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I

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Not lost only transformed

New data on three Roman coin hoards from Brigetio

Tamás FEHÉR

The paper provides additional information about three coin hoards found in Brigetio (Komárom-Szöny, Hungary) between 1925 and 1930. They were probably buried around AD 167, 252 and 375. The hoards were collected by Ödön Kállay, the notary of Szöny, but he left the publication to Aladár Radnóti and László Barkóczy, although containing some shortages. These were thought to have been lost during WWII, but fortunately, not all is lost. Traces of the first two hoards can be found in Kuny Domokos Museum in Tata.

Between the two World Wars two Roman silver coin hoards were unearthed in the civil town (municipium/colonia) of ancient Brigetio, today's Komárom-Szöny in Hungary. Until recent times very little information was available about the exact composition of the finds, the place where the coins were kept was also unknown, even the fact was uncertain if any piece survived until now.

The fate of both hoards has been linked to each other from the very beginning. In this respect, Ödön Kállay (1879-1960), former notary of Szöny, had an important role who used to be the owner of the greatest private collection of Roman objects found and preserved in Hungary. As an 'inhabitant of Brigetio' he was close to ancient finds coming to light day by day and being a bachelor, he spent all his free time and money on expanding his collection and educating himself in archaeology. In the 1920's he was entrusted by the city of Komárom to purchase ancient artefacts found in Brigetio for the purpose of a new museum, since the old one was in the northern part of the city, across the Danube, transferred to and remaining under Czechoslovakian administration as a result of the Peace Treaty of Trianon in 1920.¹

The settlements between Kállay and the city have been preserved showing line by line what objects were bought by the collector with the money provided by the city. Therefore, from this moment on, there were two collections growing next to each other but with separate ownership: Kállay's own collection and the one of Komárom, both under Kállay's supervision.

And now for the topic of this article, from the settlements this is clear that Kállay bought three

363	Zárt érmelelet. Kállay féle I & II szá- radí donátuslelet	198	160
364	Zárt érmelelet. Petrus és Páulus III. századi antoninianus lelet	503	400
365	Zárt érmelelet. ősegek és püspökök II szá- radí szoborlelet	973	800

Fig. 1. The three hoards listed in a 1934 inventory (Kállay-Lenhardt Heritage, Dunaalmás).

¹ This 'old' museum is currently called Duna Menti Múzeum, in Komárno, Slovakia (Podunajské múzeum v Komárne in Slovak). The foundation of a new museum was probably postponed for a while in 1938, since as a result of the First Vienna Arbitrage, the northern part of the city along with the museum was returned to Hungary. (After WWII the decision of the arbitrage was annulled.)

coin hoards for the new museum of Komárom: a denarius hoard (198 pieces) found on the land of Antal Hajósy in 1925, another one consisting of 508 antoniniani found in 1930 on the land of Jenő Petrovics and a third one discussed later in this article.²

When writing one of my former papers published in the 2009–2010 volume of *Numizmatikai Közlöny*³ I noticed some Roman silver coins listed in the volume III of *Füfundmünzen der Römischen Zeit in Ungarn*⁴ with the inventory numbers of the Kuny Domokos Museum in Tata (KDM). where several items were marked with 'PB' meaning that those ones were already in private collection at the time of the publication. This list was quite similar to the information available about the hoards found in 1925 and 1930.⁵ Finally, it became obvious to me that this numismatic material, which was kept in a box in the museum, should be identical to the surviving pieces of the two silver coin hoards found before WW II and were totally mixed up after getting to Tata.

This is where the investigation got stuck. It was clear that later the coins had been taken to Tata and a big part was still in the museum and in a private collection but where are the missing ones?

To learn more, it is essential to know that although due to different reasons both Kállay's own collection (except for his Roman coins, which were gifted to his nephew) and the collection of the new museum of Komárom were taken to Tata after WWII.

Regarding the collection of Komárom including the two coin hoards the head of the Department of Archaeology of the Hungarian National Museum wrote to the Mayor of Komárom in 1946 as follows: *'...I ask the Mayor to deposit these objects (i.e. the ones bought by Kállay for the city) in the Hungarian National Museum until the city of Komárom sets up a museum or an exhibition. The collection in question is currently kept safely in the basement of the town hall of Komárom along with Kállay's (own) collection.'* In his response the Mayor was willing to put the material in temporary deposit with the following condition: *'Naturally, once I am able to find an appropriate place in Komárom and the professional custody and handling can be ensured, I ask an immediate refund of the material owned by the city.'*⁶

The last report about the coins is from 10th August 1951 when an inventory was prepared in Komárom. At this moment all coins were still available, more than 700 pieces. They were probably taken to Tata afterwards where the closest museum to Komárom was located at the time. After many years of disappearance, we could see them again, at least virtually, in the FMRU, however, only 360 pieces, several items in private collection already. What happened in the meantime?

