

Die Nachbarschaft: Ein Muster gesellschaftlicher Organisation

Abstract:

Known as a model of social organisation, the neighbourhoods were attested, from the documentary point of view, in the sixteenth century Transylvania. The relative late beginning of this type of social organisation makes us presume that its "inspirational" source came from another two models found in the Transylvanian society starting with the twelfth - thirteenth centuries: religious organizations and guilds. Imitating them, the neighbourhoods created their own policies and adopted the same symbolic items (the sign, the trunk, the seal, the flag). As one can deduce reading the policies, neighbourhoods were extremely important in the community. One of the concerns of the members of the neighbourhoods was the mutual help offered during the important life moments of the community members – birth, marriage, and funeral. The neighbours' safety was also very important. It was maintained by assuming the rules concerning fire extinction, night guards and cleaning the drinking fountains. Ethics and respect towards the church were also stipulated and followed by the neighbourhoods' members. Those misbehaving were strictly punished. Therefore, the neighbourhoods played a special role both in the social life of each fellow and in the safety and order of the town. Although it was subordinated to higher forums – the magistrate and the villicus – the administrative and some of the juridical problems were solved inside the community by the neighbourhood's fathers.

The activity and importance of this type of organisation in Sibiu are certificated both by the high number of documents preserved in the Public Archives and the specific neighbourhood objects – trunk, signs, flags, seals – preserved in the Brukenthal National Museum.

Keywords: *neighbourhood, neighbourhood rules, Sibiu, documents, neighbourhood objects.*