Abstract

This paper examines the artistic activity of the Sardinian painter Pietro Cavaro (ca. 1508-1537) and focuses in particular on commissions and decorative work on gold backgrounds. The latest developments in this field include the proposal that the altarpiece retablo di Giorgino (1507) was commissioned by Lady Franxisca Cardona, and the identification of the portrait of Salvador Aymerich (1493-1563), the Lord of Mara, in the retablo di Villamar and in the S. Agostino in cattedra (Cagliari, Pinacoteca). Three distinct types of decoration of gold backgrounds have been identified: the Renaissance motif "of the pomegranate" (Villamar and Madonna dei sette dolori), the symbolic meaning of which is analysed here, in its textile forms and in their dissemination; rhomboid-shaped linking forms enclosing four-petalled flowers (S. Agostino and Suelli), which are compared with the Sardinian silverware of the first half of the sixteenth century; and four-petal-shaped linking forms inscribed in squares (SS. Pietro e Paolo), which are compared with Renaissance grilles. An analysis is also provided of the repertoire employed by the Stampace workshop in the punched and engraved decorations of aureoles, with a comparison being drawn between this repertoire and the work of gold and silversmiths. The paper also identifies Jaume Font, -who gilded the silver cross for the councillors of Cagliari (work of Bernardino Sollanes, 1499) identified in the Crocione processionale housed at the Cathedral of Cagliari-, Francesco Llinares and Giacomo Pitxoni as the most likely names of the goldsmiths who plied their trade among the Cagliari silversmiths of the time.

Keywords

Painting, Renaissance, Sardinia, commissions, gold backgrounds.