

# FINDINGS OF COINS FROM THE ROMANIAN PART OF BANAT REGION IN THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM IN VRŠAC

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The formation of coin collection of the National Museum in Vršac began long back in 1896 when the region of South Banat was an integral part of Temeser Banat Region. Nowadays it is a region spread in both Serbia and Romania. Therefore, our collection includes also the coins originating from the area today belonging to Romania.

Abundant literature from the end of the last and the beginning of this century dealing with archaeology of Banat (by that the eastern, Romanian, and the western Yugoslav part of Banat are meant) also mentions numerous coin findings from that region. One can immediately observe that the coins from overall Banat region looked upon on a broader scale geographically speaking (both northern and southern parts of Romanian and Yugoslav part) at that time went to the collections of several museums: besides Vršac museum (then called Verseczi Museum), also to the museum of Southern Hungary in Timisoara (then called Délmagyarországi Museum), the National Museum in Budapest (Nemzeti Museum). One should bear in mind that a substantial quantity of coins went to Bela Crkva<sup>1</sup> (Weisskirchen, Fehértemplom, Biserica Albă), where a museum was founded even back in 1877, whose activity was greatly contributed by Feliks Milleker (Felix, Bodog, Srečko) and Leonard Bem (Leonhard Böhm). Coin findings from this region frequently went to Vienna (Bécs).

In view of all the above mentioned as well as of the fact that the data on coin findings are mainly insufficient, it is very difficult to trace many findings. In this case we are interested in coin findings that reached Vršac Museum originating from the present Romanian part of Banat. For that purpose we are going to compare the data from the so called entry register kept from 1896 till 1940 by F. Milleker, the famous researcher of Banat archaeology and history the data from literature with the actual state of the collection.

The entry register records the following information regarding the inflow of coins from the territory we are researching.

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<sup>1</sup> For the history of the Museum in Bela Crkva and the present state of the collection see Lj. Bakić-D. Ujes 1995, with quoted literature.

## GREEK, „BARBARIAN COINS”

- a drachma of Apollonia, found in Koronini<sup>2</sup> (present Pescari), presented to the museum in September 1895 (entry register, date: 2/9/1958, item no. 2);
- a drachma of Dyrrachion, from the same place, presented to the museum in January 1896 (e. r. 24/01/1896, i. no. 14)
- a drachma of Apollonia, from the same place, bought off in November 1896 (e. r. 30/11/1896, i. no. 1)
- a Dacian silver coin from Varhelj, presented by Adolf Vajsertel (e.r. 1/11/1895, i. no. 1)
- 2 „barbarian silver coins” from Potok<sup>3</sup> (present Potoc) – purchased in 1897 (e. r. 28/05/1898, i. no 12).
- a barbarian silver coin from Oršava (present Orșova), purchased (e. r. 12/09/1910, i. no. 88)

## ROMAN COINS

- a small Roman silver coin („a family coin” as stated by Milleker) from Fizeš (present Fizes), a gift by Nandor Štajn (e.r. 2/12/1897, i. no. 2)
- denar of Marka Antonija (Mark Antony) from Veliki Žam (present Jamu Mare), the gift by Wilder (e. r. 4/9/1901, i. no. 1)
- among the findings from Varadija<sup>4</sup> (present Varadia), 2 Roman coins are mentioned – large bronze coins (1 Vespasian), purchase (e. r. 31/07/1902, i. no. 65)
- among other findings there is a silver denar of Antonius from Deta (present Deta), (e. r. 29/07/1904, i. no. 60).
- a coin of Trajan Germ. Dac., also from Deta, purchase (e. r. 19/05/1910, i. no. 47).
- a Roman large bronze, III century, from Orsava (present Orșova), text illegible, a gift (e.r. 2/07/1917, i. no. 17)
- a silver denar of Antonius Pius from Berzaška (present Berzasca) discovered in 1895 in „Lyborazdija” Valley, the gift by Ernest Neustadt (e.r. 15/10/1913, i. no 77).

## MIDDLE-AGE COINS

- 4 pieces of Turkish coins from a hoard in Pećika (present Pecica) in the parish. Discovered in the current year. The gift by Karl Kinc (e. r. 24/11/1901, i. no. 11)
- 52 small Turkish coins from a collective finding in Pecika in 1901, the gift by Antala Krojca (e.r. 11/10/1903, i. no. 87)

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<sup>2</sup> B. Milleker 1897, 27; I. Berkeszi 1907, 12–13; B. Mitrea 1945, 88, no. 6; F. Medeleț 1994, 275.

