



HALL
ART AND CULTURE TOURS
TRANSYLVANIA

6 - 17 June 2013

Welcome...

Dear HALI Friends and Subscribers,

When my father returned from a private tour of Transylvania with two good friends in 2012, he described the region as 'a treasure house set in Paradise'. The trip had been guided by Stefano Ionescu, a respected independent scholar of carpets and a native of Transylvania himself; we then asked Stefano to do the same for HALI readers. Stefano has led a number of tours for rug societies as well as for the Textile Museum in Washington, DC. The testimonials are outstanding.

My father spoke with such enthusiasm of the National Museum of Art in Bucharest, which contains outstanding costumes and textiles in pristine condition dating from the fifteenth century and embroideries and excellent carpets from the early seventeenth century. He met with the museum's young conservators, and with their teacher and mentor Mircea Dunca. He also visited the Museum of the Romanian Peasant, which features superb handicrafts and educational displays.

Most of all, however, he was smitten by the extraordinary churches and their walls covered with Turkish carpets from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. With all his experience, he still found it extremely useful to have Stefano's book on Ottoman rugs in Transylvania by his side so as not to miss a thing, and to be taken around by its author. Stefano made his visit even more special. The dining and accommodation were excellent as well. If my father's opinion is anything to go by, I can certainly recommend this tour. In fact, I shall be taking the first one with my husband.

I hope you will join us for a marvellous experience.

Jessica Franses

Director, HALI Publications Limited



Above: church altar, Sibiu

Below: the town of Sibiu

Front cover: painted church in Voroneț



The itinerary in Romania...

HALI is pleased to announce its first-ever Art and Culture Tour. Organised and curated by HALI experts, this eleven-day journey will provide participants with an opportunity to explore the textile arts of Bucharest, Transylvania, and Bukovina, against the splendid backdrop of the Carpathian Mountains.

Enjoy this chance to see nearly 300 of the most beautiful Ottoman Turkish rugs in the world, dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries and preserved in the region's churches and museums.

The tour will be led by historian, author of *Antique Ottoman Rugs in Transylvania*, and experienced guide Stefano Ionescu, with HALI's editor Ben Evans, an expert on international carpets.

The tour fee of 2,700 euros per person includes:

Accommodation with breakfast in four-star hotels, full meals including drinks as specified (mineral water, local wine, and slivovitz), transfer from and to the airport in Bucharest, private bus with air conditioning and WC, entrance tickets, expert English-language guiding.



This programme may be slightly amended according to local conditions (traffic, etc.) as necessary. No insurance is provided as part of the fee. Travel costs to Romania are not included. For further information please contact: info@transylvanianrugs.com

Detailed Itinerary

HALI is pleased to present a full programme of activity including visits to art and folk museums; private tours of renowned churches and monasteries (including workshops and art collections); encounters with individual rug collectors and artisanal textile producers; visits to UNESCO World Heritage sites, splendid mountain passes and bucolic valleys; hotels and restaurants selected for their high quality; and, of course, many opportunities to view unique, exquisite, antique carpets with expert guidance.



Fragment of an Ottoman Cairene prayer rug, circa 1600

DAY 1 *Thursday 6 June*

ARRIVAL IN BUCHAREST

Tour participants arrive independently at Otopeni International Airport.

Transfer to the **Domenii Plaza**, a four-star boutique hotel about a 30 minutes' drive away.

Suggested walk after a long flight: from the hotel to the Triumphal Arch, and to the park by the Herăstrău Lake, in the most elegant residential area of Bucharest.

7.30 p.m. Tour participants gather in the hotel bar to meet the tour guide, Stefano Ionescu, a Romanian independent carpet scholar, author, and leading international authority on the Ottoman carpets of Transylvania.

Video presentation of the tour and introduction to the itinerary for Transylvania and Bukovina.

Welcome dinner at the hotel restaurant with Turkish and Balkan specialities and Castel Bolovanu wine.



Open-air Village Museum

DAY 2 *Friday 7 June*

BUCHAREST

9.00 a.m. Depart for the Armenian Church, followed by a visit to the parish museum and coffee afterward.

11.00 a.m. Curated visit to the Medieval Gallery at the National Art Museum, exhibiting religious art, post-Byzantine and Ottoman textiles, costumes, etc.

1.00 p.m. Snack with *băreks*, spinach pies and Lebanese pastries.

2.00 p.m. Visit to George Pirsoagă's Antique Art Gallery.

4.00 p.m. Walk through the open-air Village Museum featuring old peasant homes from different regions of the country, with original furnishings including looms.

