Religios şi non-religios în cultura materială a abaţiei Bizere (Frumuşeni, jud. Arad). Obiecte din bronz (I)

Abstract:

Various artifacts belonging to the former Benedictine abbey in Bizere were recovered during archaeological excavations in 1981 and from 2001 to 2009.The present study focuses on few of such items. The first analyzed piece is a partially preserved bronze piece in the shape of a dragon's or a snake's head, broken off from the body at some point. Several comparable Western European pieces suggest that the fragment might belong to the upper end of a crosier, and enable a partial graphic reconstruction. Given that the item was found in an abbey complex, it was arguably an abbatial crosier. Stylistically Romanesque, it may be dated sometime before the thirteenth century and thereby be considered the oldest abbatial crosier known so far from the territory of present-day Romania. The second object, from which two pieces were found, is the foot of a large pot. It is an exception among the series of similar pots discovered until now. A reconstruction, typological classification and a study of its functionality will be discussed. The last one is a fragmentary casting negative for producing stellate mace heads. This find is the only one piece of this type in our area. Its presence in a monastery reveals a type of weapon production that has no connection with the nature of the monastic establishment, which we archaeologically researched. Such examples of artifacts contribute to the reconstruction of the larger picture of religious and secular life of Bizere monastery and offers clues to some geographically distant connections for the technical achievements of this place.

Keywords: *Benedictine abbey, medieval bronze artifacts, abbatial crosier, bronze pot, stellate mace heads.*