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New Aureus of Roman Empress Herennia Etruscilla Found in Gąski (Kuyavia, Poland)

*Nowy aureus rzymskiej cesarzowej Herenni Etruscylli znaleziony w Gąskach
(Kujawy, Polska)*

ABSTRACT

The article concerns a hitherto unpublished coin find from Gąski (Inowrocław County, Gniewkowo distr.), discovered in 2009 by archeologists from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Aureus in the barbarised type was struck during the reign of

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Emperor Trajan Decius for his wife, Herennia Etruscilla. The coin has a hole typical of aureus found in *Barbaricum*, indicating its extra-monetary use. It belongs to a group of only a few coins of this type found in the area of the Przeworsk culture, where it ended up as part of the loot most likely as a result of the Romans losing the battle against the Goths at Abrittus in 251 AD, when the emperor himself was killed.

Key words: Roman imperial coin, Roman monetary finds, Przeworsk culture, Gąski, *Pudicitia*, Herennia Etruscilla, Battle of Abrittus

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł dotyczy dotąd niepublikowanego znaleziska monetarnego z Gąsek (powiat Inowrocław, gmina Gniewkowo), odkrytego w 2009 r. przez archeologów z Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu. Aureus w zbarbaryzowanym typie został wybity za rządów cesarza Trajana Deciusa dla jego żony, Herenni Etruscylli. Moneta posiada typowy dla aureusów znajdujących na terenie *Barbaricum* otwór, co wskazuje na jej pozamonetarne użycie. Należy do zespołu zaledwie kilku monet tego typu znalezionych na terenie kultury przeworskiej, gdzie trafiła jako część łupu najprawdopodobniej wskutek przegranej przez Rzymian bitwy z Gotami pod Abrittus w 251 r. n.e., w której zginął sam cesarz.

Słowa kluczowe: rzymska moneta cesarska, rzymskie znaleziska monetarne, kultura przeworska, Gąski, *Pudicitia*, Herennia Etruscilla, bitwa pod Abrittus

Site 18 in Gąski, Gniewkowo distr., in the county of Inowrocław, in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodship, where the aureus of Herennia Etruscilla comes from, is the subject of archeological research dating back to the 1970s. Although the archeological research began in 1972 and the site itself was named 'Site 18 in Gąski' a year later, it is necessary to mention that individual finds had already been recorded in the area earlier, in the 19th century¹. From 1984 to 1991 excavations were carried out here by the Kuyavia Research Team (Zespół Badań Kujaw) of the then Institute of Prehistory of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. At first, i.e. until 1988, the Team worked under the direction of Aleksandra Cofta-Broniewska (1926–2013), then, until 1991, Barbara Stolpiak with the participation of Małgorzata Talarczyk-Andrałojć (1985–1990). Since 2008, on the initiative of a team from the Institute of Prehistory (now the Faculty of Archeology of the Adam Mickiewicz University) of the then Historical Faculty of the Adam Mickiewicz University (now the Faculty of History of the Adam Mickiewicz University) and the Cuiavia Foundation (Fundacja 'Cuiavia') under the direction of Józef Bednarczyk, with the participation of Małgorzata Andrałojć and Mirosław Andrałojć, magnetic prospecting using metal detectors has been carried out on the site.

¹ B. Zielonka, *Rejon Gopła w okresie późnolateńskim i rzymskim*, "Fontes Archeologici Posenienses" 1970, 20, p. 194.

The conducted research allowed archeologists to uncover a biritual burial ground dating back to the period from the 2nd century BC to the 1st century AD and the remains of a settlement dating to the 3rd to 4th century AD². It was estimated that the settlement area covered 13 acres, but that was probably only a fragment of it.³ The site is currently estimated to cover an area of approximately 12 hectares. Remains of buildings of a trade and dwelling character were found within the settlement. The former included post pits and traces of workshops where metal and ceramic products were originally made⁴, while there were several households in the area occupied by dwelling structures. Archeological artefacts uncovered in the area of the houses, from excavations between 1984 and 1991 – fragments of luxurious *terra sigillata* pottery, imported glassware, smaller or larger lumps of amber and Roman denarii, including a deposit of 143 denarii discovered in 1986⁵ – indicate extensive trading activities of the settlement's inhabitants. For unknown reasons, the settlement was irretrievably abandoned in the late 4th or early 5th century AD⁶.

