
ADDITIONAL DATA ON THE GOLD HOARD FROM VÍZIVÁROS

Abstract: The gold hoard found in 1994 in Víziváros south of Aquincum was only briefly published by M. Torbágyi. The 9 aurei from Tiberius to Vespasian, closing in 71 AD were most likely hidden around the middle of the 70s. New data on the find context make it likely that it was hidden within the camp of the *ala I Hispanorum Auriana*, which was stationed there from 69 to the end of the 80s.

Keywords: *Pannonia, gold, hoard, military camp, Víziváros.*

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The gold hoard from Víziváros is in itself it not unknown, since it was mentioned in several publications with obverse illustration, but was never dealt with in detail. This was partly due to the fact that following its discovery it was very quickly exhibited in the Budapest History Museum. Previously they were shown to Melinda Torbágyi, who also published them in a short article, only listing the 9 coins without pictures.¹ This is probably one of the reasons, why this hoard did not find its way into the main numismatic literature, as it is not included in the Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire database either. Since then additional archaeological investigations have been carried out that further clarified the context of the deposition. This article intends to give a more detailed study of this hoard together with the latest archaeological information on its context.

The hoard was discovered in 1994 on the lot of Medve utca 9-13 in Víziváros (Fig. 1), now the historic centre of Buda, where excavations were carried out due to the expansion of the school.² The hoard consists of 9 aurei dating from Tiberius to the early reign of Vespasian also including a coin of Claudius, the bulk being made up of 5 post-reform Neronian pieces. The last two were minted by Vespasian in

DOI: 10.14795/j.v7i1_SI.488

ISSN 2360 – 266X

ISSN-L 2360 – 266X

¹ M. Torbágyi did not receive any information on the context at the time. TORBÁGYI 1997-1998b, 175-176.

² KÉRDŐ 1995, 20.

	Issuer	Date	Mint	Weight (g)	Die axis (h)	Obverse	Reverse	RIC ³
1	Tiberius	14-37	Lugdunum	7.52	5	TI CAESAR DIVI – AVG F AVGVSTVS	PONTIF – MAXIM	29
2	Claudius	46-47	Lugdunum	7.71	6	TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG P M TR P VI IMP XI	SPQR / P P / OB C S	40
3	Nero	64-65	Rome	7.18	8	NERO – CAESAR	AVGVSTVS – GERMANICVS	46
4	Nero	64-65	Rome	7.27	7	NERO CAESAR – AVGVSTVS	CONCORDIA – AVGVSTA	48
5	Nero	64-65	Rome	7.25	7	NERO CAESAR – AVGVSTVS	CONCORDIA – AVGVSTA	48
6	Nero	64-65	Rome	7.34	7	[N]ERO CAESAR – AVGVSTVS	IVPPITER – CVSTOS	52
7	Nero	65-66	Rome	7.26	5	NERO CAESAR – AVGVSTVS	SALVS	59
8	Vespasian	70 ⁴	Rome	7.17	7	IMP CAESAR VESPASIANVS AVG	COS ITER – TR POT	28
9	Vespasian	71	Lugdunum	7.16	5	IMP CAESAR VESPASIANVS AVG	TR POT – COS III	1114

70 and 71 AD. All the Neronian coins together with a Flavian piece were minted in Rome, while the others in Lugdunum.

Generally the appearance of the coins is quite good with some minor wear visible. This together with the close dating of the closing coins suggest that the coins were buried not long after the minting of the last coin and got to the border of the Empire, probably around the middle of the 70s AD.

In ancient times the territory of north-eastern Pannonia was inhabited by the Celtic Eraviscus tribe, who also minted silver coins modelled on Roman denarii.⁵ A village existed from the middle of the 1st c. BC at Corvin tér, about 1km south of the hoards findspot, but was abandoned before the Roman occupation under Claudius (Fig. 2). Their oppidum on the Gellért Hill was vacated following the conquest.⁶ Afterwards a pottery production

site was established at the nearby Tabán functioning until the 1st c. AD, while the Lágymányos area was inhabited even further, at least until the middle of the 2nd c.⁷ From the latter area an Eraviscan-Roman silver hoard is known.⁸ Aquincum's legionary castrum further north at the Flórián tér was only built in 89 by the *legio II Adiutrix*, which was preceded by the camp of the *ala I Tungrorum Frontoniana* between 73 and 80.⁹

