

The 25th Anniversary
of the Transylvanian Saxon Foundation
(1979 - 2004)

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Frontpicture: Fortified church in Biertan/Birthälm (Author: Hermann Fabini)

Culture in a European Spirit

Transylvania. The word itself conjures up images of a European cultural landscape, gentle but full of character, that has rested for over 850 years in the Carpathian basin and in itself.

I admit today that the Transylvanian Saxons are close to my heart, and I would like to emphasise that over the years I came to know many of them and hold them in high esteem. My native Free State of Bavaria has taken in around one hundred thousand Transylvanian Saxons since the Second World War and has given them a new home.

The Bavarian-Transylvanian relations culminated in the Bavarian Cultural Days held in Sibiu/Hermannstadt in September 2000, organised by the Bavarian Government in close co-operation with the Romanian Ministry of Culture and, above all, the Transylvanian Saxon Foundation. Looking back we can say that it has been a successful co-operation.

“European encounters – made visible”. The motto of the Cultural Days clearly reflected their content, and there were plenty of opportunities for getting to know each other, for multi-faceted presentations and to discover differences and also similarities between Bavaria and Transylvania.

I gladly accepted the patronage for this presentation of Bavarian culture and customs together with Ion Caramitru, my opposite number in Romania at that time. With this colourful and packed series of events stretching over nine days and including exhibitions, concerts, film evenings, symposia and even a sizeable beer tent on the Grosser Ring in Sibiu/Hermannstadt, we demonstrated a true European partnership and managed to send the desired signal.

These European encounters four years ago were designed to help Europe grow together. The Transylvanian Saxons, represented by your foundation that shares the same goals, were as usual an important intermediary.

I remember the Annual Meeting of the Saxons in Biertan/Birihalm held shortly before the opening of our Cultural Days, the meeting with the host town's newly inaugurated Mayor, Klaus Johannis, and his first encounter with the long-serving Lord Mayor of Landshut, Josef Deimer. As you know, these towns formed a partnership at that time that we can be proud of today!

Your Munich-based foundation has greatly contributed to our achievements during the sunny autumn of 2000, and I wish your foundation continuous success and fruitful application of its funds in its 25th year.

In the context of the signals sent out four years ago we are now very glad about the decision that Sibiu will be, together with Luxembourg, European Capital of Culture 2007. Once again two towns and regions could demonstrate in European spirit that a true European Union is primarily based on cultural co-operation.

Dr. h. c. Hans Zehetmair

Former Bavarian State Secretary of Science,
Research and Arts

Chairman of the Hanns Seidel Foundation

Greeting

The Transylvanian Saxons have made a significant contribution to Romania's national treasure. Their architectural monuments - including ecclesiastical as well as secular buildings - can be found in over 200 settlements in Transylvania. They exude a strong and unique expressiveness and have shaped a cultural landscape. Thanks to their architecture and their local yet diverse traditions the Transylvanian Saxons play a special role in the cultural heritage of our country.

Seven Saxon monuments have been included in the UNESCO World Heritage Programme because of their special value: the fortified churches in Biertan/Birnhelm, Viscri/Deutsch-Weißkirch, Prejmer/Tartlau, Saschiz/Keisd, Valea Viilor/Wurmloch, the peasant castle in Câlnic/Kelling and last but not least the Old Town (the "Citadel") in Sighişoara/Schäßburg. One has to highlight this fact in order to correctly specify Romania's national treasure.

It is also worth mentioning that the Brukenthal Museum is not only leading the way but also acts as a role model in the development of modern storage techniques.

Transylvanian Saxon researchers and collectors have significantly contributed to Romania's national heritage, not only through their thorough and extensive work in the fields of humanities and natural sciences but also by accepting each other's achievements.

The strong community spirit of the Transylvanian Saxons has enabled the formation of numerous associations, amongst them your Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) that is currently in its 25th year. The foundation was formed in 1979 by the distinguished Ernst Habermann from Sibiu/Hermannstadt and it is dedicated to the conservation of the

Transylvanian Saxons' cultural heritage. Most of them have left their home in Romania due to political developments and economic incentives and returned to Germany. Over 850 years earlier their ancestors set out from there to colonise a country that would be known as Transylvania.

The foundation of the Transylvanian Saxons was set up at a time when no one could predict the events of 1989/90 that brought about radical political changes in Romania. All the Romanian governments after 1990 have supported the foundation's activities, a fact highlighted by the signing of a protocol on October 10th 1997 by the Romanian Ministry of Culture and the Transylvanian Saxon Foundation.

A second protocol signed on June 7th 2003 in Dinkelsbühl by the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Education and the Transylvanian Saxon Cultural Council includes special regulations regarding the conservation of the cultural assets created by the Saxons over the last centuries.

We would like to congratulate the esteemed Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) on its 25th anniversary and we wish its Council and Board of Directors a lot of success. We hope to continue and expand our co-operation with the foundation by preserving the Transylvanian Saxons' cultural heritage in Romania.

Prof. Dr. Ion Oprea

Romanian State Secretary of Culture

Let us work good!

