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MINTING, COIN HOARDS, AND PROCESSES IN THE HISTORY OF MONEY DURING THE MONGOL INVASION OF HUNGARY IN 1241–42.
Thoughts on a New Catalogue of Coins[1]

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The third volume of the new catalogue of Hungarian coins from the Árpádian period (Tóth & Kiss 2020; Fig. 1) has been published recently, which covers almost the entire thirteenth century (from the reign of King Andrew II) to the Angevin era starting in the early fourteenth century (i.e. to Otto's minting). The latest part of this series is a considerable achievement in the numismatics of the period, but it also goes beyond it in many respects.

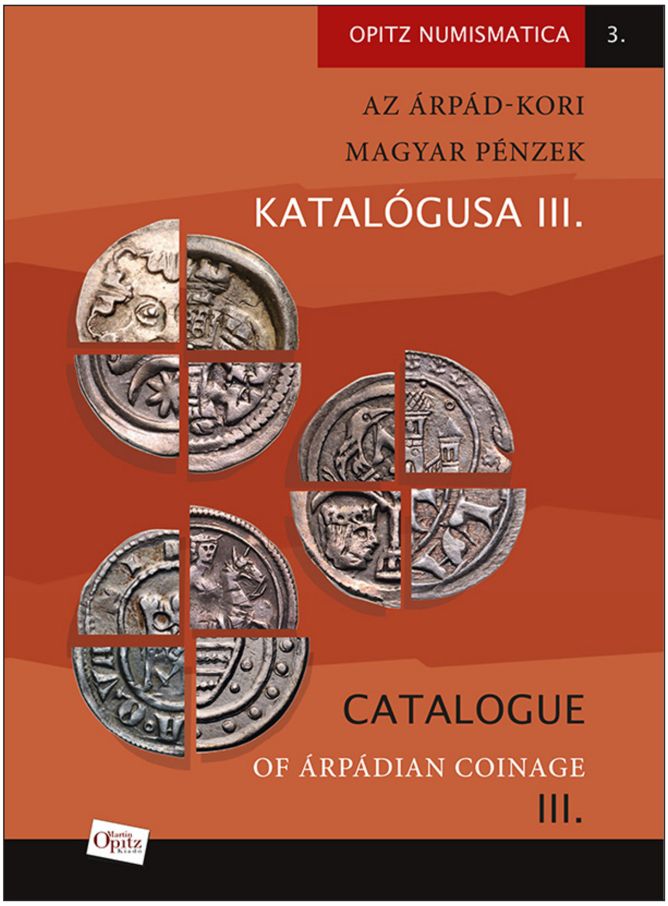

Fig. 1. Tóth Cs. & Kiss J. G. (2020).
Az Árpád-kori magyar pénzek katalógusa III.
Budapest: Martin Opitz, 2020.

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In line with the previous volumes of the series, the richly illustrated publication presents all types of coins and their variations, both in photographs and drawings (Tóth, Kiss & Fekete 2018; Tóth & Kiss 2018). However, this work is more than just a catalogue of coins, as it unites the criteria of the history of money and the history of coins (*Geldgeschichte – Münzgeschichte*) in the short introduction to the volume. In other words, it also relevant for the questions of minting, financial management, and economy in relation to each type of coin, which highlights the most important processes in addition to the constant change of coinage. With regard to the thirteenth century, it is enough to mention that one of the major initiatives for financial reform in medieval Hungary also took place in this era. In his preface to the volume, Attila Zsoldos writes about this reform that King Andrew II "did not hesitate to call his bold innovations as 'new measures' (or 'new institutions': *nove institutiones*) in line with reality." Nevertheless, they did not produce the expected results, and neither did the comprehensive changes that were carried out during the reign of his son, King Béla IV, in the period preceding the Mongol Invasion. All these certainly left a mark on contemporary coinage and the use of money. In the economic and monetary history of the era, however, there were also processes of a greater impact that affected larger areas in these decades. The whole continent saw a general hunger for silver, prompting rulers and landowners throughout Europe to discover and exploit more and more silver mines. The widespread use of foreign coins and the impact of

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money deterioration are part of this complex mechanism of action, as is the emergence of hoards, which are the archaeological imprints of the monetary history of the period as well as traumatic events afflicting the whole country the effects of which could be felt for centuries, such as the Mongol Invasion in 1241–42.

