

beginning of the 17th century. Another example of this type, CAT. 88, may be later, perhaps end of the 17th century, judging by the stiff and imprecise drawing.

As *Table 7* shows, the pattern that occurs most frequently in the spandrels is the so-called 'rosette and leaf' type with the characteristic large rosette – contrasting with the ground colour – and feathered leaves as well as other smaller floral motifs.

Not infrequent are spandrels with serrated or curled leaves and carnations, as for instance in the example from the Brukenthal Museum, CAT. 79. One example from Rupea, CAT. 129, shows the flowering stem spandrels characteristic of 'Transylvanian' prayer rugs (see *Table 9*).

The main ground colour of the spandrels is dark blue, followed by ochre, black, ivory and red. There are some so-called 'harlequin' examples with spandrels of alternating ground colours, CAT. 107.

The most distinctive feature of the double-niche group is undoubtedly the prominent main border, found in a great variety of patterns as illustrated in the following table.

Table 8 - Double-niche rugs in Transylvania: BORDER PATTERNS

	<i>star and cartouche</i>	<i>cartouche</i>	<i>floral</i>	<i>'Gothic'</i>	<i>palmette</i>	<i>other</i>	<i>total</i>
<i>no. of rugs</i>	14	67	7	4	4	3	99
<i>percent.</i>	14%	68%	7%	4%	4%	3%	100%

The elegant star and cartouche border, in which ivory cartouches alternate with eight-pointed stars, occurs mostly in the earliest examples, CAT. 69, 94.

The great majority of double-niche 'Transylvanians' show the typical cartouche border of elongated polygons. Within these are 'shield' palmettes, a motif basically made up of two forked leaves similar to the rather more curvilinear variety found in Ottoman textiles (velvet and brocade). The design of the cartouche itself contains some features that are helpful for the dating of the carpets, but this has to be related to other compositional elements (field and niche design, proportions). In earlier examples the shield palmettes are very finely drawn, with some curvilinear features (1). In the centre of the cartouche there is sometimes a further clearly drawn motif, as in CAT. 81, found mostly in Melas carpets from the 18th and 19th centuries (2). In later examples the design becomes more rigid and angular, the forked leaves lose their identity and the shield becomes a hexagon that could contain a lozenge (3) or even a stylised flower (4). The next phase shows the design becoming simpler and the features even more angular (5). Often the vertical borders are slightly different from the horizontal ones, showing irregular cartouches, sometimes unevenly proportioned, CAT. 87.

The cartouches are most frequently ivory, alternating with (among others) ochre, red, blue, green. Ground colour of the borders include red, yellow, blue, ochre, ivory.

Floral, so-called 'Gothic' and palmette borders occur in just a small proportion of the rugs of this type (see CAT. 127-132).



(1)

Early 17th century cartouche with well drawn 'shield' palmette



(2)

More stiffly drawn cartouche with hexagonal shield



(3)

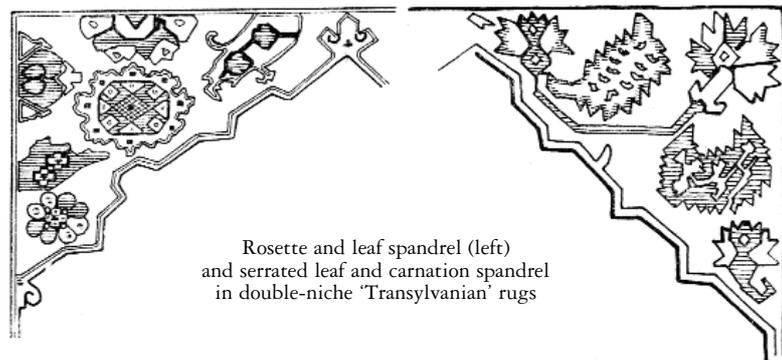


(4)



(5)

Simplified cartouche, with angular drawing and lozenge 'shield'



Rosette and leaf spandrel (left) and serrated leaf and carnation spandrel in double-niche 'Transylvanian' rugs

As for other Turkish rugs, regardless of the pattern, vertical and horizontal sections of the main border meet abruptly, without proper corner solutions.

One particularly elegant variant is that of the white-ground 'Transylvanian' rugs, in which the ivory ground is sometimes carried through into the border and spandrels. Few in number (CAT. 123-127) rugs of this type show remarkable variety in the main borders.

The superb example in the Brukenthal Museum, CAT. 124, shows a 'Gothic' border similar to that of certain Selendi rugs. This is a highly unusual piece as both field and spandrels are decorated with the same pattern on a white ground. The foundation of this rug, with ivory wefts, is identical to that of white-ground Selendi carpets.

Double-niche 'Transylvanian' rugs have an unusually rich repertoire of secondary borders, and these play an important role in the ornamentation.

Reciprocal trefoil motifs – sometimes polychrome – flank the star and cartouche main borders of the early examples, CAT. 68, 69. Very similar arrangements occur in some early 16th century Anatolian carpets, as can be seen in detail (this page, below) from Holbein's *Ambassadors* of 1533.



The reciprocal trefoil secondary borders rarely flank floral main borders of double-niche rugs, as in CAT. 122, and never occur in 'Transylvanian' prayer or column rugs

Other minor border patterns such as eight-pointed stars, small rosettes, pinwheels, 'S' chains and diagonal cross-hatching are common to the whole 'Transylvanian' group. So for instance the pinwheel secondary border appears in double-niche rugs (CAT. 99), in prayer rugs (CAT. 171) as well as in coupled-column rugs (CAT. 201).

The Anatolian origin of 'Transylvanian' carpets, long a matter for debate, is further demonstrated by the fact that the production does not end in the 18th century. Through the whole of the 19th and into the early years of the 20th century, certain Anatolian Turkish weavings continued to reproduce the same ornamental motifs. The so-called Demirji or Kömürkü Kula rugs could be considered the direct 19th century offspring of the double-niche 'Transylvanians', even if the design has become much more rigid and stylised. It is remarkable that these 19th century carpets have preserved the same composition with vases in the field, while on the other hand the borders, often of Ottoman type, show carnations on a yellow ground, an original design that is never found in 'Transylvanian' rugs. In addition, late 19th and early 20th century Kizil Bergama rugs borrowed the motif of the floral medallion, while the Ushak medallion scheme survived in late 18th and 19th century white-ground Kiz Gördes rugs, and in later Doşemalti rugs.



White-ground double-niche 'Transylvanian' West Anatolia, 17th century (from 1913 photographic plate) Evangelical Parish, Bistrița



The Ambassadors (detail), 1533 Hans Holbein the Younger Secondary border with reciprocal motif of an early 'Holbein' carpet National Gallery, London

¹ The sub-groups carry the designations used in the catalogue of the exhibition *Sovrani Tappeti*, which took place in 1999, in Milan, at the 9th ICOC.

² 'Transylvanian' rugs belonging to the various groups are conserved in museums in Istanbul (Balpinar and Hirsch 1988, pl. 54 and Ertug 1999, pls. 94, 95, 99, 100, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107) as well as in collections in Lebanon (Beirut 1963, pls. 6, 13) or Cairo (Mostafa 1953, pls. I, II).

³ Eichhorn 1968.

⁴ Kühlbrandt 1907.

⁵ Sakisian 1931, pp. 368-373.

⁶ Batári 1994/b, p. 41.

⁷ Boralevi 2003.

⁸ Neugebauer and Orendi 1909.

⁹ Batári 1994/a, cat. 50.