A foundation dedicated to selflessness and charity

The biblical motto of the Gustav-Adolf-Foundation, formed in Germany in 1832, *“Let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith”* (the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians, chapter 6, verse 10) equally applies to Ernst Habermann’s life-time achievements and the Siebenbürgisch-Sächsishe Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) he set up in 1979. The ecclesiastically-orientated association primarily supported Christians and their communities in the diaspora, whereas the “Habermann-Foundation”, as it was widely called, lends support to those Transylvanian Saxon institutions and bodies that keep alive the rich cultural heritage of this “German tribe” and its 850 years’ history in Transylvania. Thus both the benefactor and his foundation are part of a long tradition of the Transylvanian Saxons whose way of life was characterised by solidarity and a strong community spirit.

Ernst Habermann, who found success not only in his country of origin but even more so following his emigration to Germany in 1947, was motivated to set up his foundation by this rarely found community spirit and the understanding, that only the community can carry an individual and equally an individual can only survive within a community. It is deeply rooted in the character of the Transylvanian Saxons, who managed to create a “Universitas Saxonum” by putting the community first and by bringing sacrifices for the greater good. This has enabled them to weather the storms and to overcome adversity in spite of the dangers and threats they were continuously faced with.

The time following the “collapse” at the end of the Second World War brought destitution to the Germans in Romania and threatened their existence. The growing emigration of Transylvanian Saxons from Romania put their

longstanding survival strategies and hopes for the future to the test. This is where the work of the “Habermann-Foundation” has brought hope for Transylvanian Saxons in Romania and Germany.

Other contributors to this Festschrift will be able to dis-

close in more detail how much support was given to individuals, how many ancient traditions and assets have been saved and how the foundation strengthened the confidence of the Transylvanian Saxons. What matters is that the motto “Let us work good” and “especially to those who are of the household of the faith” became reality for the Transylvanian Saxons, where community and church, civil society and Christian community were synonyms, according to the old saying: “God’s help is nearest in greatest time of need”. But God helps through people whom he gave the willingness and the selflessness, but also the strength and the appreciation to turn this into actions. He also gave his blessing for their actions through visible success and lasting testimony to their sometimes hidden work.

I have already heard of Ernst Habermann when I was a child and later as a young man. My father and he were – if I may say so – close friends and so were their wives. His name was often mentioned at home, but parti-



*D.Dr. Christoph Klein
Bishop of the Evangelical
Church of the Augsburg
Confession in Romania*



*The foundation takes over patronage of the fortified church in Harman/Honigberg in October 1998.
On the way to the church service (from left): Hans-Christian Habermann, Ion Caramitru, Romanian
Secretary of Culture, Bishop D.Dr. Christoph Klein, Church Curator Dr. Horst Haldenwang (†)*



*Inaugural signing of the certificate of the patronage in the protestant church in Harman/Honigberg.
Bishop Christoph Klein, Wilhelm Graef, Curator of Honigberg parish, Secretary Ion Caramitru,
Carol König, Director at the Romanian Ministry of Culture (from left)*

cularly in the difficult years after the war when we received food parcels and we thanked him. During that time words of gratitude and appreciation for the benefactor were mentioned in conversations and letters.

His son Hans-Christian Habermann is practically my age and it is only because he emigrated with his family when he was nine years old that we did not become close friends like our parents. I was very happy when the son, equipped with his father's mind, took over the work after his death – two years before my father's. And so I got to know him (again) at a time when Romania was once again a free country. Impossible under the previous regime, he now started to refocus the work of the foundation in Transylvania with plenty of enthusiasm and commitment. We could now openly and on an institutional basis concentrate on larger projects, above all on our cultural heritage, that has to be maintained by the church and whose very existence is threatened after the mass exodus of the Transylvanian Saxons.

This is how large and small projects aimed at the preservation of important fortified churches were started and found the necessary financial backing. I will always remember the restoration work on the famous fortified church in Prejmer/Tartlau and even more so the acceptance of a patronage in 1992 that also aims at the future conservation of this unique monument.

Later the neighbouring community of Harman/Honigberg was added to the list of large projects, and it would not have been finished without the tireless efforts of Hans-Christian Habermann, Dip. Eng., the foundation and its staff. Smaller projects were launched every year bringing immediate relief from the threats our fortified churches were facing and they deserve to be specially mentioned as they were solely supported by the "Habermann Foundation". The Consistory was asked to select and put forward monuments that required urgent attention, and this

process ensured efficiency and cut down bureaucracy. The famous fortified church of Biertan/Birthälm is now in the spotlight, where the Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) as project leader organises life-saving and indispensable restoration work in co-operation with the World Monuments Fund.

But we should also not forget the support lent to individual people or groups. Young Transylvanian Saxons receive scholarships to study in Germany; we also support our church and community staff so that the community and our home does not lose them, only because they suffer from well-known financial shortages. It is very moving that the founder's revered widow, Nora Habermann, the mother of the current Chairman, frequently supports this and other programmes with private funds and thus continues her husband's work and legacy.