One of the most important objectives of such coin catalogues is to determine exactly which coin can be linked to which ruler and, if possible, to establish a closer chronology within their reign. The latter is a particularly difficult task, as no year is indicated on the coins of the era, and in many cases, it is difficult even to associate them with a ruler. Suffice it to say that there were four kings named Béla in the House of Árpád. There is also a century-long debate concerning the unidentified author traditionally called Anonymus and the question of which king's reign his historical work (*gesta*) can be dated to. In the same way, there are coins bearing the name of Béla, but it is uncertain which king it is. Interestingly enough, in terms of the *Gesta Hungarorum*, researchers excluded the first and second kings of this name relatively early; similarly, the third and fourth kings named Béla have emerged as a possible solution to the question of the disputed coins quite recently. Tamás Körmendi, who studied this problem both as a historian and as an archaeologist, involved the hoards of the Mongol Invasion in this long-standing debate in connection with the chronology of coins (2011, 2012). He was arguing for dating the coins to the rule of Béla IV, instead of the reign of Béla III that was previously held in scholarship, and the same process took place regarding the dating of certain coins without an inscription. At the same time, some scholars still follow the earlier dating of these coins. However, the consequences of these discussions and re-dating go beyond the fact that the age of some coins is now determined differently. The respective images on the coins have also been re-dated, which has important implications for further historical issues, such as the history of certain elements of the Hungarian coat of arms. Körmendi demonstrated many of these aspects (2011), but the re-dating, as we will see later part in this article, has other consequences as well.

Getting back to the new volume referred to at the beginning of the present article, even if we refer only to the elements that are relevant for the coin catalogue, interesting new findings have been made in connection with the Mongol Invasion. The excavation that revealed evidence for minting activities on Sibrik Hill in Visegrád is an important recent discovery not only from the aspect of the mints of the period. The finds briefly presented in the new volume (Tóth & Kiss 2020, 18) have also been published in detail (Buzás et al. 2017), based on which we can safely assume that King Béla IV had his mint there as the young king, before the beginning of his actual reign (1235). This supports the idea that he used the early castle of the *comes* ('*ispán'* in Hungarian) as his seat even before he ascended the throne. This is important from the aspect of why King Béla IV made Visegrád a prime site of castle development and how it became one of the most significant elements of the Danubian defensive system after the Mongol invasion (Laszlovszky 2021). In this case, therefore, the evidence on minting represents an important piece of information for a deeper understanding of the country's rebuilding.