6.00 p.m. Tea at the Bukhara Gallery with passionate rug collector Norbert Hauser.

8.00 p.m. Dinner at the hotel restaurant.



Mogoșoia Palace

DAY 3 *Saturday 8 June*

BUCHAREST - MOGOȘOIA

9.30 a.m. Depart for the Museum of the Romanian Peasant (European Museum of the Year 1996), which holds the largest collection of Romanian flatweaves. Stefano will introduce the museum and the main production regions of Oltenia, Transylvania, Moldavia, and Bessarabia. There is an excellent museum shop with items (textiles, woodworks, painted eggs, ceramics) made by the best craftsmen.

12.30 p.m. Depart for Mogoșoia Palace, built by Prince Băncoveanu. The palace houses about 300 items donated by top Romanian art collectors Liana and Dan Nasta, including Kula, Ghiordes, and Kirshahir rugs, Senneh kilims and Romanian *scoarțe*.

1.30 p.m. Open-air lunch at the garden restaurant on the palace grounds.

2.30 p.m. Guided tour of Mogoșoia Palace. Return to the hotel.

7.30 p.m. Depart from the hotel for Caru' cu Bere, a historical beer hall in town with music and entertainment, followed by a short city tour by night. Return to the hotel.



'Dracula' Castle, Bran

DAY 4

Sunday 9 June

BUCHAREST - SINAIA - BRAN -

BRAȘOV (210 KM)

9.00 a.m. Depart for Sinaia. Short presentation of the historical and religious background of the Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania regions of Romania.

11.30 a.m. Stop at Sinaia, a famous resort in the Carpathian mountains. Meet Ecaterina Oproiu, a local woman who specialises in making embroidered folk blouses and waistcoats. Guided visit to Peleş Castle, former residence of the Royal Family, which has retained original furnishings including 18th-century Persian carpets.

1.30 p.m. Open-air refreshments at the coffee shop on the castle grounds.

2.30 p.m. Depart for Bran, home of the so-called 'Dracula' Castle, nestled in an idyllic valley. We'll view the castle from the outside and stroll in the nearby market, sampling local *grappa*, delicious sheep's cheeses, fruits and sweets if we wish.

5.00 p.m. Visit to the Lutheran church in Rosenau, including a presentation on its history and a discussion of why Ottoman rugs survived in Saxon churches.

7:00 p.m. Accommodation at the four-star Hotel Ambient (which has a fitness centre and spa).

8:00 p.m. Dinner at the hotel restaurant followed by a stroll around the medieval town centre.



The Black Church

DAY 5

Monday 10 June

BRAȘOV / KRONSTADT

9.30 a.m. Depart by bus from the hotel for a visit to the Black Church.

10.00 a.m. Private tour of the Black Church, where almost 100 antique Ottoman rugs are displayed. The organist Stephen Schlandt will perform a short concert on the church's historic organ. Dr Agnes Balindt-Ziegler, curator of the church's collection, will present the history of the Church; Stefano will outline important examples from the collection including different types of 'Transylvanian' rugs.

1.00 p.m. Refreshments with fresh fruit and coffee at a nearby book and souvenir shop.

3.30 p.m. Depart from the hotel for a visit to the Blumenau Church, which holds thirteen rugs.

5.00 p.m. Visit to the Hungarian Lutheran Church, which has six rugs.

7.00 p.m. Depart by bus for Poiana Brașov, the most attractive mountain resort in the area (altitude: 1,100 m).

8.00 p.m. Dinner at the 'Shepherd's House' for local food and Gypsy music. Return to Brașov with a stop to admire the town by night.



Nuns weaving carpets at Agapia

DAY 6

Tuesday 11 June

BRAȘOV - AGAPIA - BUKOVINA (370 KM)

8.30 a.m. Depart for Moldavia across the Oituz pass; refreshments and fruit available along the road.

3.30 p.m. Visit to the Agapia Monastery in Moldavia, including its workshop.

5.30 p.m. Visit to the Voroneț Monastery (built in 1488 and possibly the most famous religious building in Romania).

6.30 p.m. Accommodation at the four-star **Best Western Bucovina** in Gura Humorului.

8.00 p.m. Dinner at the hotel restaurant.



Agapia Monastery



Embroidered cover, tomb of Prince Ieremia Movilă (1595–1606)

DAY 7

Wednesday 12 June

BUKOVINA (150 KM)

9.00 a.m. Depart for the Putna Monastery (60 km). Visit to the monastery's museum, where curator Father Alexei will present highly important historic embroideries. After lunch, visit to Sucevița Monastery, built in 1583, where curator Sister Mariani will present the monastery's famed 16th-century frescos. The south wall depicting Moses and the Burning Bush is unmissable.