The "Habermann Foundation" has thus become well-known in Transylvania and all across Romania because it also supports other cultural projects, such as the "Carl Filtsch Competition Festival" that is regularly held in Sibiu/Hermannstadt, as well as other musical activities and institutions.

Ernst Habermann would have turned 100 in August 2003, his son celebrated his 65th birthday the same year and the foundation commemorates its 25th anniversary this year. It is a good enough reason to thank the foundation and its staff in the name of the German community in Romania, and to wish the Chairman, his lovely mother and his lovely wife health and energy to continue this honourable work and to ask God to uphold their aim to "work good" for a long time.

D. Dr. Christoph Klein

Bishop of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania



Evangelical church in Sibiu/Hermannstadt

Ernst Habermann, father of the Foundation

Ernst Habermann was born August 2nd 1903 in Sibiu/Hermannstadt. The family owned the Hermannstädter Dampfbrauerei (Sibiu Steam Brewery) founded by his grandfather, Johannes Habermann, and was one of the town's prosperous families. His grandfather was a successful businessman. His exemplary life and the determination to continue the work of his ancestors shaped Ernst Habermann.



He developed strong ties with his Transylvanian home during his childhood and his early school days in Sibiu/Hermannstadt and later at grammar school in Braşov/Kronstadt. He spent his formative years in Munich studying Economics, and the distressing aftermath of the First World War shaped him and strengthened his feeling of ethnic belonging. Early on in his career he set up a commercial and manufacturing business that expanded beyond the Romanian borders before and during the Second World War.

After the collapse in August 1944 Ernst Habermann and his family were in danger of persecution and deportation, as indeed all the Germans in Romania. The family went underground for nearly a year before they managed to escape in May 1947. It was characteristic for Ernst Habermann to lend his support to persecuted people during the war, and it was with their help that his family managed to flee the country.

At the age of 44 he started from scratch building up a corporation in the free west and through hard work established himself again as a businessman. His heart though remained in his old home country, and his love for the small

Saxon tribe dominated his thoughts until his death on November 26th 1987. He was proud of its continuous steadfastness, diligence, cultural achievements and community spirit over the centuries.

Ernst Habermann dreamt of setting up businesses in his new home inspired by Saxon traditions. He planned on founding a Saxon bank and Saxon companies, all the while aiming at the formation of "Transylvania Corporation". The corporation was intended to support the

overall community spirit of the Saxons, together with other organisations founded by fellow Saxons and the Saxon Landsmannschaft (Saxon Association), care homes, settlements, the Saxon Museum at Castle Horneck etc. He wanted to help secure the future of the Saxon culture. These are the pillars of the Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) he set up in 1979. The beginnings were difficult because in spite of the good intentions it took a long time to get the foundation's message across and to gain acceptance from his countrymen. Over the years the importance of the foundation was acknowledged, illustrated by the fact that further foundations were added. The Transylvanian Saxons can be proud of their foundation that does not depend on public finances in order to preserve cultural heritage and to support compatriots in the new as well as the old home.

Ernst Habermann is no longer alive, but his Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) continues its work.

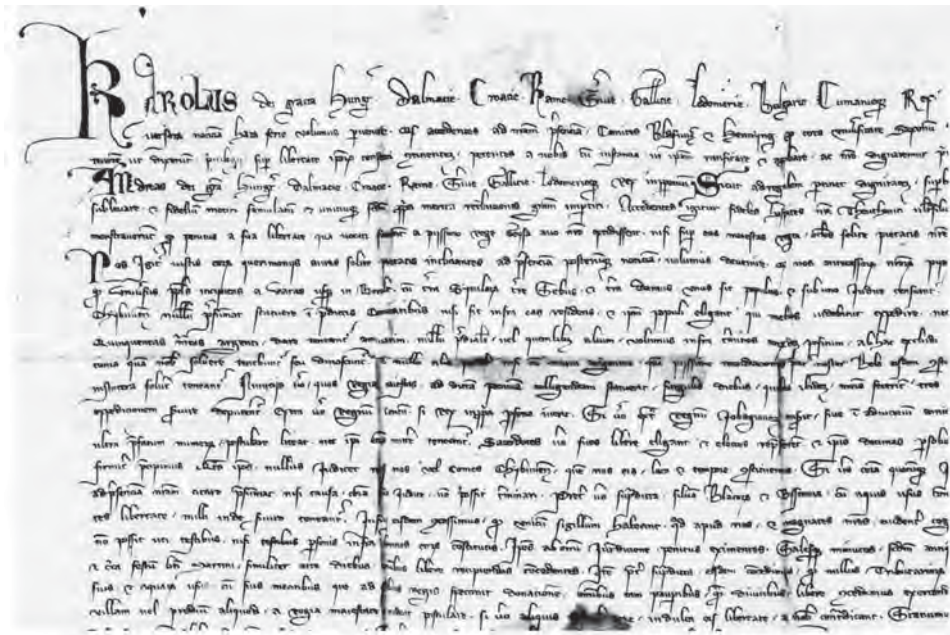
Hans-Christian Habermann
Chairman of the Foundation's Council



The fortified church of Prejmer/Tartlau



Who are the Transylvanian Saxons?



