
A new bronze phalera from Dragu (Sălaj County, Romania)

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Abstract

The present study aims to present a new bronze phalera, discovered on the surface of the Roman settlement at Dragu (Sălaj county). The phalera is part of a cavalry outfit, its dating being early, at the beginning of the 2nd century AD, probably immediately after the Roman conquest. The piece is an exception, very early for this environment, having a direct analogy with the phalera of the same type from Sarmizegetusa Regia.

Keywords

Roman phalera, rural settlement, cavalry, Dragu.

O nouă phalera romană din bronz de la Dragu (jud. Sălaj, România)

Rezumat

Studiul de față își propune prezentarea unei noi phalera din bronz, descoperită pe suprafața așezării romane de la Dragu (jud. Sălaj). Phalera face parte dintr-o garnitură de cavalerist, datarea ei fiind una timpurie, la începutul secolului al II-lea AD, probabil imediat după cucerirea romană. Piesa este una de excepție, foarte timpurie pentru acest mediu, având analogie directă cu phalera de același tip de la Sarmizegetusa Regia.

Cuvinte cheie

Phalera romană, așezare rurală, cavalerie, Dragu.

The findspot.

The Roman rural settlement at Dragu – *Dealul Blidarului* (Sălaj County).

Located in a rather isolated area of Sălaj County, the village of Dragu (Drág) has attracted the attention of archaeologists since the 19th century, due to the concentration of surface archaeological discoveries, ranging from the Neolithic to the Roman period.¹ What particularly interests us in this study is the fact that, among the multitude of discoveries, those that can be assigned to the Roman era are also numerous, their concentration being extremely high for an area like that of Dragu village.

In order to contextualize the mentioned rural settlement, as well as to later understand its wider context, we briefly review the findspots with Roman discoveries on the territory of this locality:

1. **Dragu – *La Bulbuc***. The multi-phase settlement is located 3 km northwest of the center of the village, on a wide plateau. The potsherds discovered here in the last decades are indicating the presence of the Neo-Eneolithic communities (Coțofeni), Bronze Age (Wietenberg/Noua), and Roman period.²
2. **Dragu – *Țibenea/Dâmbul Țibeniei***. The site is located 50 m south of Dragului valley, on the elongated plateau near the edge of the forest,³ totaling around 23 hectares (according to the spatial extension of the Roman ceramics from the surface. This is the place where a rear wall of a family aedicula was discovered on the surface of the site, during agricultural work, currently stored at the Zalău County Museum of History and Art.⁴
3. **Dragu – *Dealul Podurilor***. The only available date is an older mention of a Mithraic relief.⁵
4. **Dragu – *Zăpodea de Piatră***. Having the same indications of a precarious location, the site entered the specialized literature as being located 1 km north of the village, the presence of Roman ceramics and a statuette representing an eagle (Jupiter?) being reported.⁶
5. **Dragu – *Pusta Mică***. This point appears most often mentioned in specialized publications, the discoveries on its surface being quite numerous and varied. It is

1 See the list of discoveries in Luca, Gudea 2010, pp. 72–75 with the mentioned references.

2 Marțian 1909, p. 328, nr. 161; Roska 1942, p. 69, nr. 66; Tudor 1968, p. 234; Lakó 1981, p. 53; Lakó 1983, p. 75; Bejinariu 2001, p. 104; Bejinariu 2003, p. 67; Bejinariu 2005, p. 63; Kacsó 2003, p. 136; Luca, Gudea 2010, p. 72.

3 Matei, Lakó 1979, p. 125, nr. 14; Gudea 2008, p. 76, nr. 16; Luca, Gudea 2010, p. 74.

4 Bajusz 2004, p. 369, fig. 4; Balaci-Crânguș, Matei 2008, pp. 143–152, Pl. I. Inv. No: CC.3/1978.

5 Roska 1942, p. 69; Gudea 2008, p. 76; Luca, Gudea 2010, p. 74; see especially the extended study of Szabó 2012, pp. 135–143 with bibliography.

6 Neigebauer 1851, p. 234; Finály 1904, pp. 245–246; Tudor 1968, p. 235; Matei, Lakó 1979, p. 125, nr. 14; Gudea 2008, p. 76, nr. 16; Luca, Gudea 2010, p. 75.