

## ANTIQUÉ OTTOMAN RUGS IN TRANSYLVANIA

Today there are more than 380 Ottoman 'classical' carpets in Transylvania. Together they comprise the most important corpus of Turkish textile art still surviving in Eastern Europe, a region that for centuries was part of the Ottoman Empire. These carpets also form the largest ensemble of rare Turkish rugs to have survived in exceptional condition anywhere in the world. Remarkably, despite their immense cultural importance, little research has been carried out on the Transylvanian collections and they remain largely unknown to the wider public.

The carpets, many of them prayer rugs, date from the second half of the 15th century to the second half of the 18th century, a time when Ottoman textile production was at its peak. They have survived mostly in the Lutheran Evangelical churches of the Transylvanian German (Saxon) minority, who lived side by side with the Romanian Orthodox and Hungarian reformed communities. To explain this complex and unique cultural phenomenon will be the purpose of this publication.

A number of these rugs were first published by *Emil Schmutzler*, a collector and textile manufacturer from Braşov, who was a connoisseur of Transylvanian rugs. His monumental album, *Altorientalische Teppiche in Siebenburgen*, was published in Leipzig in 1933, in a limited edition of just 325 copies. This collectors' dream album with 55 excellent illustrations has been the most important reference work for several generations of scholars. To mark the seventieth anniversary of the publication of *Schmutzler's* book, our intention is to build on his study by publishing high quality photographs, updated information and textile analyses of more than 240 rugs from Transylvania.

The complete collection of the Black Church in Braşov will be published for the first time, together with the most important rugs from the Evangelical Churches from Mediaş, Sighişoara, Rupea, Biertan, Sebeş, Călnic, Râşnov, Richiş, Căsnădie, from the National Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu, the National Museum of History of Transylvania in Cluj and the National Museum of Art in Bucharest.

It is hoped that as well as fostering the preservation and restoration of Transylvania's important heritage, this new comprehensive study will encourage the exhibition of an increasing number of the finest quality rugs in the collections.

### CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

FOREWORD by dr.dr.h.c. Christoph Klein, Bishop of the Evangelical Church C.A. of Romania

#### I - EARLY STUDIES

A short discussion of publications on the Turkish Rugs in Transylvania.

#### II - TRANSYLVANIA AND THE TURKISH RUGS

1. Historical background
2. The Turkish rug trade and Transylvania.
3. Use of the Turkish rugs in Transylvania.

#### III - TYPOLOGY OF OTTOMAN RUGS IN TRANSYLVANIA

Extensive fieldwork in Transylvania has made possible the establishing of a full and detailed database of all the 'classical' carpets; some very rare pieces will be discussed and published for the first time.

#### IV - CATALOGUE

Colour illustrations of over 250 'classical' Turkish rugs, many published for the first time, with 50 full page photographs including: 'Ghirlandaio', 'Holbein', Ushak, Selendi, 'Lotto', Double-niche 'Transylvanian', 'Transylvanian' Prayer rugs, Column Prayer rugs, etc. New non-perspectival photography was carried out inside the Churches. All the rugs were washed before being photographed.

#### V. - THE RUG COLLECTIONS IN TRANSYLVANIA

A short introduction to the main collections (Black Church in Braşov, Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu, the Parish Churches of Sighişoara, Mediaş, Biertan, Rupea), with illustrations and documentation relating to each church. To present a complete picture of this chapter of Transylvanian history, the Bistriţa collection will also be included.

