

Insights into the Mineral Pigments (Cinnabar, Orpiment, and Lead- and Copper-Based Pigments) Employed in the Creation of Wooden Transylvanian Icons Dated Eighteenth to Early Nineteenth Centuries

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Abstract:

This paper is part of a research project aiming at revealing and reconstructing the icon painting techniques of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century in Transylvania, as well as identifying and characterising the materials used, their provenance and preparation methods. The series of studies already published within this project cover different aspects: identification and characterisation of earth pigments in the colour palette of Transylvanian icons, as well as their provenance and reproduction from local raw material sources, the study of varnishes, and a brief presentation of the materials identified with the aim to reconstruct the painting techniques using similar materials prepared from local sources. This paper focuses on documenting the origin and preparation methods of some of the pigments commonly identified in the icons painted in eighteenth- to early-nineteenth-century Transylvania, such as cinnabar, orpiment and lead- and copper-based pigments. We expect to better understand and contextualise the technique of wooden icon painting in Transylvania by correlating data collected through an integrated approach.

Keywords: *Transylvanian icons, 18th - early 19th century, XRF, cinnabar, orpiment, lead-based pigments, copper-based pigments*