In this way, the analysis of the impact of the Mongol Invasion deserves special attention within the period, which represents a turning point not only from a historical point of view but is also an issue of outstanding importance in terms of both numismatic and archeological research history and methodology, which is worth discussing here. For a long time, in the numismatics of the period, the analysis of the individual coins and the types of coinage was in many respects separated from the study of the archaeological features in which these coins were discovered. Coins from this period were, of course, included in numismatic repositories from the beginnings of coin collection in Hungary. However, the number of known coins discovered as new finds considerably increased from the nineteenth century onwards. As the vast majority of the coins and hoards dated to the period were found by chance instead of during archaeological excavations, our data on the find circumstances were generally incomplete. In relation to this, there was a legal practice in which the regulations allowed and even stipulated the distribution of finds among the finder, the owner of the area, and the treasury. On the other hand, since the primary objective was not to keep the coin assemblages together, but to display the different types of coinage as fully as possible in all major collections, the pieces of hoards were distributed among the numismatic repositories of museums and universities. This definitely hindered, and to some extent still hinders the scientific processing of coin assemblages and their treatment as a single hoard (Visky 1982, 128; Gyöngyössy 2016, 10–42). The transformation of the methodology applied in numismatics, as well as the increasing use of coins in dating in addition to the method of typology, contributed to the fact that this fragmentation began to disappear over time. It became crucially important to identify the coins discovered in the graves and to examine their dating value first in the case of the cemeteries of the Conquest Period, then for the burials found in Árpád-period cemeteries around churches. At the same time, an increasing number of "treasure hoards" – which, in fact, comprise several types of coins – only came to the forefront of archaeological interest somewhat later. The first reason for this was their dating value, even if indirectly. In this respect, the history of research into the hoards from the period of the Mongol Invasion is particularly intriguing, as they represent find assemblages that are almost unique in Hungarian archaeology both in terms of number and significance. The abundance of hoards is only comparable to that of the treasures dating from the Ottoman Period, which are associated, for example, with the periods of the Battle of Mohács, the Fifteen Years' War, and the Battle of Mezőkeresztes. However, as far as the spatial distribution of coin assemblages is concerned, the hoard horizon of the period of the Mongol Invasion covered a much larger part of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary. Therefore, in connection with the complex examination and reinterpretation of these finds, it is worth briefly summarizing those factors and academic issues that reflect the interconnection of the types of coins, the development of minting, the contemporary use of money, and the study of coin hoards.

A relatively long time passed from the first identification of coin types before the first major work on the history of money was published. The monumental work by Bálint Hóman (1916) is still an indispensable scientific summary, and it took a long time until it was followed by a similar enterprise or a survey that shed light on the contemporary use of money from other perspectives. However, the increasing number of coin finds and hoards raised many questions concerning archaeological interpretation. Therefore, in addition to numismatics, this discipline also started to be interested in this special group of finds. The first comprehensive archaeological study of hoards from the Árpád period was carried out by Nándor Parádi (1963), who was looking for a solid basis for the chronology of ceramic finds of the period that were difficult to date. In line with the methodology and approach used in international practice (see, for example, the summary of the Austrian finds, Steininger 1963), he compiled a catalogue of ceramic vessels dated with medieval and early modern coins. All of these were hoards where the coins were hidden in a vessel. Thus, the latest coin provides a relatively accurate piece of evidence for the time when the pottery was used, which would be otherwise difficult to date or could only be dated to a long period. Additionally, Parádi also raised issues in this study that were connected not only to chronology but also, for example, to the topographical location of sites and the historical interpretation of finds that survived in a particularly high number from different periods. Then, Nándor Parádi continued his work with a logical next step (1975). In this research, he did not only rely on the coins for dating pottery but also for determining the age of the jewellery. He focused on assemblages, where coins and jewellery (as well as other valuable items, such as rock crystals or pieces of what can be identified as hacksilver) were discovered together. Today, it is evident that these two fundamental cataloguing works, complemented by finds where the coins were discovered on their own (instead of being hidden in a ceramic vessel), have delineated an important horizon of hoards that is of paramount importance for studying the processes that took place during the Mongol Invasion and for understanding the economic and social history of the period (Tóth 2007). Furthermore, Parádi's findings, especially the new chronologies connected to coins, had major implications for identifying the use and "fashion" of certain types of jewellery and for defining the time frames. For instance, the idea that the fashion of S-terminalled lockrings was mainly typical for the early Árpád period and they had fundamentally "gone out of fashion" by the thirteenth century prevailed for decades. Paradi's collection of finds has clearly demonstrated that this was not the case, and the earlier inferences about chronology were drawn from objects placed in the graves (i.e. buried items of costume and jewellery), rather than from the use of the real objects. In other words, the grave-goods reflect a fundamentally different chronology from hoards. Their daily use could have been inferred from metal finds brought to light by the excavations of settlement sites. At the same time, it took some time until these conclusions have been drawn concerning the use of jewellery, or "the fashion of jewellery", from the hoards presented by Nándor Parádi and the new chronology set up by him (Kulcsár 1992). However, as is generally known, metal objects and jewellery items in particular are only infrequently discovered in the features of settlements.

