

The Conservation of the Altarpiece from Biecz in 2007–2011

Summary

In 1913, the National Museum in Krakow acquired a unique portable altarpiece made in the stained-glass technique and decorated in the technique known as *amelierung* (reverse painting and gilding on glass). In 1936, sheet metal was found inside the altarpiece with an engraved inscription.

According to the inscription, deciphered correctly in 2010, the altarpiece was made by Daniel Schneider in Wrocław in 1617. The iconographic composition consists of the graphic representations of Christ as the Man of Sorrows, Apostles, angels, a pelican and the Eucharist taken from the Netherlandish copperplates by Anton (1552–1604) or Hieronymus Wierix (1553–1619) according to drawings by Maarten de Vos (1531–1603). There are also fragments of texts from the Old and New Testaments and the Creed. The ideological programme of the altarpiece emphasizes the role of Church and the Eucharist and as such it is a manifestation of the Counter-Reformation approach.

Between 2007 and 2012 the altarpiece underwent total conservation. This covered the frame and glass elements as well as the decoration on the preserved original glass panels decorated in the technique known as *amelierung*. The replaced glass panels, inserted in the 1930s, were removed and replaced with glass panels copying the shapes of the original glass panels, decorated using a computer graphic technique. The assembly of glass elements was carried out in a different stained-glass technique and differently in terms of construction. The conserved original panels received secondary illuminative undercoats.