King Charles I re-affirms the "Golden Charter" (Andreanum) in 1317 issued by the Hungarian King Andreas II in 1224 (facsimile)

In the 12th century Hungarian King Geza II invited German settlers to Transylvania in the Carpathian basin. They came from the Rhine and Mosel regions, from today's Luxembourg, later also from other parts of Germany to protect the crown. Together they formed a new tribe in Transylvania that, in the beginning, was officially called "Saxones" (Saxons).

Privileges and Common Law

The settlers were granted extraordinary privileges on Crown Land (30000 square km). The

Golden Charter of 1224 presented by King Andreas II, later commonly known as the Andreanum and frequently affirmed by Hungarian kings, pinned down the privileges of the German settlers in the Sibiu province that were later extended to all free Transylvanian Saxons: territorial autonomy and self-government; the right to free ownership and inheritance; free elections of judges and priests; exemption from customs and independent German jurisdiction. This charter laid the ground for the development of a republican-democratic enclave within the

Hungarian Kingdom free of aristocratic rule and serfdom. The Common Law of 1583 remained the code of law until 1853.

The Tatar invasions and the wars with the Turks in the 15th and 16th centuries forced the Saxon settlers to build defence fortifications. This is how the Transylvanian Saxon fortified towns and churches were founded.



Young couple from Șura Mare/Großscheuern in festive costume for the crown festival

In 1541 Hungary became a Turkish province whereas Transylvania remained an autonomous principality paying tribute to the Turks. The Saxons as one of the three ruling nations (Hungarian aristocracy, free Szekler, free Saxons) jointly converted to Lutheranism in 1547.

As early as the 14th century they had a highly developed guild system comparable with the ones in Nürnberg and Augsburg. Schools that have been operating for over 600 years, influential grammar schools, the school regulation from 1543 and the early introduction of compulsory primary education for all Saxon boys and girls (1772) all contributed to the small Transylvanian Saxon community's high standard of education. It can further boast pioneering achievements in South Eastern Europe in areas such as economic development (for example electrification from 1896!) and culture.

Following the victory of the imperial troops over the Turks the Transylvanian principality was annexed by the Habsburg Empire (1688) whereby the Austrian Emperor Leopold I respected the Saxon autonomous rights. Transylvania joined Hungary in 1867 and Romania after the First World War.



Child with traditional bonnet

Disastrous effects of the Second World War

The Romanian-German Economic Agreement put Romania under the influence of the Third Reich and drove the German community into Berlin's arms. Romania's about-face in August 1944 brought catastrophic events for the Romanian Germans (Transylvanian Saxons, Banat and Sathmar Swabians, Germans from the Banat Mountains, Zips Saxons etc.): partial deportation to the Soviet Union, disappropriation of the agricultural, industrial, commercial, cultural and educational assets. In those hard times only the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession managed to offer refuge and support for the Germans in Transylvania through its community orientated tradition.

The end of the war brought painful conse-

quences for the Germans in Romania: families were torn apart by captivity, the North Transylvanian Saxons were evacuated by force and thousands who were deported to Ukrainian coal mines were refused entry back into Romania. Following the resumption of diplomatic relations between Germany and Romania in 1967 more and more Transylvanian Saxons emigrated to Germany via the so-called Family Reunion Programme. The first year after the fall of the Ceausescu dictatorship in December 1989 saw a mass exodus. One of the main reasons for the emigration was the threat to the language and the cultural identity in the old Transylvanian home.

Where they live today

Today over 200 000 Transylvanian Saxons live in Germany, 15 000 in Austria, about



The Brukenthal Palace on the „Großer Ring” in Sibiu/Hermannstadt. Public museum since 1817



Transylvanian Saxons at the grand costume parade at the Munich Oktoberfest in 1997. Their parade included 316 people

25 000 in the US, 8 000 in Canada and less than 15 000 in Transylvania. Most of them are genuine representatives and descendants of a German culture and language enclave that survived 850 years in South Eastern Europe and are equipped with a strong sense for their origin and history. They can indeed be proud of their past!

The Transylvanian Saxons are increasingly facing problems regarding the preservation of their cultural heritage. Monuments, town districts and villages as well as the fortified churches (unique due to the sheer number and diversity concentrated in a small area) but also further elements characterising a typical, organically grown environment, should not only be preserved but also offer benefits to people who subscribe to the motto Use without Abuse.

The fate of mobile cultural treasures also deserves more attention from museums and other cultural institutions. The audio-visual recording of customs as well as the documentation of local dialects is one of the most urgent tasks of securing evidence.

The Transylvanian Saxons have a rich cultural heritage and are at pains to keep up the traditional values and to maintain them creatively. Several cultural institutions and associations have been established in pursuit of this aim, amongst them the Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) based in Munich.