The Roman occupation of north-eastern Pannonia occurred under Claudius. The *ala Hispanorum I* was moved from Burnum (Dalmatia) to Aquincum around 50 AD.¹⁰ This was transferred to Moesia in 69, and was replaced by the *ala I Hispanorum Auriana* from Noricum. This troop stayed in the Víziváros until the end of the 80s, when it was relocated to Raetia. Their *ala* camp was previously localised to the Bem tér, while more recent excavations make a more southern location between Fő-Csalogány-Medve-Vitéz street

³ RIC I² and RIC II/1 were used for the identification.

⁴ The aureus minted for Vespasian in Rome (Nr. 8) is the commonest of this early series of the emperor. It was also probably minted for longer time than the rest of this group of coins i.e. later than July 70. RIC II/1, p. 20.

⁵ TORBÁGYI 1984.

⁶ NAGY 2018, 92-93.

⁷ K. Kérdő supposed that the re-settlement of the Corvin tér was also a consequence of the abandonment of the Gellért Hill oppidum. KÉRDŐ 2011, 170.

⁸ GOHL 1902, 17-45.

⁹ LŐRINCZ 2001, 26.

¹⁰ LŐRINCZ 2001, 20-21.

more probable (Fig. 1).¹¹ The findspot of the hoard, Medve utca 9-13, falls within the walls of the supposed ala camp. Unfortunately no written record survived on the name of this Roman town, thus the modern Víziváros name is used to denote this area.¹²

According to the excavator, Katalin Kérdő, the hoard was hidden in the rubbles of a clay wall, 40 cm under a modern cellar.¹³ Traces of a subsequent (2nd-3rd c.) domestic building, rebuilt several times during the Roman era, were also found. This had a row of several rooms equipped with hypocaustum and was decorated with wall-paintings, thus belonged to a relatively wealthy owner. Next to it ran a 5 m wide road with drainage. Medve utca is located in modern day Víziváros, which name is already mistakenly taken for another hoard found in 1898. This contained more than 500 denarii and was erroneously named, since its findspot is in fact part of the Rózsadomb district.¹⁴ Nonetheless this is the name applied in the archives and thus also in the literature.

Aurei hoards with both pre- and post-reform coins are not common across the Empire. This is in part because of the Neronian reform, when the previous heavier coins were reminted for profit.¹⁵ This also resulted in the hoarding of the old and more valuable coins, therefore hoards typically tend to contain either pre-reformed coins, if they were selected before, or the common post-reform coins that were more abundant later. Hoarding in general becomes more numerable from the Flavian period.¹⁶ Taking into account that in the Víziváros hoard only 2 pre-reform coins are outnumbered by the reduced weight coins,

thus the reason for hoarding these aurei was not the Neronian reform, but had a different motive. It may simply be that the reminting of the old coin was not fully undertaken at the time. This is further strengthened by the findspot within the Roman ala camp.

Similar hoards containing mixed pre- and post-reform dating from Augustus to Vespasian containing aurei were found mostly in the western part of the Empire. 15 gold coins were discovered in Xanten from Tiberius, Claudius, Nero, Vitellius, Vespasian and Titus caesar.¹⁷ In Utrecht a hoard with 50 gold coins from Augustus to Vitellius was deposited.¹⁸ The hoard of Martigny containing 19 aurei from Nero to Vespasian also contained 1 pre-reform Nero aureus.¹⁹ These deposits mostly contained lower weight coins. From Büechlihu came 25 Republican denarii along with an aureus of Tiberius and a post-reform Nero, and was probably a ritual deposit.²⁰ The hoard from Murs-et-Gélignieux was made up of 26 denarii (Republican, Julio-Claudian and 1 of Galba) together with an aureus minted for Antonia by Claudius.²¹ Interesting is also the Este hoard found in 1891 containing 178 Republican, 18 Tiberian denarii and 5 aurei of Tiberius, 1 post-reform Nero and 1 of Titus.²²

The closest geographical parallel to this gold hoard from Pannonia is the Szombathely-Herény containing 38 aurei from Tiberius to Nero, although only containing pre-reform coins.²³ Similar is also the Patras hoard with 35 gold coins from Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius, and the Bredgar hoard with 34 aurei from Augustus, Tiberius and Claudius.²⁴

The 9 aurei make up quite a considerable sum especially at this remote frontier of the Empire and at this early date. The 225 denarii

¹¹ KÉRDŐ 2011, 166-168; NAGY 2018, 93-94.