Almost at the same time as the publications of Nándor Parádi, the numismatic studies also raised awareness of the importance of hoards dated to the Mongol Invasion from the aspect of the history of money. István Gedai (1969) gave a summary of the use of foreign currency in Hungary and demonstrated how high its proportion was in the thirteenth century. The so-called Friesach denarii proved to be particularly important, as they were present in an especially high number in the hoards. On the other hand, for a long time, they were hardly discovered in the settlement features of Árpád-age villages unearthed during the increasing number of excavations.

Meanwhile, Hungarian historians outlined the social relations and the highly stratified groups of the peasantry of the Árpád period in several works based on various written sources. Ilona Bolla (1983) and Jenő Szűcs (1981) demonstrated that the age of the Mongol Invasion brought a fundamental turn in the transformation and restratification of these groups. According to Szűcs (1991), the devastation caused by the Mongol Invasion and the subsequent reorganisation accelerated the economic and social processes that had already started earlier. Meanwhile, historical research also observed that, for example, there was a kind of structural transformation in the contemporary management of monastic estates (Maksay 1972), one of the essential elements of which was to what extent the various services had to be paid in crops and money, and how it affected the social situation and money using practices of people living on the monastic estates and even on other types of landed properties. In the light of the above, it seemed logical for me to examine the financial situation and social stratification that was reflected by the hoards instead of the written sources (Laszlovszky 1991). If we regard these find assemblages as the hidden assets of individuals and families, the number of the coins they comprised also provides information about the size of wealth accumulated by these people. This interpretation was supported by those cases, where jewellery items were also included in the hoards. These clearly demonstrated that they must have been the assets of individual families. The pieces of jewellery bore traces of continuous wear. In this study, I was also able to rely on the data of the history of money, because on the basis of the written sources collected by Bálint Hóman, for example, the contemporary purchasing power of each hoard could be determined.

Based on all this, it has also become evident that the interpretation of hoards can be used for multiple purposes simultaneously. The interpretations of the hoards play an important role in the archaeological approach of the Mongol Invasion (Laszlovszky 2003). Additionally, numismatics also explored more and more aspects in this context, as demonstrated by the studies written by György V. Székely (1994, 2014) and Csaba Tóth (2007, 2020; Tóth & V.Székely 2016). In the volume of studies dedicated to the archaeological data on the Mongol Invasion in Hungary and the relevant research, György V. Székely (2014) addressed almost all the key questions related to the Mongol Invasion and numismatics, considering even those possibilities that can be followed by numismatic analyses. Furthermore, this volume (Carmen Miserabile) was also a breakthrough because it drew attention to the new archaeological finds and excavations that can be directly linked to the devastation caused by the Mongol Invasion. One of the main features of these – in contrast to the previous excavations of cemeteries or settlements yielding hardly any coins from this period – is that the archaeological traces of destruction can often be dated with good coins, too. The archaeological interpretation of coins, therefore, raises another issue, which already has a monographic summary, as well. In this monograph, Mária Vargha (2015) studied the complex system of correlations between grave-goods, hoards, and objects from the excavations of settlement sites. This issue is important all the more because the largest Central European find of the era, a treasure hoard comprising thousands of coins and objects discovered at Fuchsenhof in Austria, raises similar questions (Prokisch & Kühtreiber 2004). The exact chronology of this hoard from Austria also depends to a large extent on the dating of coins minted in Hungary, even though it contained coins from almost the whole continent. Similarly, the objects found in the hoard show a wide distribution in a geographical sense. Nevertheless, this famous hoard cannot be associated with the Mongol Invasion in Central Europe in 1241–42, as it was hidden after that.