Ewalt Zweyer



Restoration work on fortified churches in Transylvania

Transylvania as a cultural landscape is increasingly attracting attention from beyond Europe. The interest not only focuses on tourism but also on the extraordinary architectural monuments that were built in areas formerly inhabited by Germans, and above all their fortified churches.

Some of them are now part of the UNESCO World Heritage Programme, others are still awaiting urgent restoration or at least a clean-up. There is no doubt that professional architects involved in the restoration process understand that it offers an opportunity but also entails much responsibility.

As we are dedicated to the preservation of the most important Saxon fortified churches, we were honoured to take part at a specialist conference in London in April 2000 at the invitation of His Royal Highness Prince Charles. The delegation was led by the then Romanian Secretary of Culture, Ion Caramitru, and included the Bishop of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania, D. Dr. Christoph Klein, Hans-Christian Habermann, Chairman of the Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) and the Foundation's entire Council and Board of Directors, furthermore several specialists from Romania and Germany and Councillor Karoline Fernolend from Viscri/Deutsch-Weißkirch who made important contributions.

The discussions centred on our architectural monuments in Transylvania and their preservation, also following my presentation. Prince Charles as patron of this conference pledged his support for Transylvania. He has since paid several private visits to this region and has launched welcome support projects, for example at Sighișoara/Schäßburg, Biertan/Birihälm and Viscri/Deutsch-Weißkirch.

We are very happy to record that apart from the famous Orthodox monasteries in the Bukowina, the Danube Delta and the entire "Citadel" in Sighișoara/Schäßburg, the fortified churches in Prejmer/Tartlau, Biertan/Birihälm, Valea Viilor/Wurmloch and Viscri/Deutsch-Weißkirch as well as Castle Câlnic/Kelling are all under the protection of the World Heritage Programme.

It is of course impossible to restore and maintain all of the approximately 140 fortified churches as they were mostly abandoned by their protestant believers following their emigration. It was and is very difficult to make a selection, but several foreign private sponsors and foundations have generously agreed to support us. Amongst them is the Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) based in Munich. Since 1992 it is deeply involved in the restoration and maintenance of some of these architectural monuments, in close co-operation with the respective Romanian authorities and the Consistory of the Evangelical Church.

We are delighted to report - at the foundation's 25th anniversary - on the lead up to and the detailed work on three monuments: Prejmer/Tartlau, Harman/Honigberg and Biertan/Birthälm.

Prejmer/Tartlau

This community's fortified church is particularly significant for the Transylvanian Saxon history of art and construction. On the one hand, its early gothic church has a central building dating from the presence of the Order of the Teutonic Knights in the Burzenland (1211-1225) and is the first example of early gothic architecture in Transylvania. On the other hand it has a uni-



Some of the 278 escape chambers and pantries of the fortified church Prejmer/Tartlau. Each family within the community had their own chamber.



Prejmer/Tartlau: restoration work in the fortified church's so-called bakery yard

que fortification system amongst the Transylvanian Saxon fortified churches: a massive oval ring with walls as thick as 4,5m and highly fortified gatehouse, barbican und outer ward.

The directorate for the preservation of ancient buildings in Bucharest lead by the architect Mariana Angelescu has carried out extensive restorations between 1962 and 1970. It was trying to apply an analytical concept that aims at the truthful presentation of every single stage of the construction process and architecturally important findings in the final work. This is how we can now see reconstructions and changes that became necessary after numerous destructions.

The most important jobs of this restoration project include: dismantling of the tower



Over 600000 special roof tiles (single lap tiles) were used during the renovation of the roof above the outer curtain, which is 800m long and 5m wide at the base

above the crossing and its restoration after the strengthening of the arch, renovation of the wooden defence corridors and access to the pantries, re-tiling of the roofs, clearing away of debris and repairs on trusses and walls in the inner ward. The decision to dismantle the bell tower above the entrance to the barbican, dating back to the 17th century, cannot be upheld today.

During the restoration over 30 years ago a blind floor and a layer of felt were laid under the batten that carries the roof tiles. This approach prevented the ventilation of the tiles, so that due to the inner curtain's flat sloping roof the tiles remained humid und were eventually destroyed by freezing and defrosting. As the tiles could not be exchanged from within, the roof cladding was in a deplorable state at the beginning of the restoration that was paid by the Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation).





New render and paintwork on the curtain wall in Prejmer/Tartlau

The foundation took over the patronage of the fortified church in Prejmer/Tartlau during a ceremony in March 1992. The original roofing was restored and gutters and downpipes were added to allow the rainwater to drain. The church gutters were installed in a manner that did not obstruct the stone-petal cornice. The pergola leading to the barbican was restored in 1994, the work in the forecourt was finished in 1995 and the keeper's accommodation in the south-westerly part of the barbican was made habitable again in the same year. 1995 also saw the restoration of the roof above the pantries, and the roofs above the bakery yard were restored in 1996.