¹² NAGY 2018, 98.

¹³ In the first publication following the excavations K. Kérdő wrote that the hoard was hidden in the clay wall, while later, she interpreted it as being amid the debris of the wall. KÉRDŐ 1995, 20-21; KÉRDŐ 2011, 167.

¹⁴ Only 25 pieces found their way to the Hungarian National Museum, while 23 others were described by Ö. Gohl in his notes. TORBÁGYI 1997-1998a, 11.

¹⁵ RIC I² P 134-135; BUTCHER/PONTING 2015, 22.

¹⁶ RIC II/1, 11-13; GUEST 2015, 107-109; TORBÁGYI 1993-1994, 30-31.

¹⁷ <http://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/hoard/7421> Accessed 30.10.2019.

¹⁸ TORBÁGYI 1993-1994, 31; <http://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/hoard/6263> Accessed 30.10.2019.

¹⁹ WIBLÉ 1992, 126-127.

²⁰ MARTI/NICK/PETER 2012, 35-36.

²¹ <http://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/hoard/6216> Accessed 30.10.2019.

²² PROSDOCIMI 1892, 280.

²³ TORBÁGYI 1993-1994, 27-33.

²⁴ SAUER 2002, 341-342; BLAND 2018, 35.

is in fact the yearly wage of an auxiliary cavalry or a legionary foot soldier of the time.²⁵ Of course this may be a coincidence, since this sum was not paid out to the soldiers in full. There were considerable deductions from this nominal wage e.g. for clothing, food. An average soldier could only have buried this substantial sum from his donativa, which were not deducted. Of course, it would have been easier for an officer of the *ala I Hispanorum Auriana* to deposit this money from his higher earnings. Apart from the findspot within the Roman camp, the decisive role of the military in the monetarization of a new province also supports the presumption that the gold hoard was hidden by a Roman soldier.²⁶

Gold hoards from military camps are not unheard of either. The closest example comes from the legionary camp of Brigetio, where 7 aurei were found together with various gold jewellery including bracelets and rings.²⁷ In Lambaesis near the north-eastern gate of the camp a hoard was uncovered containing 6 aurei (Antoninus Pius-Severus Alexander) as well as silver rings, earrings and necklace.²⁸

Why this large amount of money was buried and never recovered is unclear, as it is usually the case with Roman coin hoards. A cultic deposition seems unlikely, although there were sanctuaries within the camp²⁹ (e.g. *saturnalicium kastrense, ad signa*), the purely gold composition speaks against it.³⁰ The same can be said about a barbarian invasion. Disturbances in this area are only known in 89 and 92, when Domitian fought a war against the Marcomanni, Quadi and Sarmatians.³¹ However this a date too late for this hoard, since the *ala I Hispanorum Auriana* left the Viziváros at the end of the 80s. Furthermore there is no archaeological evidence of the *ala* camp being destroyed.

²⁵ SPEIDEL 2009, 359-360.

²⁶ KEMMERS 2009, 144-146; HOWGEGO 2015, 131-132.

²⁷ FMRU III 214; ALFÖLDI 1949-1950, 5-7.

²⁸ PERASSI 2004, 898-900.

²⁹ SPEIDEL 2009, 360.

³⁰ Cf. the Büechlihu hoard mentioned above.

³¹ Cassius Dio 67.7.1-2; Suet. Dom. 6.1; MÓCSY 1974, 84-85; STROBL 1989, 83-104; JONES 1992, 150-152.

In the case of the Viziváros hoard containing 9 aurei, found in Medve utca in 1994, we have one of the fortunate cases, where we have more information about its context. Thanks to the recent archaeological investigations it is most likely that it was buried within the camp of the *ala I Hispanorum Auriana*, stationed in the Viziváros from 69 to the end of the 80s, around the middle of the 70s by one of its soldiers.