It was already probable when writing my article referred to above that the items marked with 'PB' (Privatbesitz – private collection) were received by collector István Rolkó as a result with an exchange with the museum of Tata. Several collectors and numismatist have memories about the deal around 1990 when Mr. Rolkó gave a pretorian diploma to the museum,⁷ in

2 Both the Hajósy and the Petrovics grounds are located along the limes road (Primary main road nr. 1 nowadays).

3 FEHÉR 2009–2010.

4 FMRU III 299–305. Coins are listed under the title 'Sammlung von Kállay' (Kállay collection), however, this is incorrect since Kállay's coins did not get to Tata (unlike to the rest of his collection) but were donated to his nephew.

5 RADNÓTI 1945–1946 and BARKÓCZI 1951, 16. In the FMRU the hoard is also listed based on Radnóti's publication (page 213), this is therefore a duplication, in addition, the FMRU inaccurately cites the number of pieces and incorrectly claims that the find later got to the nephew, Gy. Lenhardt.

6 MNL KEML Archive of Komárom, documents no. 22/1946 and 3232/1946, cited by SZÁMADÓ 2007, 5–6.

7 Translated by the author. It should be identical to a diploma published by Sándor Petényi (PETÉNYI 1997). In the first footnote it is noted that it was given by Mr. Rolkó to the museum.

return he could choose ca. 200 pieces of silver coins, probably from the two hoards at hand. These coins of Mr. Rolkó, at least those still in his possession were described by the authors of FMRU (Vera Lányi and Miklós Bakos, unfortunately both have passed away already).

In the meantime, new information came up about the potential route of the other elements of the hoards. Another collector Balázs Mészáros also made an exchange deal with the museum in Tata, however, since he did not collect Roman coins, they were sold to collectors in Esztergom and Budapest in the early 80's. Fortunately, two former buyers could recall what they had bought and could give partial descriptions especially about the reverses. In addition, there are photos of two items since several years later they were auctioned in Budapest.⁸



Fig. 2. A Lucius Verus RIC 463 denarius from the hoard auctioned in Budapest a few years ago.

Piece	Ruler	Reverse	Source
1–101.	Nero – M. Aurelius	(KDM and ex Rolkó collection)	FMRU III 1–95.
102.	Antoninus Pius	AVRELIVS CAESAR AVG PII F COS	B. Mészáros private collection (pc)
103.	Antoninus Pius	elephant	B. Mészáros pc.
104.	Antoninus Pius	TEMPLVM DIV AVG REST	B. Mészáros pc.
105.	Divus Antoninus Pius	CONSECRATIO (pyre)	B. Mészáros pc.
106.	Faustina (sen./iun.?)	CERES	B. Mészáros pc.
107.	Faustina (sen./iun.?)	IVNO REGINA	B. Mészáros pc.
108.	Diva Faustina	AETERNITAS (veil)	B. Mészáros pc.
109–110.	Faustina iunior	SAECVLI FELICITAS (2 pcs)	B. Mészáros pc.
111.	Faustina iunior	CONCORDIA	B. Mészáros pc.
112.	Marcus Aurelius	Armenia (..TR P XVIII/XIX?..)	B. Mészáros pc.
113.	Marcus Aurelius	CONCORD AVG TR P XVI	Auction in Budapest
114.	Lucius Verus	PROVID DEOR TR P COS II	Auction in Budapest
115.	Lucius Verus	TR P V IMP III COS II (Parthian captive)	B. Mészáros pc.
115–198.	Probably A. Pius, M. Aurelius and family members		B. Mészáros pc.

⁸ The auction details are not provided here, since it was requested by the auctioner (although the origin of these coins was not illegal at all.)

The reconstruction of the two hoards is difficult not only due to the lack of information, but also due to the miscalculations in the publications.

According to László Barkóczi the denarius find consisted of 177 coins (beside 40-50 lost pieces). However, if we add the subtotals by rulers, the total number is 125 only. He also wrote that 133 went to the collection of Komárom, whilst 44 to Kállay. On the contrary, all settlements between Komárom and Kállay during two decades mentioned 198 pieces showing Komárom as the sole owner.

