

Reconstructing a monastic landscape: the case of Cârța (Kerc, Kerz) Abbey

Abstract:

The study deals with the reconstruction of a monastic landscape of the easternmost Cistercian abbey in Europe, which is located today in central Romania, in the region called the Land of Făgăraș, which during the Middle Ages belonged to the border region of Transylvania of the Hungarian Kingdom. The research synthesizes the data from written sources, cartographic and archaeological data, as well as the results of non-invasive surveys, such as a geophysical survey, and extensive field walking. Results unveiled the existence of an elaborate water system (including traces of stream regulation, water channels, ditches, a mill site, and at least one fishpond), which was most probably developed and used by the Cistercian monks during different periods of time. Since the monastic buildings were situated in the floodplain of the Olt River and rich mountain streams ran through the area the water had to be regulated, controlled, and drained. The exact dating of the landscape features could not be carried out because these features were destroyed in 2014 by the establishment of a fishery.

Keywords: -