

## OTHER DOUBLE SESTERTII IN THE BRUKENTHAL MUSEUM'S COLLECTION

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**Abstract.** *The National Brukenthal Museum's numismatic collection has several roman double sestertii. While one issued by Trajanus Decius, and another one, issued for Herennia Etruscilla were previously published, another four sestertii, one a cast forgery after a Trajan Decius type and three issued by Postumus were recently rediscovered. Until now, not a single double sestertius has been known as being unearthed from the territory of the roman province of Dacia.*

**Keywords:** *roman, coin, double sestertius, Lugdunum.*

Recently, in the National Brukenthal Museum's numismatic collection was discovered other 4 roman double sestertii. 2 double sestertii dated in the 3rd century from the collection were previously published<sup>1</sup>. O. Dudău belived that the Trajan Decius double sestertius was aquired from another part of the Roman Empire, presumably from the west<sup>2</sup>. She also believed that the double sestertius issued for his wife, Herennia Etruscilla was found around *Apulum* or *Sibiu*<sup>3</sup>.

Of the other 4 double sestertii, one is a modern cast forgery after a coin of Trajan Decius. The presence of a forgery should not surprise us, considering how rare these coins are<sup>4</sup>. In fact, the forgery was made after the Trajanus Decius type mentioned above:

## Trajan Decius (249 - 251)

1. Obv. **IMP C M Q TRAIANVS DECIVS AVG.** Radiate, cuirassed and draped bust to the right.

Rv. **FELICITAS SAECVLI.** Felicitas standing left, holding *caduceus* and *cornucopia*. S – C.

RIC IV/III, no. 115a .

Inv. no. T 1286/4628; D = 29 x 30,6 mm; W = 23,23 g.

The rarity of these coins inspired the realisation of forgeries, the Welzl collection including such a coin<sup>5</sup>.

The other 3 double sestertii were all issued by the emperor Postumus in the Lugdunum mint during the 260-262 period.

## Postumus (260 - 269)

2. Obv. **IMP [C M CASS LAT] POSTVMVS P F AVG.** Radiate, cuirassed and draped bust to the right.

Rv. **[FID]ES MI-LITVM.** Fides standing, draped to the left, between two standards.

RIC IV/III, no. 125.

Inv. no. T 1286/18701; D = 30,5 x 32 mm; W = 15,9 g.

3. Obv. **[IMP C] M CASS LAT POSTVMVS.** Radiate, cuirassed and draped bust to the right.

Rv. **LA[ETI]TIA.** Galley to the left.

RIC V/II, no. 142.

Inv. no. T 1286/19100; D = 32,9 x 33,1 mm; W = 21,5 g.

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<sup>1</sup> Oltea Dudău, *Dublu-sesterți de la Traianus Decius și Herennia Etruscilla din colecția Muzeului Național Brukenthal*, in Cl. Munteanu (ed.), *Monedă și comerț în sud-estul Europei*. III, 2009, pp. 79-82.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> According to the site [www.qblay.com](http://www.qblay.com), only 250 double sesterii from Trajanus Decius are known and only 21 for Herennia Etruscilla.

<sup>5</sup> RIC IV/III, p. 135, no. 115a (note).

4. Obv. IMP C M CASS LA[T PO]STVMVS P F AVG. Draped bust with helmet to the right.  
 Rv. LAE[TI]TIA. Galley to the left.  
 Exergue: [A]VG.  
 RIC IV/III, no. 145.  
 Inv. no. T 1286/19101; D = 31,7 x 35,1 mm; W = 21,45 g.

As O. Dudău correctly remarked, no double sestertius seem to have circulated in Roman Dacia<sup>6</sup>. This type of coin is neither present in the main sites of Dacia (*Apulum*<sup>7</sup>, *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*<sup>8</sup>, *Porolissum*<sup>9</sup>), nor in the auxiliary castra<sup>10</sup>.

Several double sestertii issued by Trajan Decius appear in the monetary circulation from *Carnuntum*<sup>11</sup>. From stray finds or hoards from Pannonia Inferior and Superior, and from Moesia Inferior and Superior, mentioned in Cr. Găzdac's book, no double sestertius is mentioned<sup>12</sup>.

Coins with the portrait of the „Gallic” emperor Postumus, who reigned over the provinces of Gaul, Germany, *Britannia*, *Hispania* and *Lusitania* from 260 to 269 AD are frequent in western Europe. Authentic or imitations, they occur especially in the nowadays territory of France as stray finds, as well as in hoards.

P. Bastien identified four regular emissions of bronze coins, the first of which began towards the middle of 260<sup>13</sup> and the last took place in 262<sup>14</sup>.

Though regular issues of Postumus' bronze coins ceased within the first years of his reign, unofficial copies were produced in enormous numbers until at least 270<sup>15</sup>. In Gaul existed an officina for double sestertius forgeries of Postumus, initially named „Atelier II”<sup>16</sup> and presumably identified with the site of Châteaubleau, where four techniques of casting and striking were used<sup>17</sup>.

Hoard of bronzes of Postumus sometime include older sestertii from the first to the early third centuries A.D., that have been overstruck with a radiate effigy of Postumus, or have had a radiate crown cut into the laureate head of the emperor<sup>18</sup>.

In terms of Roman monetary history, the official and imitative bronze coins of Postumus represent the death throes of a system of token bronze coinage that had been established more than two centuries ago by Augustus. After this point, no imperial or secessionist government would strike significant issues of large bronze coins until the monetary reforms of Anastasius<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Oltea Dudău, *art. cit. in loc. cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>7</sup> C. Găzdac, V. Suci, Agnes Alföldy-Găzdac, *Apulum*, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> C. Găzdac, S. Cociș, *Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa*, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> C. Găzdac, N. Gudea, *Porolissum*, Cluj-Napoca, 2006, *passim*.

<sup>10</sup> Oltea Dudău, *Circulația monetară în castrale de trupe auxiliare din Provincia Dacia*, Timișoara, 2006, *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> Fr. Dick, *Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Österreich*, IX, Wien, 1978, p. 94.

<sup>12</sup> C. Găzdac, *Circulația monetară în Dacia și provinciile învecinate de la Traian la Constantin*, I-II, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> P. Bastien, *Le Monnayage de Bronze de Postume*, Wetteren, 1967, pp. 46-52.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 125.

<sup>15</sup> Philip Kiernan, *Counterfeit bronze coinage in the late third century A.D. The Ardennes hoard of imitation double sestertii of Postumus*, in: *Kölner Jahrbuch*, 42, 2009, p. 625.

<sup>16</sup> P. Bastien, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>17</sup> Fabien Pilon, *Four coin production techniques used in three 'officinae' of Châteaubleau (ca 260-280)*, in: C. Alfaro, C. Marcos and P. Otero (eds.), *XIII Congreso Internacional de Numismática*, Madrid, 2003, p. 794.

<sup>18</sup> P. Bastien, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>19</sup> Philip Kiernan, *art. cit. in loc. cit.*, p. 625.

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