It seems the coin closing the hoard has been preserved in Tata (a Marcus Aurelius denarius minted in 166–167 with TR POT XXI IMP IIII COS III reverse legend which should be identical to item nr. 79 in the FMRU) This was the moment when, as a result of the Marcomannic wars, Brigetio and later Pannonia was invaded.

The settlements always show 508 antoniniani whilst Aladár Radnóti only mentioned 503 pieces in his publication. Since he also gives subtotals by rulers and the total is 508 pieces, I think this is the right number. A supporting fact is that in the 1944 inventory 508 is overwritten by 503, this means that 5 pieces had disappeared somehow between 1934 and 1944. Radnóti determined by type only those coins which were relevant for his article, namely all Trebonianus Gallus, Volusian and DIVVS specimens. Those still being in the museum of Tata or getting into the former Rolkó collection can be seen in the first row of the table below. The closing date is around 251–252, there are other finds with similar closure in Pannonia.⁹

There are some mathematical difficulties left though. Gallus has 82 items according to Radnóti's summary, however, once we summarise the subtotal by type there are only 55 coins from Gallus, no news about the remaining 27 pieces. Compared to the original numbers, all Gallus type are represented with much fewer specimens in the museum currently, except for the PAX AETERNA reverse which should have been 3 pieces originally and today there are 14. We can assume that this is not about a miraculous multiplication, but this is a typo and these 3 were rather 23, but definitely more than 14 pieces left today (I assumed 23 in the below table):

Piece	Ruler	Reverse	Source
1–259.	I. Domna – Volusian	(KDM and ex Rolkó collection)	FMRU III 96–256.
260.	Traianus Decius	PANNONIAE	B. Mészáros pc.
261.	Herennia Etruscilla	PVDICITIA (?)	B. Mészáros pc.
262–271.	Divus-sorozat	CONSECRATIO eagle/altar	RADNÓTI 1945–46, 10.
272–292.	Trebonianus Gallus	IVNO MARTIALIS	RADNÓTI 1945–46, 7.
293–295.	Trebonianus Gallus	LIBERTAS PVBLICA	RADNÓTI 1945–46, 7.
296–318.	Trebonianus Gallus	PAX AETERNA	RADNÓTI 1945–46, 7.
319–321.	Trebonianus Gallus	PIETAS AVGG (Cohen 88.)	RADNÓTI 1945–46, 7.
322.	Trebonianus Gallus	LIBERTAS AVGG	RADNÓTI 1945–46, 7.
323–324.	Trebonianus Gallus	VIRTVS AVGG	RADNÓTI 1945–46, 7.
325–330.	Volusian	FELICITAS PVBL	RADNÓTI 1945–46, 7.
331–334.	Volusian	VIRTVS AVGG	RADNÓTI 1945–46, 7.
335–508.	I. Domna – Hostilian	?	RADNÓTI 1945–46, 6.

⁹ RADNÓTI 1945–1946, 8.

To ease the digestion of this quite complicated story, here is an overview on the collections concerned:

1. Collection of Komárom including the two silver hoards (Deposited in the museum of Tata)
2. Kállay's collection with no numismatic material (Bought and owned by the museum of Tata)
3. Kállay's own coin collection probably containing 381 pcs from the third hoard (Donated by Kállay to his nephew, Gy. Lenhardt and sold in the 70's, dispersed by now)

What is the story behind these facts therefore? 1950's were turbulent times in Hungary, many collections were nationalised or seized from aristocratic families and/or from churches and these all ended up in local museums, which were far from ready to properly handle this tsunami of antiquities. I do think that the collection of Komárom and Kállay's collection were mixed up in the early 50's in Tata since both materials were linked to Brigetio and to Kállay even if the ownership was different. It seems it was not realised in the museum of Tata that they were not facing with a collector's mixed material but two coin hoards. Accordingly, they did exchange deals through the silver coins in good faith in the 80's and 90's.

Unfortunately, four additional pieces were lost since the publication of the FMRU: the antoniniani with inventory numbers 90.1.110 – 90.1.113 were already missing in the inventory taken in 2009.

I hereby express my gratitude to two private collectors for providing information about coins, which used to be in their possession and to the members of the Antique Numismatic Group of the Hungarian Numismatic Association helping me with comments and remarks.

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