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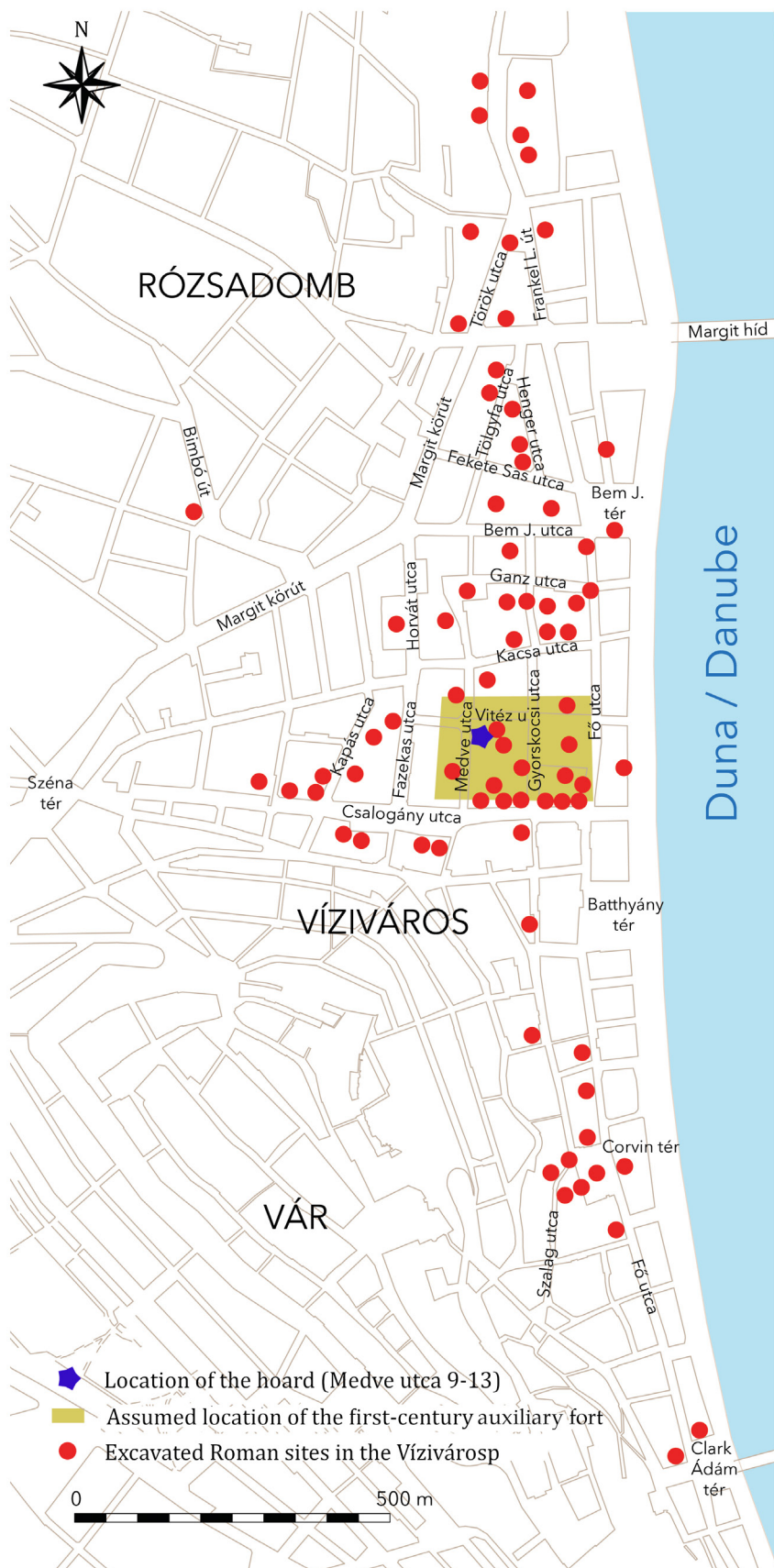


Fig. 1. The location of the hoard with the excavated Roman sites in the Víziváros (After NAGY 2018, Fig. 2)



Fig. 2. Aquincum and its surroundings (After NAGY 2018, Fig. 1)



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