During the archeological prospecting carried out at Site 18, an assemblage of Roman coins was discovered, which, at the request of Józef Bednarczyk, is currently being studied and elaborated by Katarzyna Balbuza. This collection includes an aureus signed with the name of empress Herennia Etruscilla (Fig. 1), which was recorded in 2009. The coin comes from the mint Rome and was struck in the mid-3rd century AD during

² A. Cofta-Broniewska, B. Stolpiak, M. Andrałojć, *Gąski, gm. Gniewkowo, woj. bydgoskie. Stanowisko 18*, in: *Informator Archeologiczny. Badania rok 1989*, ed. M. Konopka, Warszawa 1993, pp. 9–10 (see also earlier yearbooks); A. Cofta-Broniewska, *Badania stanowiska 18 w Gąskach, gmina Gniewkowo, woj. bydgoskie, "Ziemia Kujawska"* 1993, 9, pp. 201–224; M. Andrałojć, B. Stolpiak, *Pochówki dzieci z cmentarzyska kultury przeworskiej w Gąskach, stan. 18*, in: *Dusza maluczka a strata ogromna. Funeralia Lednickie, Spotkanie 6*, eds. W. Dzieduszycki, J. Wrzesiński, Poznań 2004, pp. 217–221; *Barbarzyńskie Tsunami. Okres Wędrówek Ludów w dorzeczu Odry i Wisły*, eds. A. Bursche, K. Kowalski, Warszawa–Szczecin 2017.

³ A. Cofta-Broniewska, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

⁴ A. Cofta-Broniewska, A. Koško, *Kujawy w pradziejach i starożytności*, Inowrocław–Poznań 2002, pp. 122, 152.

⁵ The coins are currently being investigated by Katarzyna Balbuza as a part of the research project, which is a continuation of previous research and is headed by Milena Danielewska-Teska and Paulina Suchowska-Ducke. Announcement: E. Konarzewska-Michalak, *Skarby z Gąsek wracają po 40 latach*, "Życie Uniwersyteckie" 2024, 6, pp. 12–13. See: K. Balbuza et al., *The Treasure of Roman denarii from Gąski site No. 18 (Kuyavia). Preliminary remarks*, "Historia Slavorum Occidentis" 2025, 3 (in print).

⁶ General information on the finds in Kuyavia, see: M. Rudnicki, *Kujawy (Central Poland) between Antiquity and Middle Ages*, in: *The Migration Period between the Oder and the Vistula*, vol. 2, eds. A. Bursche, J. Hines, A. Zapolska, Leiden 2020, pp. 469–499.

the reign of emperor Trajan Decius (249–251 AD)⁷ for his wife Herennia Cupressenia Etruscilla⁸. Below are the details of the coin:

Obverse: HER(ennia) ETRU[SC]ILLA AVG(usta). Bust of Herennia Etruscilla, diademed, draped, right.

Reverse: PVDIC[I]TIA AVG(usti). *Pudicitia* veiled, seated by column left, with right hand drawing veil and holding scepter⁹.

Axis: 12 h

Diameter: 18,7–19,6

Weight: 4,17



Fig. 1. Aureus of Trajan Decius found in 2009 in Gąski, Gniewkowo district, Inowrocław county. Photo by Anna Skowronek

⁷ PIR² M 520; K. Wittig, *C. Messius Quintus Traianus Decius*, in: *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 16, part 1, Stuttgart 1931, col. 1244–1245, no. 9; F.S. Salisbury, H. Mattingly, *The Reign of Trajan Decius*, "The Journal of Roman Studies" 1924, 14, 1–2, pp. 1–23; A.R. Birley, *C. Messius Quintus Traianus D.*, in: *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 3, Leiden 1997, pp. 348–349; A.R. Birley, *Decius Reconsidered*, in: *Les empereurs illyriens*, eds. E. Frézouls, H. Jouffroy, Strasbourg 1998, pp. 57–80; U. Huttner, *Von Maximinus Thrax bis Aemilianus*, in: *Die Zeit der Soldaten-Kaiser. Krise und Transformation des Römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr. (235–284)*, eds. K.-P. Johne, U. Hartmann, T. Gerhardt, Berlin 2008, pp. 201–212; D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*, Darmstadt 2011, p. 204; D. Potter, *Decius and Valerian*, in: *Imagining Emperors in the Later Roman Empire*, eds. D.W.P. Burgersdijk, A.J. Ross, Leiden 2018, pp. 18–37; L. Grozdanova, *The Roman Emperors against the Goths of Cniva: Political Mythology, Historical Documents and Retrievable Reality*, Sofia 2019, pp. 81–117; R. Selinger, *Decius. Ein römischer Kaiser zwischen Tradition und Restauration*, Berlin 2024.