The inner ward was fitted out with paved rills and sewage pipes for above-mentioned fast drainage of the rainwater. The fortified church was furthermore equipped with modern fire protection and sanitary installations. The damaged plaster was replaced with lime mortar particularly in places where cement was used. The walls in the forecourt and in the external area of the church were whitewashed with lime and the wooden parts were treated with wood protectors. Further restoration was done on the pavement, and maintenance work was carried out lately. The museum within the fortified church was expanded by adding various exhibition items to ten rooms previously used as pantries and

the “Old School”. A draft has been designed for the conversion of the western side of the bakery yard to guest rooms.

Harman/Honigberg

During the restoration of 1975-1978 the land-fill in the court was cleared away and the church was partly uncovered. At that time a bell was found buried to the east of the church and the stone profiles of the western façade were exposed.

The earthquakes of 1977 and 1986 damaged the bell tower and caused numerous cracks in the tower's walls. In 1999 a project was set up

to strengthen the bell tower by building reinforced concrete belts on four levels – corresponding with the cornice – and to tie these belts in the inner tower. The work was carried out in 2000 and 2001. At the same time strengthening work was started on the eastern tower, which depicts gothic murals; the work was supported by the directorate for the preservation of ancient buildings but was never finished due to insufficient funding. The Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) will start the restoration of the foundation stones on the western façade in 2005. The north-westerly buttress is particularly vulnerable due to the weathered stones in the dado. The work on the defence corridor and curtain walls will be continued also in 2005.



*Harman/Honigberg. Prior to the restoration.
The bell tower shows deep cracks and crevices*



Alpinists abseiling from the bell tower's external walls in Harman/Honigberg and survey the damage

The church tower with scaffolding

Tower and clockface of the clock tower were permanently and beautifully restored



Staircases and banisters in front of the escape chambers and pantries in Harman/Honigberg had to be replaced with authentic replica. Linden tree soaked in linseed oil was used.

Biertan/Birthälm

The fortified church in Biertan/Birthälm is one of the most representative architectural monuments of its kind and is today part of the UNESCO World Heritage. The earthquake of 1977 that led to the detaching of the arch brickwork made restoration and maintenance work indispensable and the project started in 1979.

Following tasks were carried out: strengthening of the choir archway by dismantling and rebuilding, fastening of the spines of the late-gothic archway, renewal of the windows with rondels and uncovering of the murals that led to a new polychrome concept in the interior. Apart from geometrical ornaments, inter-

esting inscriptions were also uncovered dating back to the time the church was built (1500-1522). Repairs were carried out on the roof cladding and the choir truss and the church's external paintwork was renewed.

The inner curtain with the Catholic tower, the gate tower and the mausoleum tower was restored following the work on the church. The exterior walls and the walls of the outer ward were restored next, and finally the exterior gate tower.

Following the change of the political system in 1989 the building that housed the nursery was converted to a guesthouse with bedrooms (two to four beds) with washrooms and youth dormitories.

The restoration of the site received the Europa-Nostra-Prize in 1991, and in 1993 the fortified church and the small town of Birtihalm were added to the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Restorations between 1979 and 1991 had to be carried out with little money, which was mostly provided by the community so that the stone foundation could not be renewed; it has earlier been largely replaced with a concrete profile.

The Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation), together with the World Monuments Fund, is planning to restore this dado in 2004, i.e. removing the cement profile and the plaster and replacing it with natural stone profile and to plaster the surface with lime mortar. The approved project also allows for the improvement of the churchyard' drainage with cobblestones. Further restoration work is planned on the Catholic tower's murals and its roof and staircase.



Biertan/Birtihalm with its impressive fortified church was protestant bishopric for nearly 300 years



A magnificent reticulated vaulting and the precious 500 year old winged altar decorate the church hall in Biertan/Birthälm



Cutting of stones from Sânzieni (Harghita district) for the church's foundations



The weathered foundations were removed in the spring of 2004 and replaced with new stones

During the winter of 2003/4 the work on the approximately 200m long foundation stone profile will be carried out. The weatherproof natural stone comes from a village in the Harghita district, and the stonemasonry will be carried out by the workshop of the roman-catholic bishopric in Alba Iulia/Karlsburg.

foundation will continue allocating its funds to areas that are vital for the preservation of Transylvania's cultural landscape. It could for example take on a patronage of the fortified church in Miercurea/Reußmarkt, and for that we would like to thank the decision makers in advance.

We hope that following the successful conclusion of the joint project with the WMF the

Dr. Hermann Fabini, architect



“We want to stay what we are”

“We want to stay what we are” – the commitment to this motto runs like a thread through all the activities, projects and plans of the Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) from its formation in August 1979 to this day, 25 years later.

The revolutionary changes in December 1989 in Romania and the following mass emigration of Transylvanian Saxons to Germany somewhat shifted the focus of the foundation's activities. The problems relating to the preservation of cultural treasures have taken

on a new dimension. Documenting and saving the Transylvanian Saxon cultural treasures in Romania that often are abandoned or in danger of being deserted had to become priority; we would otherwise risk losing invaluable treasures for ever. Our foundation has from the start consistently and enthusiastically followed a path to ensure the protection of the exceptional testimony of Transylvanian Saxon culture. In view of the fact that our culture created a strong community spirit and forged a common identity, the representatives of our foundation were keen to start working on projects across the border in 1990. The foundation's financial resources didn't allow for the clean up and restoration of every single church and fortified church. It is important though to save the most characteristic examples of our ethnic identity and cultural tradition from decline. Of the approximately 14000 historical buildings constructed by Transylvanian Saxons, the 140 fortified churches form a worldwide unique group of monuments.

