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Coin finds in the Măderat village area (Pâncota, Arad County)

Andrei Baltag, Alexandru Berzovan

Abstract: This study aims to discuss the four medieval coins discovered by chance in the boundary of Măderat commune. Three belong to the Kingdom of Hungary: a quarring of Zsigmond Luxemburgi, a denar of Ulászló I and a denar of Hunyadi Mátyás. One piece, a denar of Ferdinand I, belongs to the Holy Roman Empire. Even if the discussed pieces are simple stray finds, they mirror the preponderant Hungarian coin issues dominating the coinage circulation in the Transylvanian-Banat area during the 15th–16th centuries.

Keywords: coin finds; stray finds; medieval numismatics; the Kingdom of Hungary; the Holy Roman Empire.

The Collection of the Numismatic Cabinet with the Archaeology Institute of Iași has been recently enriched by four novel coin finds from the region of Măderat village, under the administration of Pâncota town (Arad County). Even though the initiative to valorise the present material is not circumscribed to a chronicle of coin finds from the intra-Carpathian area, we believe that the introduction of these pieces in the academic literature circuit is useful. Until recently, the Transylvanian historiography compiled remarkable scientific contributions by which important registers of numismatic material have been published. Whether we refer to ancient, byzantine or medieval finds, most of these studies materialized in references, under the aegis of E. Chirilă and F. Pap (with works signed as single authors or together with various collaborators). They have the merit of drawing up synthesis studies on the monetary circulation phenomenon¹ and vast numismatic repertoires with finds from private collections or preserved under the custody of museums from Transylvania².

The four coins we recorded are stray finds, recovered by chance, un-correlated to an archaeological context. They were presented to us for scientific valuation by a village native, who wished to remain anonymous. According to his declarations, the coins were discovered in the village's southern area, more specifically, on the north-western slopes of Cioaca Măderatului Hill (340 m), on the eastern slope of Zopița Valley, where in the forested area are still visible the traces of old vineyard terraces, existing there in the 18th Century (Fig. 1/1–2). The pieces were discovered separately, at different time intervals. We also add that by the northern feet of the Moldoveni Hill, a crest detached peak from Cioaca Măderatului Hill, at about one kilometre from the area mentioned by the finder, there is a medieval date settlement, which we identified during a field survey conducted in 2010. On the occasion of other investigations, between 2011 and 2015, in the village centre, namely the gardens of the local inhabitants, we identified several cluster areas of 14th–17th centuries potshards, indicative of rather extensive habitation, in line with documentary data³.

As a whole, the lot we present here is relatively homogenous in terms of the original monetary space, with three coins of the Kingdom of Hungary (Cat. no. 1–3, Fig. 2/1–3) and only one of the Holy Roman Empire (Cat. no. 4, Fig. 2/4), where since 1526, the monetary law became the prerogative of the Austrian Habsburgs on the throne of Hungary. For this reason, the division of the pieces in two distinctive groups may seem arbitrary in the catalogue structure, however, it complies with the events of the period, which place coinage realities between “spaces and state reasons”⁴. The coin species included in the discussion here are of low nominal value, the lot being composed of three denars (Cat. no. 2–4, Fig. 2/2–3) and one quarring (Cat. no. 1, Fig. 2/1).

¹ Pap 1984, 543–549; Pap 1987–1988, 623–629; Pap 1989–1993, 65–83, etc.

² Pap 2002; Chirilă *et al.* 1980, 44–80, etc.

³ For the documentary attestations of the village, referred to as *Megyeror Boros-Megyer* in medieval sources, see Márki 1892, 240.

⁴ The methodological model initiated by the Iași based scholar, V. M. Butnariu. See Butnariu 1997, 157–172.