⁸ PIR² H 136; W. Kroll, *Herennia Cupressenia Etruscilla*, in: *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 8, part 1, Stuttgart 1912, col. 681, no. 53; B. Klein, *Tranquillina, Otacilia, Etruscilla, Salonina: vier Kaiserinnen des 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.*, Saarbrücken 1998, pp. 142–177; D. Wardle, *Pudicitia*, in: *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 10, Leiden 2001, p. 585; D. Kienast, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

⁹ *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. 4.3, *Gordian III to Uranian Antoninus*, eds. H. Mattingly, E.A. Sydenham, London 1949 [hereinafter: RIC IV.3], Traj. Decius (Herennia Etruscilla) 59a (?): weight 4,17; diameter 18,7–19,6; axis 12h. Typology of *Pudicitia* representations in Roman minting, see: F. Schmidt-Dick, *Typenatlas der römischen Reichsprägung von Augustus bis Aemilianus*, vol. 1, *Weibliche Darstellungen*, Wien 2002, pp. 95–96.

Coin in the upper part of the coinage disc, exactly above the head of the empress on the obverse and the head of *Pudicitia* on the reverse, is pierced (at 12 o'clock)¹⁰. On the obverse and reverse the coin shows a medium degree of abrasion. Aureus is catalogued in *The Roman Imperial Coinage* (RIC) No. 59, subtype A. However, the catalogue does not separately distinguish the two variants of obverse and reverse. They differ in the hairstyle of the empress on the obverse and the iconography of *Pudicitia* on the reverse¹¹. In the catalogue titled *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* this type is already categorized separately¹². The coin bears the standard legend on the obverse – the only one known for these specimens: HER ETRVSCILLA AVG – which does not allow for a precise dating of issuances. Attempts to date these coins using iconography, and more specifically the empress' hairstyles, are fraught with risk. This is because the depictions of the empress represent two different hairstyles – both wearing a diadem, but with a different coiffure. It is assumed that the coins depicting Etruscilla in a hairstyle with wavy hair and a braid worn at the back of her head are later¹³. The aureus from Gańki belongs to this group. In addition, the aurei mentioned have yet another feature that makes it necessary to distinguish at least two variants in RIC subtype 59 A. Well, some aurei with the hairstyle of the empress with braid have on the reverse a slightly different arrangement of the hand

¹⁰ More on the phenomenon of coin drilling, see: J.-P. Callu, *La perforation de l'or romain*, in: *Die Münze. Bild – Botschaft – Bedeutung. Festschrift für Maria R.-Alföldi*, eds. H.-C. Noeske, H. Schubert, Frankfurt am Main, 1991, pp. 99–121; A. Bursche, *Złote medaliony rzymskie w Barbaricum. Symbolika prestiżu i władzy społeczeństw barbarzyńskich u schyłku starożytności*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 171–176; A. Bursche, T. Więcek, *Roman Gold Coins and Medallions, Pierced or Looped, from the Collections of the National Museum of Ukrainian History in Kyïv*, "Wiadomości Numizmatyczne" 2010, 54, 2, pp. 193–224. On the finds of Roman coins with holes from the *Barbaricum* area, see: A. Bursche, *Złote*, pp. 129–171; in particular about the denarii with holes, see also A. Bursche, J. Okulicz-Kozaryn, *Groby z monetami rzymskimi na cmentarzysku kultury wielbarskiej w Weklicach koło Elbląga*, in: *Comhlan. Studia z archeologii okresu przedrzymskiego i rzymskiego w Europie Środkowej dedykowane Teresie Dąbrowskiej w 65. rocznicę urodzin*, ed. J. Andrzejowski, Warszawa 1999, pp. 141–163; A. Bursche, K. Hahuła, *Roman Coins from the Princely Burial in Białęcino 2004 (Balenthin) in Pommerania*, in: *Europa Barbarica. Čwierć wieku archeologii w Małomęczu*, ed. P. Łuczkiwicz, Lublin 2004, pp. 139–146. This custom, little known in Rome, became widespread in *Barbaricum* from the 2nd century AD onwards.