<sup>3</sup> B. Milleker 1899, 90; B. Milleker 1906, 121; I. Berkeszi 1907, 34; F. Medeleț 1994, 277.

<sup>4</sup> B. Milleker 1906, 261; F. Medeleț, 1994, 292.

– 37 Hungarian silver denars of Ferdinand I (1526–1564), 14 Maximilians (1565–1579), and 7 Rudolfs (1579–1585) from a larger hoard of the coins from Korniareva (present Cornereva) discovered in January (?) 1902. The coins were in a big pot. The gift by Imre Pongracz, a retired home-guard major from Orșava (e.r. 23/02/1902, i. no. 12).

– 46 small Middle-Age silver coins, 3 fragments of curled silver wire from the finding in Mali Gaj<sup>5</sup> (present Gaiu Mic), (e.r. 29/06/1903, i. no. 48)

– 731 pieces of Hungarian Middle-Age coins from Sokolovac (present Socol) purchased from Karl Bem from Bela Crkva, at the cost of the town (e.r. 31/08/1912, i. no. 31)

The above mentioned data from the old entry register of F. Milleker have been fully quoted the way he himself registered them. The data from the literature are more numerous, but this time only the ones referring to findings entered in Milleker's entry register have been included. It is noticeable that the descriptions given by Milleker are rather meagre, so that it is very hard to recognise corresponding numismatic items in the collection. It is also noticed that the coins which have got into the Vršac Museum mainly originate from the area of the Romanian part of Banat, except for the finding Pecika, which is the most northern point, at the right bank of the Mures River. Today, the state of the museum collection is as follows:

1. 2 specimens of Dacian coins, 1 specimen of *re-mint*, without the data referring to the place of finding (1–3)
2. 8 specimens of drachma of Apollonia and Dyrrachion, without the data referring to the place of finding (4–11)
3. the finding of Hungarian coins from Socol with the total of 16 silver coins of Ladislaus IV (1272–1290) and Robert Karl (1308–1342).

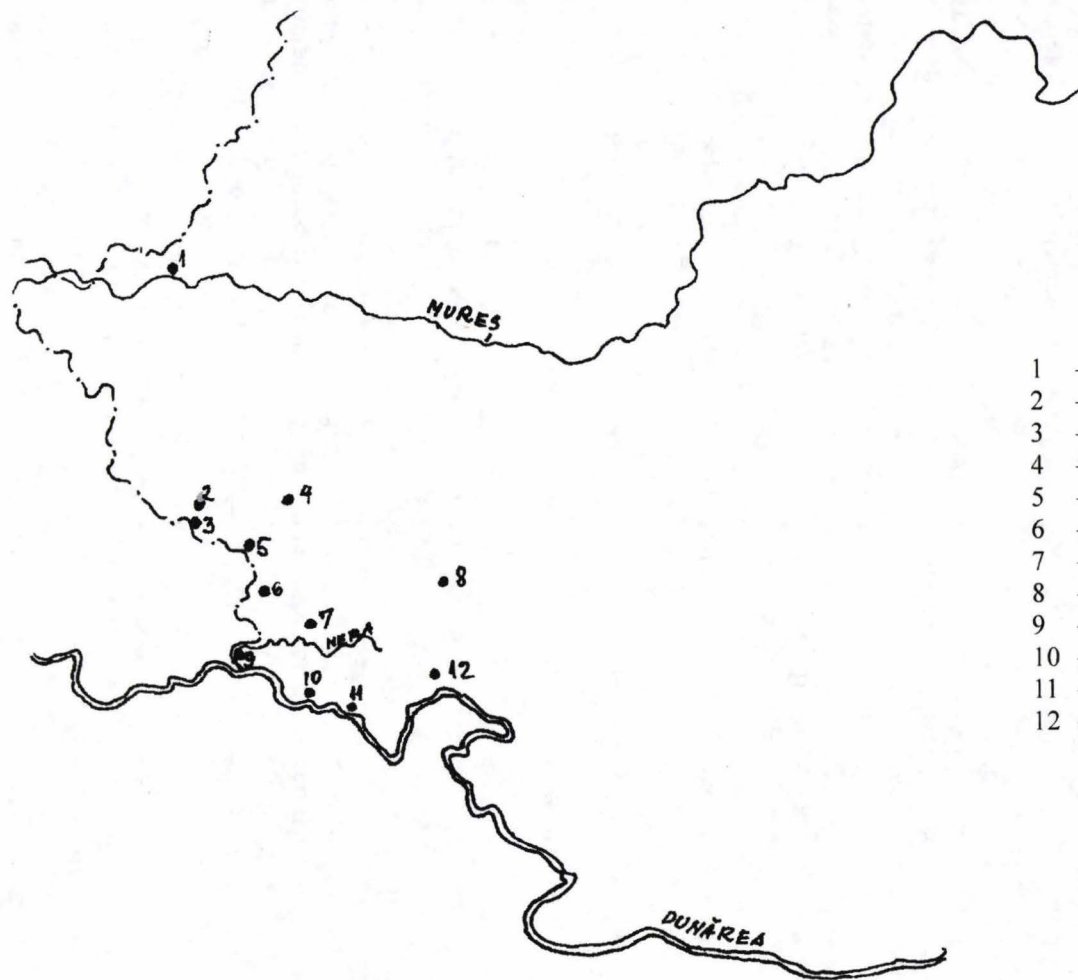
Since there are no more precise data, it is impossible to associate the data from Milleker's old inventory book with the coins present in the museum (findings from 1–11). Milleker registered pieces of „Barbarian money” (2 coins from Potoc, 1 coin from Orșova and 1 coin from Varhelj, the only one he refers to as being Dacian), that had come to the museum. Two of the coins in the museum are in the form of a *scyphate*, of rough execution, with a silver coating, weighing 12,80 g. and 13,20 g with very stylised images on the obverse and the reverse which could be associated with the mintage of Transylvania and Banat from the second half of II and the beginning of the I century B.C.<sup>6</sup> The third specimen is of silver, weighing 12,50 g. *re-mint*, which is hard to determine so far. The examples quoted by L. Bem<sup>7</sup> do not correspond to our findings. We can only suppose that the findings from Varhelj or Orșova are in question.