The Paris-based United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO, adopted an international treaty in 1972 concerning the protection of world cultural heritage. Looking at UNESCO's list of 730 cultural and natural heritage sites one is taken through history of mankind from its origin to the masterpieces of modern times. The ruins of Greek Olympia, Venice and its Laguna, the Egyptian pyramids or the histori-



An aid convoy arriving in Chirpar/Kirchberg



After the ceremony to present the decoration. Romanian President Ion Iliescu is talking to Hans-Christian Habermann (January 2004)

genius and as world heritage have to be protected from wars and other catastrophic events, from neglect and decline.

Delegates at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies in 1982 agreed on *"the need for cultural policies that will protect, stimulate and enrich each people's identity and cultural heritage. The neglect or destruction of the culture of any group is a loss to mankind as a whole."*

In view of this responsibility Romania and the Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung

cal centre of Rome - they all carry the glorious World Heritage title. It is awarded by UNESCO to cultural treasures of outstanding universal value following stringent selection criteria.

The fortified church in Prejmer/Tartlau, which was renovated with funds from the Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) and is looked after by the foundation, is on this list. Also on this list is the fortified church in Biertan/Birihälm, where the foundation launched the restoration work in 2003 in co-operation with the World Monuments Fund.

According to UNESCO these fortified churches are unique masterpieces of human creative



Group photo with prominent people from Transylvania on the occasion of the ceremony to present the decoration.

From left to right: Senator Dr. Hermann Fabini, Dr. Anneli Ute Gabanyi – she received a decoration on the same occasion -, Klaus Johannis, Chairman of the Democratic Forum of the Germans in Romania (DFGR), Mayor of Sibiu/Hermannstadt, Dr. Beatrix Habermann, Dip. Eng., Hans-Christian Habermann, Prof. Dr. Paul Philippi, Honorary Chairman of the DFGR, Carmen Johannis, Ortwin Schuster, Deputy Chairman of the Foundation's Council

(Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) ratified a "Protocol on the improvement of cultural co-operation" under international law on October 10th 1997. The bilateral co-operation is blossoming and in January 2004 President Ion Iliescu awarded the foundation's chairman, Hans-Christian Habermann, Dip. Eng., a prestigious cultural medal acknowledging his personal achievements.



What in Prejmer/Tartlau no more will be possible: Reverend Johann Orendi with his choir of the community in summer 1991

Our little Saxon "nation" has become even smaller and

older and carries a heavy load on its frail shoulders. Nevertheless, as a community in the true Saxon tradition, we do not depend primarily on size, legal status or materialistic resources, but above all on the knowledge of our historical and cultural foundations and everybody's willingness to live by it now and to pass it down in the future.

But, to say it with St Matthew's Gospel: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" (chapter nine, verse 37).

Should the few Transylvanian Saxons living in the homeland be left alone to carry the burden of their fathers' legacy, looking after graveyards, maintaining churches and castles? It remains our duty to assist and support them in their huge tasks.

Those of us who live in prosperity would like to help the Saxons living in Transylvania.

They just are torn between duties and

demands and are no longer in control of their time; they hurry from one task to the next. We have to help them build a new livelihood and together we have to continue the traditional role of Germans in Romania and act as intermediaries.

In the words of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: "Don't predict the future, strive to make it possible." We not only want to make history but also shape the future. With this in mind:

**If you love Transylvania,
please give!**

Foundations have sometimes been called "pia causa", "agreeable to God" in previous legal and moral value systems and thus making them particularly respected and protected.

The Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation) was set up



The Bach Choir from Sibiu/Hermannstadt toured through Germany in July 2003 and was largely sponsored by the foundation. Picture taken at the concert in the Christ Church, Munich.

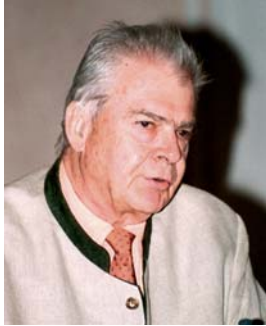
on 31st August 1979 for “everlasting duration” and it has been a tireless trustee of Transylvanian interests for the last 25 years. Many fellow countrymen have supported the foundation’s activities with donations, legacies and entire estates. Without this financial help some tasks could not have been implemented. First-time and returning donors can make financial contributions within a secure legal framework knowing that they help protect Transylvanian traditions and customs and ultimately our home. They can rest assured

that their personality and will continues to be reflected in the foundation’s activities.