¹¹ RIC IV.3, Traj. Dec. 59a. On the various variants, see: footnote 59 (a) as well as * on p. 127.

¹² X. Calicó, *The Roman Aurei Catalogue*, vol. 2, *From Didius Iulianus to Constantinus I (193 AD–335 AD)*, Barcelona 2003, no. 3308c.

¹³ On the subject of diversity of hairstyles, see: RIC IV.3, p. 109.

with which the empress reaches the veil, as well as a column behind the seat back. The specimens with the column are assumed to have been barbarized¹⁴. The aureus from Gaški belongs to this group. An additional element that distinguishes the coin is the hole in the upper part of the disc, at the height of the empress' head. The custom of drilling coins is known and typical of the specimens found in *Barbaricum*.

The coin was struck during the reign of Trajan Decius on behalf of the empress Herennia Etruscilla. The couple married before 249 and Herennia was then given the title of Augusta after Decius took over as emperor. As Herennia Cupressenia Etruscilla Augusta she ruled in Rome with her husband until his death. She received the honorable titles of Mother of the Camps (*Mater Castrorum*) and Mother of the Augusti (*Mater Augustorum*) from the Senate. She outlived her husband slightly, dying in July 251 during the reign of the next emperor, Trebonianus Gallus. The couple had two sons, Herennius Etruscus¹⁵, who died in the same Battle of Abritus, as his father, and Hostilianus¹⁶.

Trajan Decius' reign in Rome was short – less than two years (from the end of September/beginning of October 249 to June 251) – and very turbulent¹⁷. The unrest that erupted from time to time within the state

¹⁴ Cf. RIC IV.3, Traj. Dec. 59a, fn. 59 (a), p. 127.

¹⁵ PIR² H 106; C. Wittig, *Herennius Etruscus*, in: *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 15, part 1, Stuttgart 1931, pp. 1284–1285, no. 10.

¹⁶ PIR² V 8; C. Wittig, *Hostilianus*, in: *Paulys*, vol. 15, part 1, pp. 1285–1286, no. 11.

¹⁷ On the epoch: E. Demougeot, *La formation de l'Europe et les invasions barbares*, vol. 1, *Des origines germaniques à l'avènement de Dioclétien*, Paris 1969; B. Scardigli, *Die gotisch-römischen Beziehungen im 3. und 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr. (Ein Forschungsbericht 1950–1970)*. I. Das 3. Jahrhundert, in: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, part 2, *Principat*, vol. 5.1, *Politische Geschichte*, Berlin–New York 1976, pp. 220–285; B. Gerov, *Die Einfälle der Nordvölker in den Ostbalkanraum im Lichte der Münzschatzfunde*, in: *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, part 2, *Principat*, vol. 6, *Politische Geschichte*, Berlin–New York 1977, pp. 130–142; H. Wolfram, *Die Goten. Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts*, München 1990, pp. 55–58; H. Wolfram, *Kniva*, in: *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. 17, Berlin–New York 2001, pp. 34–37; D.S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire. A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, Oxford 1990, pp. 283–287; D.S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay, AD 180–395*, London–New York 2004, pp. 245–247; B. Bleckmann, *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts in der spätantiken und byzantinischen Geschichtsschreibung: Untersuchungen zu den nachdionischen Quellen der Chronik des Johannes Zonaras*, München 1992, pp. 157–160; P. Heather, *The Goths*, Oxford 1997, p. 40; A.R. Birley, *Decius*, p. 77; J. Kolendo, *Novae during the Goth Raid of AD 250/1 (Iordanes, Getica 101–103)*, in: *Novae. Legionary Fortress and Late Antique Town*, eds. T. Derda, P. Dyczek, J. Kolendo, vol. 1, *A Companion to the Study of Novae*, Warsaw 2008, pp. 117–118; G. Depeyrot, *La propagande monétaire (64–233) et le trésor de Marcianopolis*, Wetteren 2004, pp. 7–20; A. Ziolkowski, *The Background to the Third-Century Crisis of the Roman Empire*, in: *The Roman Empire in Context:*