Visit to the monastery's small museum before returning to the hotel.

8.00 p.m. Dinner at the hotel restaurant.



Putna Monastery



Detail of a 'Transylvanian' column rug



One of the finest Lotto rugs in Transylvania, St Margaret's Church



Hans Schwab von Wertingen, Portrait of Duchess Jacobaea von Baden, 1526



Folk costumes at the Museum of the Romanian Peasant

DAY 8 *Thursday 13 June*

BUKOVINA (100 KM)

9.00 a.m. Depart for the Humor and Moldovița Monasteries along the Ciumârna Pass, for spectacular views over the mountains of Bukovina.

11.30 a.m. Visit to Moldovița Monastery, where Sister Tatiana will introduce the exterior paintings of this best-preserved of all the churches of Bukovina. Lunch will be taken afterward, followed by a return to Voroneț to view good textiles at the local market.

7.45 p.m. Traditional dinner at the rustic, picturesque Arinis Inn.



Embroidered cover, tomb of Princess Maria of Mangop, 1477

DAY 9 *Friday 14 June*

BUKOVINA - SIGHIȘOARA -

MEDIAȘ - SIBIU (420 KM)

8.00 a.m. Depart from the hotel. Stop at Pasul Tihuța (altitude: 1,200 m) for views.

1.30 p.m. Lunch in Sighișoara at Wagner House, a typical restaurant.

2.30 p.m. Visit the historical centre of Sighișoara and the Monastery Church, displaying about thirty rugs: a Star Ushak, several Lottos, a very important bird rug dated 1641, and several double-niche Transylvanians.

3.30 p.m. Depart for Biertan (30 km), a picturesque old village that was the Episcopal Seat of the Saxon Lutheran Church in Transylvania. The church there has five rugs.

5.30 p.m. Depart for Mediaș (28 km) to visit St Margaret's, probably the most beautiful Lutheran church in Transylvania. The collection of forty rugs includes four Holbeins, several Lottos (including one of the best in the region), a Çintamani, and bird and scorpion rugs. A replica of a lost animal rug, woven in Turkey after an image in Emil Schmutzler's classic book, will be presented.

7.00 p.m. Depart for Sibiu (60 km). Accommodation at the five-star Golden Tulip Hotel (with fitness centre and spa), the finest hotel in Transylvania.

8.30 p.m. Dinner at the rooftop restaurant of the hotel, with stunning views over the town.

DAY 10 *Saturday 15 June*

SIBIU

9.00 a.m. Depart for the medieval center of the Saxon town of Sibiu/Hermannstadt.

10.00 a.m. Visit to the Brukenthal National Museum, the most important art museum in Transylvania. Guided tour with curator Dr Alexandru Sonoc, who will identify rugs in paintings. View some of the best Ottoman rugs and textiles in the collection, including a 15th-century brocade from Lucca. During this visit we shall consign to the museum an Anatolian rug donated by Beverly Schiltz in memory of her husband Grover.

1.30 p.m. Lunch followed by free time for shopping, visiting the great Lutheran Church and exploring Sibiu town centre.

3.30 p.m. Accommodation at the four-star Hotel Golden Tulip Hotel (with fitness centre and spa).

5.00 p.m. Visit to the vast, open-air ASTRA Museum of Traditional Folk Civilisation. Two horse-drawn carriages will be available for anyone with mobility difficulties.

8.00 p.m. Dinner at Hermania, a Saxon restaurant, followed by a farewell stroll through the old city centre of Sibiu.

DAY 11 *Sunday 16 June*

SIBIU - BUCHAREST (280 KM)

9.00 a.m. Depart for Bucharest. Journey across the spectacular Olt Valley.

11.00 a.m. Visit to the 14th-century Orthodox Cozia Monastery; meet a local weaver from Tismana (Oltenia), Filomela Tistere, who will show her work with kilims using natural dyes.

Picnic on the road.

4.30 p.m. Arrival in Bucharest, with a stop at the Museum of the Romanian Peasant's gift shop for souvenirs.

Accommodation at the Domenii Plaza.

7.30 p.m. Depart for farewell dinner at Pescăruș, a terrace restaurant by Lake Herastrău, with folk music and dancing.

DAY 12 *Monday 17 June*

END OF THE TOUR

Breakfast and transfer to the airport for individual flights home.



HALI

For additional information, please contact:

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