The oldest piece studied is a quarding (Cat. no. 1, Fig. 2/1), a rather rare denomination among Transylvanian Banat finds⁵. So far, the presence of quardings has been reported securely only in the composition of a few hoards, like for instance those of Sebeş, Alba county (480^{6±} 2 exemplars⁷) and Vârghiş, Covasna county (53 exemplars)⁸. Concurrently, another important find comes from the former north-west area of the Kingdom territories, in the vicinity of Šurany town, Slovakia (2.894 exemplars)⁹.

The quarding¹⁰ of Sigismund of Luxembourg, also referred to as *viertling*¹¹ or *fyrting*¹² had a very low division value and was made of silvered copper¹³. It emerged in the context of a monetary reform agenda carefully instrumented by the Sigismund policy¹⁴. The representative of the House of Luxembourg sought to complete the changes initiated by the Angevin King, Charles Robert (1308–1342), by the 1405 decree, when coinage production became the exclusive right of royalty¹⁵. From this view, the monarch issued an act in 1427, by which condemned and prohibited the use of false denars, anomic phenomenon that fully impacted the monetary market of the time¹⁶. In other words, the royalty orders were a direct reply to the monetary anarchy generated by the instability of struggles between the existing political factions¹⁷.

Concurrently, the ducat was put into circulation, but very shortly, by the reform of March 6th, 1430, this denomination was replaced by *moneta maior* (large denar) and *moneta minor* (quarding)¹⁸. If at the start, the par of exchange between a denar and a quarding was 1:4, the 1430–1437 successive depreciations diminished the value ratio, to 1:10¹⁹. Until now, it is believed that the evolution of this currency type may be broken down into three successive phases: 1430–1432; 1432–1435 and 1435–1437²⁰. Each new phase would represent the transition from one devaluation to another, appreciation strictly dependant on the weight variations of several pieces²¹. For the lack of metallographic indicators, the quarding here, issued in the name of Buda city, nears the average weight of exemplars struck by this mint, of 0.44 g²². Evidently, the weight difference may be explained by the fact that the coin was either minted until the first depreciation of these issues (1430–1432) or was affected by erosions, chipping or breaks caused over time.

The second coin (Cat. no. 2, Fig. 2/2) chronologically frames during the reign of Vladislaus I in

⁵ A major obstacle in the study of Sigismund coins is the composition uncertainty of most hoards discovered in Banat or nearby Cluj. Most these deposits are either unpublished or were only partially mentioned (Pap 2002, 217, tab. I, no. 7; 9–14; 16–21).

⁶ Muntean 2011, 271–337.

⁷ Dudău, Sonoc 2008, 149–185. The two pieces which we separated, likely belong to the same hoard in the “Ioan Raica” Collection (Muntean 2011, 271–337), preserved still in the heritage of the Brukental National Museum. Both lots were discovered at Sebeş and come from donations of local figures, specific information related to the place and context of the finds being unknown.

⁸ Pap, Bartók 1997, 181–196.

⁹ The find dates to 1981, when in a clay pot covered by two lids a number of 3.035 silver and copper coins were discovered, from the first third of the 15th century. Amongst, it was established that a number of 2.894 coins were quardings of Sigismund (Hunka, Soják 2007, 16).

¹⁰ See Butnariu 2021, 128, *quarding*.

¹¹ CNH 1907, 18.

¹² Pap, Bartók 1997, 181.

¹³ Pap, Bartók 1997, 182.

¹⁴ László 2007, 198.

¹⁵ Pap 2002, 199.

¹⁶ László 2007, 198; Muntean 2011, 272.

¹⁷ This resulted in a significant amount of *private coins*, minted with the permission of the royalty, which circulated in parallel with official issues (Huszár 1979, 93). During the same period are reported forgery activities of coins even in state *officinae*, under the control of minters complicit with the representatives of Hungarian nobility (Gyulai *et al.* 1983, 522).

¹⁸ László 2007, 198.

¹⁹ László 2007, 198.

²⁰ Pap, Bartók 1997, 183.

²¹ Pap, Bartók 1997, 183; Muntean 2011, 281, fig. 6.