and on its borders necessitated increased military activity of the Roman army and the emperor himself. During his absence in Rome because of the fighting on the frontiers, an uprising against his rule broke out in Rome, sparked by Iulius Valens Licinianus. In turn, a rebellion of soldiers took place on the Rhine. These conflicts, although eventually tackled, undermined the emperor's authority in the society. The most serious in terms of consequences, however, were the invasions of the barbarian tribes – the Carpi and Goths – against whom the emperor set out in person with his son Herennius Etruscus. His second son, Hostilianus, remained in Rome. The clash with the Goths led by a king named Cniva, which the Romans lost, occurred in 250 at Beroe (now Stara Zagora, ancient Ulpia Augusta Traiana). At that moment the Goths were able to occupy Philippopolis (modern Plovdiv) in Thrace unhindered, and Priscus¹⁸. Roman governor of the province of Thrace, was proclaimed the emperor by the Goths. Decius, together with his son Herennius Etruscus, attacked the Goths again in 251, having resumed the hostilities. After some minor successes, June saw the Battle of Abritus (Abrittus, modern Razgrad) in the Roman province of Moesia Inferior, when the Romans clashed with a federation of Goths and Scythians led by the Gothic king Cniva. The battle ended with the success of the Goths while the Roman emperor and his son suffered deaths¹⁹. Trebonianus Gallus²⁰, successor of Decius, had to agree to let the Goths depart to their seats on the other side of the Danube with their loots and captives. The Romans were humiliated and paid a high price for this defeat. Not only with the lives of the emperor and his son and co-ruler, but also with gold²¹.

The coin found in Gaški was struck in the name of an empress. The custom of issuing coins on behalf of Roman women, including empresses, and therefore, coins not signed by emperors, dates back to the beginning of the Julio-Claudian era. There were specific political objectives behind this, such as emphasizing the authority of women in the state,

Historical and Comparative Perspectives, eds. J.P. Arnason, K.A. Raaflaub, Oxford 2011, pp. 113–133; H. Wolfram, *Die Goten und ihre Geschichte*, München 2022, pp. 31–33.

¹⁸ *PIR*² P 971.

¹⁹ L. Caelius Firmianus Lactantius, *Divinarum institutionum libri septem, Fasc. 2, libri III et IV*, Berolini 2007, 4; Zosime, *Histoire nouvelle, Livres I–II*, ed. F. Paschoud, Paris 2003, 1, 25; Ioannis Zonarae *Epitomae Historiarum*, eds. M. Pinder, T. Büttner-Wobst. 3 vols, Bonn 1841–1897, 12.20.

²⁰ *PIR*¹ V 403; R. Hanslik, *Imp. Caesar C. Vibius Trebonianus Gallus Augustus*, in: *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 8, A2, Stuttgart 1958, col. 1984–1994, no. 58; D. Kienast, *op. cit.*, pp. 209–211.

²¹ A. Bursche, *The Battle of Abritus, the Imperial Treasury and Aurei in Barbaricum*, “Numismatic Chronicle” 2013, 173, pp. 151–170.

emphasizing the good relations between the imperial couple (*concordia*), the solidarity of the women of the imperial house with the timeless values and virtues promoted in the imperial minting²² and thus support for the imperial program of state ideology. As Minerva Keltanen aptly states in relation to women of the Antonine period: 'The coin types of empresses are to support imperial dynastic ideology rather than their own private intentions'²³. One of the values that Herennia Etruscilla promoted on her coins was *Pudicitia*, symbolizing purity, shamefulness, morality, modesty. *Pudicitia* stood guard for marital purity, and was revered mainly by women²⁴. During the imperial period, from as early as the time of Augustus, *Pudicitia* became closely ideologically associated with the imperial house and especially with women, often empresses, who embodied the ideal of *Pudicitia*. By promoting *Pudicitia* in women's minting, empresses were referred to as virtuous women, like priestesses of Vesta²⁵. Ovid does not even hesitate to state that the empress Livia, wife of emperor Augustus and mother of emperor Tiberius, is 'the Vesta of pure matrons'²⁶. Valerius Maximus also compares Livia with *Pudicitia*:

Whence should I invoke you, Chastity, chief buttress of men and women alike? You dwell in the hearth consecrated to Vesta by ancient religion, you watch over the sacred couch of Capitoline Juno, you never leave your post on the pinnacle of the Palatine, the august habitation, and the most holy marriage bed of Julia. By your protection the emblems of boyhood are defended, by reverence for your divinity the flower of youth remains intact, under your guardianship the

²² See: P. Gkantziós Drápelová, *Empresses on Early Byzantine Coins (Sixth to Seventh Centuries): Evidence of Power?*, in: *Empresses-in-Waiting: Female Power and Performance at the Late Roman Court*, eds. C. Rollinger, N. Viermann, Liverpool 2024, pp. 177–202.

²³ M. Keltanen, *The Public Image of the Four Empresses: Ideal Wives, Mothers and Regents?*, in: *Women, Wealth and Power in the Roman Empire*, eds. P. Setälä et al., Rome 2002, p. 146.

²⁴ More on *Pudicitia* see: G. Radke, *Pudicitia*, in: *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 23, Stuttgart 1959, col. 1942–1945; R. Peter, *Pudicitia*, in: *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, vol. 3, part 2, ed. W.H. Roscher, Leipzig 1902, col. 3273–3277; G. Radke, *Die Götter Altitaliens*, Münster 1965, p. 267; idem, *Pudicitia*, in: *Der Kleine Pauly*, vol. 4, München 1979, pp. 1240–1241; W. Köhler, *Pudicitia*, in: *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica Classica e Orientale*, vol. 6, Roma 1965, pp. 539–540. Examples of the presence of *Pudicitia* in ancient art: R. Vollkommer, *Pudicitia*, in: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. 7, Zürich–München 1994, pp. 589–592; T. Mikocki, *Zgodna, pobożna, płodna, skromna, piękna... Propaganda cnót żeńskich w sztuce rzymskiej*, Wrocław 1997, pp. 197–265.

²⁵ T. Mikocki, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

²⁶ Ovid, *Tristia. Ex Ponto*, transl. A.L. Wheeler, revis. G.P. Goold, Cambridge 1924, IV 13.29.

matron's robe is appraised. Come therefore, and hear of things that yourself ordained²⁷.

The presence of *Pudicitia* in numismatic material can be earliest found on the coins of the empress Plotina, wife of the emperor Trajan, but the legend of PVDICITIA is not illustrated there by the personification of the goddess, but by her altar²⁸. However, the personification itself is placed a bit later on the coins of Trajan's successor, emperor Hadrian²⁹ and coins issued on behalf of his wife Sabina³⁰. Subsequently, *Pudicitia* is promoted on coins minted in the name of the following women of the imperial house from the Antonine and Severian dynasties as well as from the Crisis of the Third Century – Faustina I, Faustina II, Lucilla, Crispina, Julia Domna, Julia Paula, Julia Soaemias, Julia Maesa, Sallustia Barbia Orbiana, Julia Mamaea, Tranquillina, Otacilla Severa, Herennia Etruscilla, Salonina, Magnia Urbica. It is also promoted on their coins by some emperors: Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Septimius Severus, Alexander Severus, Gordian, Trajan Decius, Herennius Etruscus, Hostilianus, Trebonianus Gallus. Sometimes these are parallel issues of emperors and empresses/women associated with the imperial house³¹, and at other times exclusive issues of emperors. In this case, only three emperors chose to promote *Pudicitia* alone – Gordian

²⁷ Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, vol. 2, books 6–9, transl. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, Cambridge 2000, VI 1. The name Julia appears in the text because the name of the empress was *Livia Drusilla*; *Iulia Augusta*. On the identification in epigraphic material of *Pudicitia* with individuals who embody the qualities of a deity, see: T. Mikocki, *op. cit.*, pp. 200–201; G. Radke, *Pudicitia*, col. 1945.