Taking into account these new research results as well, the interpretation of hoards connected to the Mongol Invasion leads to a series of questions that are important not only for the study of the events but also for that of the economic processes. On the one hand, there is the question of why the tesauration (i.e. the accumulation and deposition of valuables) was done in the given coins or jewellery items. It is safe to say that, like in any other archaeological period, the formation of hoards was a very complex phenomenon in the mid-thirteenth century. Additionally, further elements complicate the picture in this era, especially due to the specific features of minting, financial management, and the use of money. Considering all these factors as well as the new research results achieved in recent years, hoards are worth being studied from the following aspects:

- The contemporary use of money. Where and to what extent was any kind of minted coin used in this period? How common was payment in money in daily business and the trade of goods? In this respect, there could be major differences among the parts of the country and even among various types of settlements. It has also been hypothesised that the concentration of hoards in one area and the lack of them in other regions were connected to this. In other words, the differences came from the divergent intensity of money use. In this context the territory of Transylvania is particularly interesting. This was an area with important economic centres, for example in the Saxon regions, where various forms of developed money economy can be expected. However, only three coin hoards (Făgăraş, Streza-Cârţişoara, Székelyudvarhely – Târgu Secuiesc) are known from Transylvania from the period of the Mongol Invasion (Lukács 1999, 152; Tóth 2007, 83–84). The lack of hoards should be explained by different factors, as significant destruction can be reconstructed in this relatively well-developed area, on the basis of the written sources.

- The different means of exchange in the contemporary trade of goods. This could be not only money (including coins of various origins and qualities) but also hacksilver and other valuable objects, such as rock crystals and semi-precious stones. Many treasure hoards suggest that this was exactly the case in this period. In addition to money, there must have been other objects of value, too. When moveable assets were hidden, it was definitely the case. Additionally, the possibility also arises that they were even used in daily buying and selling. These assets could also have an "invisible" sub-group that may only be observed under exceptional find-circumstances. They include textiles of outstanding value (e.g. items with gold thread), a piece of which is already known from a hoard (Abaújvár, Bakos et al. 2020), and we also have a contemporary written source on such high-value textiles (Zolnay 1964). The significance of such objects can hardly be estimated concerning the contemporary exchange of goods.

- Research into the general history of economy has also revealed that such coexistence of different means of exchange and minted coins is not uncommon and is particularly typical of certain periods. It was an age of the so-called *Geldgewichtswirtschaft* (the economy of measured money), which means that the coins were not only counted (unless only clearly good-quality, nearly identical coins were used in one particular transaction), and all sorts of things were used in payment. They could be good coins (that were widely known and had a high silver content), bad coins (that had a low silver content but served as the official means of payment in the country), jewellery, hacksilver, and other valuable items. Of these, the ones containing silver were counted by their quality or were weighed in groups. The objects and jewellery containing silver or other precious metals were measured in the same way. This explains the presence of the items in the treasure hoards that can be identified as hacksilver.

- An evidence of this complex way of money use is the growing number of scales that have long been known in scholarship as money weighing scales, together with archaeological finds of weighs (Tóth & V. Székely 2017). These objects were needed wherever an exchange of goods took place. However, their increasing number and the discovery of hoards reveal which sites could have been important places of this form of exchange. We should not necessarily think of only one social or ethnic group when exploring their distribution, even if data obtained from written sources suggest this possibility.

- The presence of different social groups in the era whose wealth accumulation practices, or "tesauration strategies", may indicate significant differences, while the amount of accumulated wealth (e.g. the number of coins in the hoards) reflect a significant stratification of wealth at the same time. Among the hoards, there are assemblages made up of a few dozen coins as well as above ten thousand coins, which represent truly considerable wealth (Laszlovszky 1991).

- To interpret these, however, additional considerations must also be taken into account. The tesauration system of the period was not uniform; it was affected by social and regional differences. This is because tesauration could not only be done in money but also land, livestock, jewellery, salt, immovable property, etc. These are not just theoretical possibilities, but we have concrete data for all these from the period. In other words, the forms in which people kept their wealth depended on the place, and also on the individual "tesauration strategies."