²² Briefly mentioning, the average of the quardings sample minted at Buda, in the collection of the “Ioan Raica” Municipal Museum from Sebeş is not 0.41 g (Muntean 2011, 277; 282, fig. 9), but higher by 0.03 g (Muntean 2011, 313, nos. 1252–1261; 334, pl. 6, nos. 1252–1257). Moreover, in the same article, the number of quardings from Buda listed in the catalogue (10 pieces – Muntean 2011, 313, nos. 1252–1261) does not correspond to the diagram of the distribution of denominations by mints (24 coins – Muntean 2011, 276; 280, fig. 4).

Hungary (1440–1444). Similarly, to the first, despite its poor condition, we could note a series of key elements rendered on the coin. Amongst, of particular interest was the coin *logo*, illustrated on the reverse side, the mark of the Veszprém workshop. The first documentary mention of the place dates to June 1st, 1443, when bishop Matthias Gathalóczy of Veszprém awarded several properties in the area to his uncle, Nikolaus (Miklós) Bodó²³.

Until this period, the mint marks system took roots among coin issues, and in most cases, consisted of two letters, symbols or even an association of the two²⁴. Most of the times, the first part of the mark is an abbreviation of the mint name, while the second is the initial of the official's name (referred to as "chamberlain") responsible for coin production²⁵. This monetary custom is confirmed by stamped initials, bearing the surnames or names of great masters from Veszprém: Matthias Gathalóczy, archbishop (W–X)²⁶, Gregorius Bodó, castle governor (W–B²⁷/G²⁸) and Nikolaus Bodó (W–B)²⁹.

Thus, in our case, we notice the first mark, "W" as true indicator of the Veszprém officina³⁰. The second mark remains problematic because its identification is hindered by the coin's condition. Nevertheless, the half of the surviving mark (Cat. no. 2, Fig. 2/4) entitles us to believe that the coin was indeed minted at Veszprém, with the note that future finds of this type of denomination will lead to certain nuancing³¹.

The context in which the workshop operated is related to the necessary inflationist minting during the offensive against the Ottoman raids³². Thus, in that timeframe, the coinage activity of Veszprém (1440–1457) underwent three operation phases. The first (1440–1444) overlapped the reign of Vladislaus I, which ends in the Battle of Varna. In the second phase (1444–1446/1447), the mark of the Veszprém fortress (W) is figured on denars of the *interregnum*³³. As for the third phase (1453–1457), a series of distinct aspects may be noted. According to the chronological restriction based on stylistic criteria and workshop marks versions initiated by Artur Pohl, a number of denars were minted at Veszprém in the name of Hungarian successor, Ladislaus V. Thus, the coins bear the mark of the two minters of Veszprém, in the name of Matthias Gathalóczy³⁴ and Nikolaus (Miklós) Bodó³⁵, figures also recorded by the document of June 1st, 1443³⁶. Therefore, on the basis of documentary and numismatic sources, one may assume that the workshop's entire development was connected with the Bodó – Nikolaus and Gregorius family members – who benefited from the constant support of bishop M. Gathalóczy. However, this remains a hypothesis, which we hope that future coin finds ascribed to the Veszprém fortress citadel would further clarify.

The denar of Matthias Corvinus (Cat. no. 3, Fig. 2/3) was minted at Baia Mare, one of the earliest mints from Transylvania. The beginnings of coin minting from Nagybánya lie in the first half of 14th century, when the monetary activity was initiated by Charles Robert of Anjou, in 1327–1328³⁷. The coin here is in an advanced status of alteration, the module is not fully preserved because of corrosion caused over the course of time. Nonetheless, according to the alloy composition, low finesse degree, iconographic peculiarity and a few small legend fragments, whose reading was possible, the denar dates before the great 1467 monetary reform. Apart from this important chronological reason, the minting authority mark is also visible: Emmerich Szapolyai.

As early as the first reigning years of Matthias I, E. Szapolyai was a close friend of the king, as personal treasurer since 1461³⁸. Later, between 1464–1466, he was appointed Ban of Croatia, Slavonia

²³ Huszár 1964, 199.