²⁸ *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. 2, *Vespasian to Hadrian (69–138)*, eds. H. Mattingly, E.A. Sydenham, London 1926 [hereinafter: *RIC II*], Trajan 733=B. Woytek, *Die Reichsprägung des Kaisers Traianus (98–117)*, Wien 2010 [hereinafter: Woytek] 707²; *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. 2.3, *From AD 117 to AD 138 – Hadrian*, eds. R. Abdy, P.F. Mittag, London 2019 [hereinafter: *RIC II.3*], Hadrian 293–295.

²⁹ *RIC II.3*, Hadrian 293–295, 846–847, 856–857, 914–915, 2992, 3063.

³⁰ *RIC II.3*, Hadrian (Sabina) 2491, 2505–2507, 2530–2537.

³¹ Parallel issues: *RIC II.3*, Hadrian 293–295, 846–847, 856–857, 914–915, 2992, 3063; Antoninus Pius: *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. 3, *Antoninus Pius to Commodus*, eds. H. Mattingly, E.A. Sydenham, London 1930 [hereinafter: *RIC III*], Antoninus Pius 702; Septimius Severus: *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. 4.1, *Pertinax to Geta*, eds. H. Mattingly, E.A. Sydenham, London 1936 [hereinafter: *RIC IV.1*], Septimius Severus 524; Severus Alexander: *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. 4.2, *Macrinus to Pupienus*, eds. H. Mattingly, E.A. Sydenham, C.H.V. Sutherland, London 1938 [hereinafter: *RIC IV.2*], Severus Alexander 307; Trajan Decius: *RIC IV.3*, Trajan Decius 46; 159 (Herennius Etruscus); 196 and 203 (Hostilian); 58, 59–60, 65, 136–137 (Herennia Etruscilla); Gallienus: *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. 5.1, *Valerian to Florian*, ed. P.H. Webb, London 1927, Gallienus 272; 24–25, 38, 43, 46–47, 51, 65–66, 82 (Salonina).

III, Trebonianus Gallus and Volusian³². Empresses on whose coins the *Pudicitia* is propagated, while not being promoted in the mintage of their spouses, are: Plotina, Faustina II, Lucilla, Crispina, Julia Domna, Julia Paula, Julia Soaemias, Julia Maesa, Otacillia Severa and Magnia Urbica³³. In the mintage *Pudicitia* is depicted standing or sitting, as a young woman in a long dress, sometimes holding a scepter and supporting a veil on her head with her hand³⁴. Although the iconography varies, the feature that is common and decisive for the specificity of representations of *Pudicitia* in the Roman minting is the gesture of the hand holding the veil on her head, expressing feminine modesty. In these cases, the modesty of the empress embodying the qualities of *Pudicitia*, which consist of cherished moral values³⁵. So-called virtues and values of a timeless nature, occupied an important place in the ideological programme of emperors and members of the imperial house disseminated in the mintage of the time. They created, indeed, a positive, but of an ideological nature, image of the ruler, whatever the reality was. *Pudicitia*, alongside other virtues such as *Concordia* (concord), *Pietas* (piety), *Fecunditas* (fertility), contributed to the universal representation of Roman empresses as pure and modest, concordant, pious and fertile³⁶. Since *Pudicitia* was also promoted in the mintage of the emperors themselves, starting as early as with Hadrian, one can conclude that the emperors also wanted to identify themselves with the moral values associated with *Pudicitia*. Interestingly, this phenomenon existed from the beginning, when the personification of *Pudicitia* was placed on Hadrian's coins for the first time in the history of Roman minting. The situation in which *Pudicitia* is promoted on the coins of the male representatives of the imperial house is explained by the intention to integrate this value into the ideological context of imperial power. Such

³² Exclusive issues of emperors: Gordian III: *RIC* IV.3, Gordian III 240; Trebonianus Gallus: *RIC* IV.3, Trebonianus Gallus 88; Volusian: *RIC* IV.3, Volusian 204, 232–233.