- In connection with the large number of foreign coins discovered in Hungary, it would be worth examining the question which has already been raised in scholarship, but the detailed analysis of which has not been completed, yet. What kind of goods and products were given in return for the enormous number of silver coins taken to the country? Is it possible that a large number of silver coins attest an early phase of the export of livestock from Hungary, even if there is hardly any evidence of this in written documents? The latter question may also be of interest because it should also be taken into account in connection with the topographical occurrence of hoards. The economic historical interpretation of these questions requires a separate study on this issue.

The aspects listed so far were rather associated with the formation of hoards and the underlying economic principles. However, the reasons and practices for hiding hoards and their findspots lead to further questions:

- Time was a very important factor in the process of hiding (this question is also addressed in international scholarly literature). The place and time of hiding are also in connection with the nature of the danger. A lot of hoards were hidden when and where no safe possibility of escape was guaranteed, but there was still time to hide things. That is, the people who hid the hoards were aware of the peril, they knew what kind of danger they were facing (or thought they knew) but they did not want to or could leave that place. They hoped that somehow they would be able to defend themselves or that they would survive the attack. One of the most important written sources of such an event is the description of the siege of Esztergom by master Roger (Nagy 2003, 150; Master Roger 216–217).

- The exact location of hiding is also a complex question, even in the case of a small region. A substantial part of them may have been hidden in the vicinity of the given person's place of residence, but it is also conceivable that they were hidden during the flight (cf. the previous point) after it had become evident that they were not able to continue their way safely. This spot could even be at a significant distance from the place of living, that is, from the original location of tesauration. The fact that people fled carrying significant assets can also be inferred from the fact of a substantial number of jewellery items and even coins, which were discovered next to the people who were killed inside a building connected to the destruction of the Mongol Invasion (Sz.Wilhelm 2014).

- In the case of treasures hidden far from the original place of residence, and also in connection with the directions of flight and attack, the road network had a major significance. Nevertheless, this is not the only factor that affected the rate of destruction and, through this, the spatial occurrence of hoards. Previously, researchers often believed (and mapped) that the greatest destruction had taken place along the main roads because the Mongols used them. In other words, researchers attempted to reconstruct the movements of the Mongol armies, either on the basis of specific historical data on the destruction or based on the large medieval roads they had evidence of. They indicated a wider zone to those routes along which greater devastation must have been wrought. The idea is undoubtedly logical, but there are some indicators (e.g. hoards) that do not always project the same picture as the one that can be inferred in this way. Consequently, none of these elements should be emphasised as the fundamental or the best explanation. The combined use of different indicators, for instance, may reveal a much more complex picture than before, including the extent of the devastation that can be expected in the individual parts of the country (F. Romhányi & Laszlovszky 2021). From this aspect, the spatial distribution of hoards is an important piece of information, but we should not forget that in some regions (e.g. in Transylvania) hardly any hoards are known.

The investigations to be carried out in the way above are important not only because they can contribute to a better understanding of the circumstances of the Mongol Invasion. Further research is also necessary to ascertain how the findings of recent numismatic studies and the complex analyses of hoards influence each other. On the one hand, the examination of hoards has contributed to the re-dating of some coins. The re-dated coins now need to be compared to context of archaeological features and other finds, because the chronology of their context should possibly be re-dated as well. If this is the case, further features may be linked to the sequence of events that took place during the Mongol Invasion. The large number of new finds associated with the devastation (Laszlovszky 2003, 2012; Carmen Miserabile) will provide additional evidence on the contemporary circulation of money, as the coins found in people's "pockets" (boots) reflect the structure of the daily use of money in the period much better than the hoards that can be interpreted as the evidence of tesauration. This also means that the same analysis of hoards and finds can offer a solid basis for a more accurate dating of coin types connected to Béla III or IV, which is one of the most significant numismatic problems of the period. The long list of questions listed here clearly illustrates how this new catalogue of coins, combined with new finds from the period of the Mongol Invasion of Hungary, may serve as an important starting point for the exploration of issues that go far beyond contemporary minting.

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