With your help we can stay true to our motto to stay what we are, but not necessarily how we are. To quote Bishop Christoph Klein: *“Only if we change how we are can we stay what we are.”*

Prof. Univ. asoc. Ortwin Schuster
Deputy Chairman of the Foundation’s Council

Honorary in Charge of the Foundation



Dip.Eng. Hans-Christian Habermann
Chairman of the
Foundation's Council
(since january 1997)

Member of the
Foundation's Council
since february 1988



D.Dr. Christoph Klein
Bishop of the Evangelical
Church of the Augsburg
Confession in Romania

Member of the
Foundation's Council
since september 2000



Prof. Ortwin Schuster
Vice President of the
Foundation's Council

Member of the
Foundation's Council
since november 1991

As managers were elected in december 2001:
Hans-Joachim Acker and Detlef G. Barthmes

During the 25 years the Foundation's Council was composed by following members:

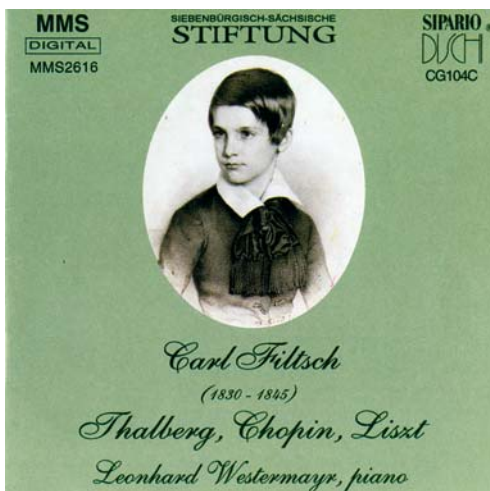
Ernst Habermann	as chairman from 1979 to 1986
Roland Gunne	from 1979 to december 1989 (since september 1986 as chairman)
Dr. Ernst Wagner	from 1979 to december 1989
Dip.Eng. Konrad Phleps	from 1985 to march 1996
Dr. Günter von Hochmeister	from december 1989 to december 1996 as chairman, after that as member till december 2001
Dr. Jost Linkner	from 1989 to 1997
Dr. Horst Haldenwang	from march 1996 to 1998
Reverend Johann Orendi	from march 1996 to 1997

In the management were elected:

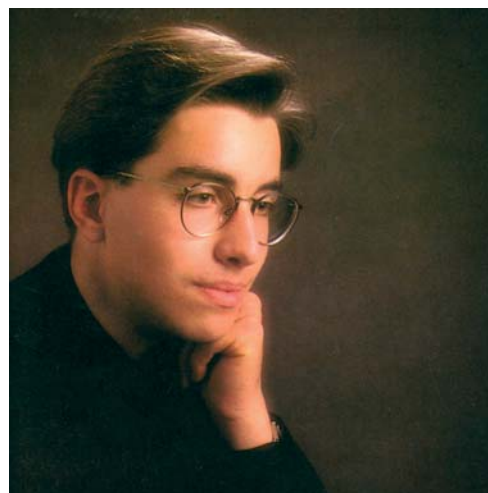
Balduin Herter	from 1979 to 1983
Hans Martin Andree	from november 1983 to august 1984
Dr. Günter von Hochmeister	from november 1984 to december 1989
Ernst Bruckner	from december 1989 to december 2001



Our activity illustrated by some pictures



In 1994 and 1995 concerts were held to honour the rediscovered musical child prodigy Carl Filtsch (Chopin's favourite pupil in Paris), after which an annual competition for young performers has been held in Sibiu/Hermannstadt. The foundation sponsors this competition as well as writings and recordings.



Leonhard Westermayr (Lenggries, Bavaria), the best interpreter of Filtsch-compositions, received the Ernst-Habermann-Prize



Dr. Günther von Hochmeister, Chairman of the Foundation's Council, presents Dr. Brigitte Lingner the Ernst-Habermann-Prize in Dinkelsbühl at Pentecost 1995



Double loom from Gârbova/Urwegen exhibited in one of the escape chambers and pantries in the fortified church of Prejmer/Tartlau



Girl's costume from Burzenland in the museum of the fortified church in Tartlau



Saxon parlour in the fortified church in Prejmer/Tartlau. The painted furniture comes from Gârbova/Urwegen and from the Rupea/Reps region

Many thanks for your help!

One of the main tasks of the Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung (Transylvanian Saxon Foundation), apart from its social responsibilities such as scholarships and supporting those in need, is to preserve the Transylvanian cultural heritage that is threatened with disappearance.

- You have a heart for Transylvania, whether it's your old home or not
- You know that Transylvanian cultural heritage is part of the German, and European, cultural heritage
- You are convinced that it needs to be saved and preserved
- You also know that any contribution to the foundation serves your interests twofold – culturally as well as financially
- If you make a donation or a further donation you can save taxes and rest assured that the money would be spent on a good cause.

We would therefore kindly ask you to:

Please help with a tax-deductible donation or further donation to keep Transylvanian cultural heritage alive!

We are very grateful for your contribution.

**Siebenbürgisch-Sächsische Stiftung
Widenmayerstraße 34
D - 80538 München**

Please find below the foundation's bank details:

**Deutsche Bank Munic
Sort code: 700 700 10
Account number: 330390600**