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<sup>5</sup> O. Gohl 1903, 106 – mentions the finding of various coins containing 378 pieces, and this figure is corrected by pencil by Milleker into 619 pieces, while I. Berkeszi 1907, 19 – notifies that the total number of coins was 613 pieces, out of which 26 coins were sent to the National Museum in Budapest, and Vrsac Museum obtained 333 pieces.

<sup>6</sup> They are similar to Dessewffy 1258, 1259, Forrer 346 (no. 1); and Dessewffy 819 - obverse, and 408 - reverse (no. 2).

<sup>7</sup> L. Böhm 1861, T.XIII/5-7, F. Medeleț 1994, 277 with quoted literature.



- 1 – PECICA
- 2 – DETA
- 3 – GAIU MIC
- 4 – FIZEȘ
- 5 – JAMU MARE
- 6 – VĂRĂDIA
- 7 – POTOȘ
- 8 – CORNEAREVA
- 9 – SOCOL
- 10 – PESCARI
- 11 – BERZASCA
- 12 – ORȘOVA

Two drachmas, one of Apollonia and the other one of Dyrrachion, reached Vršac museum from the hoard discovered 1895. in Koronini. Greek and Hellenistic coins from the collection of Vršac museum have been processed by D. Ujes and L.J. Bakić<sup>8</sup>, and they have indicated possibility that the two drachmas of Apollonia from Vršac museum are the same ones mentioned in the old inventory book of F. Milleker (4-5).

The hoard from Sokolovac (Socol) as quoted by F. Milleker included 731 pieces of Hungarian Middle-Age coins. The hoard from the same place that is presently in Vršac museum contains 16 specimens. Whether this finding is separated, which would not be unusual for that time, or two hoards are in question, for the time being the question remains open.

The numismatic collection currently present in the museum collection at Cultural-Educational Community of Bela Crkva (Biserica Albă) was examined and a part of it was even published (v. supra, f. 1), so the conclusion can be reached that the collection in question is small, obviously fragmented, without the information regarding the place of finding. The trace of findings from the Romanian part of Banat, which had come to this museum and are quoted in older literature, has been lost (Mercina, Pescari, Potoc).

The purpose of this brief review of numismatic findings from the territory of the Romanian part of Banat is the comparison of the actual state of the Vršac museum collection with data quoted in the entry register of F. Milleker and other literature. However, the lack of data, the fact that numismatic collections of Timisoara and Budapest museums are not published, which also house specimens from our Banat, make complete numismatic research difficult. But it indicates that the connection between South Banat and the neighbouring regions on the Romanian side of the Danube existed also in the numismatic sense.

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<sup>8</sup> D. Ujes - Lj. Bakić 1996, 24 with quoted literature.

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