²⁴ Újszászi 2007, 70.

²⁵ Újszászi 2007, 70.

²⁶ Pohl 1982, tab. 66, nos. 135–24; tab. 70, nos. 140–8.

²⁷ Pohl 1982, tab. 68, nos. 137–10; tab. 69, nos. 138–4; tab. 77, nos. 145–24.

²⁸ Pohl 1982, tab. 68, nos. 137–13.

²⁹ Pohl 1982, tab. 95, nos. 168B–3.

³⁰ Huszár 1964, 201.

³¹ Huszár 1964, 201.

³² Újszászi 2007, 69.

³³ Huszár 1979, 99, no. 613; Unger 1997, 155, no. 480.

³⁴ Pohl 1982, tab. 95, no. 168B–5.

³⁵ Pohl 1982, tab. 95, no. 168B–3.

³⁶ Huszár 1964, 199.

³⁷ Pohl 1982, 54; Butnariu 1994, 97.

³⁸ Pohl 1982, 55.

and Dalmatia³⁹. It is curious that until 1466, none of his titles tied him to Nagybánya, while the mark here was associated with the Maramureş officina (∩ – ξ)⁴⁰. This could mean that Emmerich Szapolyai exerted a certain type of control over the region, for this reason, a part of his income was supplied by the Transylvanian workshop⁴¹. The official's seal may be traced until 1467, when he was accused of lese-majesty for his involvement in the failed conspiracy against the monarch⁴².

The last and most recent coin in the lot (Cat. no. 4, Fig. 2/4) is an imperial denar issued by the Kremnitz workshop (today Kremnica, Slovakia), the most important mint in Hungary controlled by Habsburgs, where a significant amount of silver coins was struck⁴³. The presence of such denomination in Banat is not surprising. The dissolution of the Kingdom of Hungary in 1526 did not result in marked changes of the coinage system⁴⁴. Old species (ducats, groschen, denars or obols) continued to be minted in Eastern Hungary territories and Transylvania, controlled by John Zápolya, as well as in the possessions past the Danube, property of Ferdinand I of Habsburg⁴⁵.

Lastly, even though the discussed coins are simple stray finds, they mirror the preponderant Hungarian coin issues, dominating the monetary circulation in the Transylvanian-Banat area during the 15th-16th century. Therefore, we hope that the study here modestly completes a sequence of a historical period with substantial numismatic potential.

Catalogue of Coins⁴⁶

The Kingdom of Hungary

Zsigmond Luxemburgi (1387–1437), ¼ denár (quarting)

1. BI; 0.51g; 13 × 12 mm; 3 h; p.p.; broken on edges; minted decentred on the reverse;

Obv. Patriarchal double Cross; B–A

Rv. Open crown

Buda, B–A marks, town issue; 1430 (Unger 1997, p. 144, no. 456.d); 1430–1437 (CNH 1907, Tab. 7, no. 129 var.;

Huszár 1979, p. 95, no. 586; Pohl 1982, Tab. 54, no. 124–14);

Mäderat, 2020; IAI pending inventory listing.

Ulászló I. (1440–1444), denár

2. AE; 0.71g; 16 × 17 mm; 2 h; p.p.; small broken fragments by the edges; minted decentred on the obverse and averse;

Obv. ✠MO[...]JET[...]AI[...]DEI[...]A; the Polish eagle dextra, framed inside a lineal circle

Rv. ☉RE[...]IE[...]JET•CETERERA; split crowned shield, dextra with the Arpad stripes and senestra the Hungarian Patriarchal double Cross. To the right and left sides of the shield, the mint mark: W – S / Z (2)

Veszprém, marks W – S / Z (2); 1442 (Huszár 1979, p. 98, no. 605 var.; Pohl 1982, Tab. 71, no. 141–8; Unger 1997, p. 151, no. 470 var.).