#### APPENDIX

E. Schmutzler (biogr. notes) - Teodor Tuduc - Ottoman Carpets in The Romanian Principalities

#### AUTHORS

arch. Alberto Boralevi - Florence  
dr. Andrei Kertesz - Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu  
ing. Stefan Ionescu - Rome

#### CONSULTANTS:

arch. Alberto Boralevi (Italy) - Chief Consultant  
dr. Radu Ardevan - Cluj University - history of Transylvania  
Rodica Dinulescu (Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu) - textile analysis  
ing. Erwin Hellmann - History of the Saxon Churches  
dr. Şerban Turcuş (Romanian Embassy by the Holy See, Rome) - history of Transylvania

#### EDITOR

ing. Stefano Ionescu (Rome) - Promoter and co-ordinator of the project, owner of the copyright.  
The book – 200 pages, about 275 colour and 100 b/w illustr., size 34 x 24 cm, hardcover – will be launched in 2004. Initially there will be two language editions: English (edited by Jill Tilden, Associate Editor of HALI) and Italian (edited by A. Boralevi). The price will be 140 euro.

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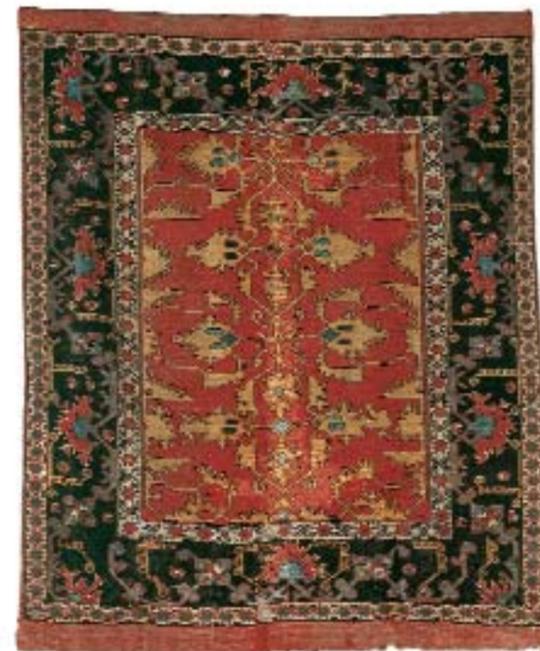
CAT. 1 - 'Ghirlandaio' rug - West Anatolia

second half 15th century - 130 x 187 cm, 840 kn/dm<sup>2</sup>

This remarkable rug, published by Schmutzler and thus long familiar to all scholars and rug lovers, has never been included in discussions of the 'Ghirlandaio' group, being certainly the oldest and perhaps the only truly convincing example of the type.

This is the oldest of all the rugs from Transylvania. The yellow ground is the same as that in the 'dragon and phoenix' rug from Berlin, while the minor 'S' chain is identical to that of the 'Marby' and occurs in other rare 15th century examples, such as the 'Cagan' animal rug, found in Tibet in the 1980s and now in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum in New York. - *Schmutzler 1933, plate 8*

EVANGELICAL CHURCH HÄLCHIU - HELDSDORF - inv. III 23\*\*



CAT. 18 - 'Lotto' - early 17th cent. - 144 x 164 cm  
'Anatolian' style field and ragged palmette border.

*Csányi 1914, cat. 6 - Végh e Layer 1925, table 3*

*Schmutzler 1933, plate 16*

EVANGELICAL CHURCH HÄRMAN - inv. 273



CAT. 57 - 'Bird' Ushak - first half 17th cent. - 137 x 204 cm

The earliest inscription on a rug in Transylvania:

TESTAMENTVM LAURENTIVS BOLKESCH AD 1646

*Schmutzler 1933, plate 3*

THE MONASTERY CHURCH, SIGHIȘOARA - SCHÄßBURG - inv. 534



CAT. 119 - 'Double niche' 'Transylvanian'

second half 17th cent. - 122 x 170 cm, 1224 kn/dm<sup>2</sup>

donor inscription: HANNES MERGLERS GABE ZUR  
WEIDENB. KIRCHE 1706

EVANGELICAL CHURCH GHIMBAV - inv. III 15\*\*



CAT. 160 - 'Transylvanian' prayer rug

first half 17th cent. - 132 x 175 cm, 1332 kn/dm<sup>2</sup>

donor inscription: 1720 D. MAYS

BRUKENTHAL MUSEUM, SIBIU - inv. M. 1618

*A few examples of the 250 rugs illustrated in colour in the book.*