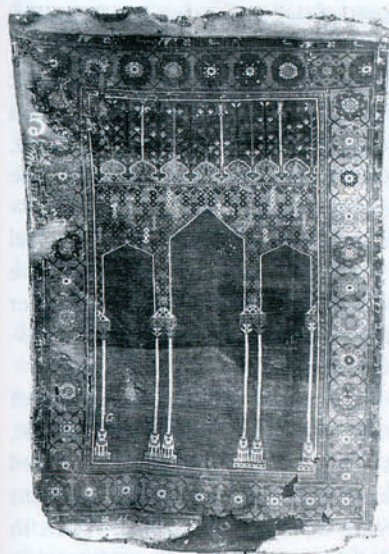


Transylvanian Update

Following the well-received publication of *Antique Ottoman Rugs in Transylvania*, **Stefano Ionescu** revisited Transylvania in September 2005 to catch up with the progress made in preserving and cataloguing the legacy of Ottoman carpets in the region's Saxon churches.

The publication of *Antique Ottoman Rugs in Transylvania* not only brought clear information to Western readers about the carpet holdings of the Saxon churches, but also generated fresh concerns within the region's parishes about their rug legacy.

In a meeting with Pastor Christian Plajer of the Lutheran Parish of the Black Church in Braşov, which holds and exhibits the world's greatest ensemble of 'Transylvanian' rugs, we mapped out a plan for future action. The Black Church will take responsibility for a number of rugs belonging to smaller churches, among them the unique 'Ghirlandaio' rug from Heldsdorf (HALI 137, p.53), and the church's



Right: St Margaret's Church in Mediaş with newly added rugs from Arbegeni, Bogeschdorf, Langenthal, and Reichesdorf

Left: Six-column 'Transylvanian' rug, measuring 1.15 x 1.78m (3'9" x 5'10") recorded as No.5 in the Bielz inventory, which was sold before World War II to an unknown buyer. Present whereabouts unknown

display will be reorganised to include these additions. Classes at the Honterus School in Braşov and other initiatives will encourage the growth of local expertise and create knowledgeable guardians for this legacy. In the meantime, where there had been only a few faded postcards in the ticket office offering information about the collection, now there is a large panel entitled 'Ottoman Rugs in the Black Church', showing all the rug types displayed there, mounted at the entrance. The brochure *The Saxon Churches of Transylvania and their Rugs* (generated from material presented in the Robert Pinner Lectures at the 2005 HALI Fair) is now available at the



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bookshop, while German-speaking readers in the area will soon have access to the German edition of AORT.

St Margaret's Parish Church in Mediaş has the second most important rug collection in Transylvania, with three 'Holbeins', several 'Lottos' and the largest selection of white-ground Selendis in the world – fifteen examples including çintamani, 'bird' and 'scorpion' designs. Two other fragmentary rugs from the stores, a 'Holbein' and a 'Lotto' are in need of restoration in order to be displayed in the Church, whose pastor, Reinhard Guib, has also succeeded in bringing in a dozen additional rugs from smaller churches in the area. The newly added pieces include a 'Holbein' fragment, two beautiful 'Lottos' (one from Arbegeni and one from Bogeschdorf) and a rare single-niche Transylvanian from Wurmlach (HALI 137, p.56). They all proudly bear the name of their original parishes.

In the parish archive at the Evangelical Church in Rupea, Pastor Siegmund Schmidt and Professor Ortrun Morgen have discovered a set of photographs of the Bielz rug inventory (33 pieces), taken before part of the collection was sold to raise money for the building restoration in the 1930s. Fourteen pieces, both complete rugs and fragments of 'Lottos', 'bird' rugs and 'Transylvanians', including a rare single niche rug, were sold between 1933 and 1940. Eleven of the photos

bear the note "verkauft Tuduc", while in three other cases the buyer is not named. And a piece of the box-border from the 'Lotto' rug which Teodor Tuduc (who played a major role in the impoverishment of the Transylvanian church legacy), sold to the Romanian collector G. Oprescu (now preserved in the Museum of Art Collections in Bucharest; AORT, p.204), was discovered in a bundle of fragments. The church in Rupea is still under reconstruction: all the funds raised were lost during currency 'stabilisation' after World War II, so Reverend Siegmund Schmidt has proposed that the rugs, now in storage, be made available for display in order to raise funds.

Photographs of the rugs sold by Rupea Parish, together with others once belonging to other Transylvanian collections, have been assembled in a brochure, *Transylvanian Collections – Whereabouts Unknown*, which will be offered with AORT for internet buyers.

I would also like to inform readers about our plan for an exhibition in Berlin in 2006, with rugs from the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu (as seen this year in Rome) as well as the above-mentioned churches. This event will herald a new phase in the life of the Saxon Parish collections and mark Romania's entry to the European Community, as well as Sibiu's nomination as Cultural Capital of Europe 2007. It is hoped that all the rugs preserved in Transylvania will be displayed.