Mäderat, 2020; IAI pending inventory listing.

Hunyadi Mátyás (1458–1490), denár

3. AE; 0.42g; 11 × 13 mm; 1 h; v.p.p.; minted decentred on the obverse and reverse;

Obv. ✠m[...]Th[...]E[...]; the Hunyadi raven dextra framed inside a lineal circle, with ring in beak. To the right and left side of the raven, the mint mark: ∩ – ξ

Rv. [...]E[...]I[...]A[...]; shield with sharp base, split and crowned, dextra with the Arpad stripes and senestra the Hungarian Patriarchal double Cross.

Nagybánya, logos ∩ – ξ, Emmerich Szapolyai, Kammergraf; 1465 (Huszár 1979, p. 112, no. 710; Pohl 1982, Tab. 109, no. 210–10; Unger 1997, p. 178, no. 558.l);

Mäderat, 2020; IAI pending inventory listing.

³⁹ Pohl 1982, 55.

⁴⁰ Pohl 1982, 55; Pohl 1982, Tab. 109, no. 210–10.

⁴¹ Pohl 1982, 55–56.

⁴² Pohl 1982, 56.

⁴³ Pohl 1982, 48–50.

⁴⁴ Toma 2016, 51.

⁴⁵ Toma 2016, 51.

⁴⁶ The following metal abbreviations were used (AE – bronze, BI – billon), metrological data (g – gramme, mm – millimetre, h – axis), condition of coins (v.p.p. – very poorly preserved, p.p. – poorly preserved), and collections (IAI – The Institute of Archaeology Iași).

The Holy Roman Empire

Archduchy of Austria: Kingdom of Hungary

Ferdinand I. (1526–1563), denar

4. AE (fourré); 0.35g; 15 × 13 mm 12 h; p.p.; broken by the edges (towards the obverse, in the exterior); Obv. FERDINAN[...]•G•R•VNG•154Z; shield with curved base, quartered, with the Kingdom of Hungary coat of arms: in the first quarter – the Arpad stripes, in the second – the Hungarian Patriarchal double Cross, in the third quarter – the two leopard heads of Dalmatia, represented from front, in the fourth quarter – the rampant lion of Bohemia. In the middle, the horizontal stripes of the Archduchy of Austria.

Rv. ✱PATROA✱ [...] ✱VNGARIE✱; Crowned Holy Mother of Christ, seated and holding baby Jesus on the left arm. To the right and left sides of Madonna, the mint mark: K – B

Körmöcbánya (Kremnitz), marks K – B, 1542 (Huszár 1979, p. 143, no. 935; Unger 2000, p. 42, no. 745.a; Chirilă et al. 1980, p. 67–68, no. VI-H).

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Fig. 1.1. Măderat. Google Earth satellite image indicating the find area; 2. Măderat. First Austrian survey, map of the Kingdom of Hungary (1782–1785), after www.mapire.eu.



Fig. 2. The coins discovered in the Măderat village area (Nos. 1-4).

Abbreviations

AB	Analele Banatului, I-IV 1928–1931; S.N. I 1981-, The Museum of Banat/The National Museum of Banat, Timișoara.
ACTA	Yearbook of the Székely Museum in Csík and the Székely National Museum, Miercurea Ciuc – Sepsiszentgyörgy.
ActaArchHung	Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, Budapest.
AÉ	Archaeologiai Értesítő, Budapest.
Acta Historica	Acta Universitatis Szegediensis (Szeged).
ArchHung	Archaeologia Hungarica.
ArhMed	Arheologia Medievală.
AM	Mitteilungen des Kaiserlich Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung (Athenische Mitteilungen), Athen, (1876-).
AMM	Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis (Vaslui).
AMN	Acta Musei Napocensis, The National History Museum of Transylvania, Cluj – Napoca.
AMP	Acta Musei Porolisensis, County History and Art Museum of Zalău.
ArhMold	Arheologia Moldovei, Iași.
BCH	Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique, Paris, 1 (1877-).
BerRGK	Berichte der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission. Roman-Germanic Commission. Frankfurt am Main.
EphNap	Ephemeris Napocensis, Cluj-Napoca.
CCA	Cronica Cercetărilor Arheologice din România, Ministry of Culture.
CCCA I	M. J. Vermaseren, Corpus cultus Cybelae Attidisque (CCCA), I. Asia Minor, Leiden, New York, København, Köln, 1987.
CIG	Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum, I-IV, (ed. A. Boeckh), Berlin, 1828–1877.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, consilio et auctoritate Academiae litterarum regiae Borussicae editum. (1863-).
Dacia	Dacia. Recherches et découvertes archéologiques en Roumanie, S.V. I-XII; N.S. Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne, I. 1957 și urm., Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest.
DAGR	Dictionnaire des Antiquités grecques et romaines, I-X, sous la direction de Ch. Daremberg et E. Saglio, Paris, 1877–1929.
DolgSzeged	Dolgozatok a Szegedi Josef Tudományegyetem Archaeologiai Interzetbol (I, 1925...XIX, 1943).
IGB V	Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae, (ed. Georgi Mihailov), vol. V: Supplementum, addenda et corrigenda. Sofia, 1997.
IGDOP	Inscriptions grecques dialectales d'Olbia du Pont, (ed. L. Dubois), Genève, 1996.
IGRR IV	Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes, IV (ed. G. Lafaye), Paris, 1927.
ISM I, II	Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris – Inscriptiile din Scythia Minor, I: Histria și împrejurimile (ed. D. M. Pippidi), Bucharest, 1983; II: Tomis și teritoriul său, (ed. Iorgu Stoian), Bucharest, 1987.
LIMC	Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, I–VIII + index vol., (eds. J. Ch. Balty, E. Berger, J. Boardman, Ph. Bruneau, F. Canciani, L. Kahil, V. Lambrinoudakis, E. Simon), Zürich, München, Düsseldorf, 1981–1999.
LSJ	Liddell H. G., Scott R., Jones H. S., A Greek-English Lexicon, with a revised supplement. Oxford, 1996.
MAA	Monumenta Avarorum Archaeologica.
OM	<i>Orbis Mediaevalis</i> .
PBF	Prähistorische Bronzefunde, München.

RA	Revue Archéologique, Paris (1844-).
RAC	Rivista di archeologia cristiana, Rome (1924-).
RevBistr	Revista Bistriței, Bistrița-Năsăud Museum Complex, Bistrița.
RH	Revue historique, Paris, (1876-).
RIG	Recueil d'inscriptions grecques, par Ch. Michel, Bruxelles, 1900.
Sargetia	Sargetia. Acta Musei Devensis, Deva.
SCIV(A)	Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche, tom 1–25, Bucharest, 1950–1974; începând din 1974 (tom 25): Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche și Arheologie, Bucharest.
SCN	Studii și Cercetări de Numismatică, Bucharest.
SEG	Supplementum epigraphicum graecum, Lugdunum Batavorum, Leiden, 1923–1971; Alphen aan den Rijn 1979–1980; Amsterdam, 1979–2005; Boston, 2006-.
StCl	Studii Clasice, Bucharest.
Syll ³	Sylloge inscriptionum Graecarum, (3rd edition), (ed. W. Dittenberger), 1915–1924.
Terra Sebus	Terra Sebus, Sebeș.
ThesCRA	Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum, I–V + index vol., (eds. J. Ch. Balty, J. Boardman, Ph. Bruneau, R. G. A. Buxton, G. Camporeale, F. Canciani, F. Graf, T. Hölscher, V. Lambrinoudakis, E. Simon), Basel, Los Angeles, (2004–2006).
UPA	Universitätsforschungen zur Prähistorischen Archäologie, Institut für Ur-und Frühgeschichte der Universität Kiel.
ZSA	Ziridava. Studia Archaeologica, Arad Museum, Cluj-Napoca.