³³ Only women's issues with *Pudicitia*: *RIC* II, Trajan 733=Woytek 707²; *RIC* III, Marcus Aurelius 707–708 (Faustina II); 778–781, 1758–1759 (Lucilla); *RIC* III, Commodus 285, 670 (Crispina); *RIC* IV.1, Caracalla 385–386, 589, 602 (Julia Domna); Elagabalus: *RIC* IV.2, Elagabalus 221A–221B (Julia Paula), 238 (Julia Soaemias), 267–269, 417–420 (Julia Maesa), *RIC* IV.3, Philip I 123, 128A, 145, 209–211 (Otacillia Severa); *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. 5.2, *Marcus Aurelius Probus to Amandus*, ed. P.H. Webb, London 1933, Carus 339 (Magnia Urbica).

³⁴ On the iconographic typology of *Pudicitia*'s representations in minting, see: B. Lichocka, *Pudicitia sur les monnaies romaines*, "Études et Travaux" 1976, 9, pp. 159–168; T. Mikocki, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

³⁵ More about the symbolism of *Pudicitia*'s representations on the coins, see: R. Peter, *Pudicitia*, col. 3273–3277; B. Lichocka, *op. cit.*, pp. 159–168; T. Mikocki, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–211.

³⁶ See: T. Mikocki, *op. cit.*

a concept was put forward by Carlos Noreña in his article on Hadrian's chastity:

In the second century AD, domestic harmony and conjugal love were emphasized, with more regularity and insistence than in earlier periods, as necessary conditions for marital stability. The emperor's own marriage was not exempt from these demands. Just as in any other marriage, the affective bond between husband and wife within the imperial household depended on the sexual chastity not only of the empress, but of the emperor as well. In fact, the emperor's marriage was supposed to be exemplary in this regard. And because of the symbolic association between the domestic harmony of the imperial household and the political harmony of the Roman state, both expressed by the ideal of *concordia*, the chastity of the Roman emperor not only conduced to the marital bliss of the imperial couple, but also guaranteed political order³⁷.

As Erika Manders argues, these conclusions can also be applied to the minting of Decius:

Decius [...] would have issued these specific types so as to set a moral *exemplum* and to emphasize the political harmony of the state, in this probably emulating Hadrian³⁸.

Aureus of Decius struck for Herennia Etruscilla, discovered in GaŃski, Gniewkowo distr., is a unique find on the territory of Przeworsk culture³⁹. Indeed, only a few aurei from this area are known and they are dated back to the time of Gordian III⁴⁰ and Decius, including these minted for Herennia Etruscilla⁴¹. Some of them are pierced. Namely the aurei

³⁷ C. Noreña, *Hadrian's Chastity*, "Phoenix" 2007, 61, 3–4, p. 311.

³⁸ E. Manders, *Coining Images of Power. Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage, AD 193–284*, Leiden 2012, p. 265.

³⁹ A. Bursche, *The Battle*, p. 158.

⁴⁰ From Kietlice, Głubczyce distr., found before 1926, pierced: R. Ciołek, *Die Fundmünzen der Römischen Kaiserzeit in Polen. Schlesien*, Wetteren 2008, p. 107, no. 161; RIC IV.3, Gordian III 8; from Oleśnica, Oleśnica distr., found in 1683, not pierced (R. Ciołek, *op. cit.*, p. 184, no. 266; RIC IV.3, Gordian III 97 or 98); and from Opatów, Opatów distr. (pierced, A. Bursche, *Later Roman-Barbarian Contacts in Central Europe. Numismatic Evidence*, in: *Studien zu Fundmünzen der Antike* (SFMA), vol. 11, Berlin 1996, p. 201, no. 135).

⁴¹ Białobrzezie, Kondratowice distr., found in 1891, pierced: R. Ciołek, *op. cit.*, p. 18, no. 1; A. Bursche, *Dawne znaleziska monet rzymskich w świetle nowych badań* (II), Śląsk, "Wiadomości Numizmatyczne" 1983, 28, 3–4, p. 231. More, see: A. Bursche, *The Battle*, p. 157 (here also on other gold coins from the territory of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine); A.

of Trajan Decius with holes, found in Łagiewniki (Łagiewniki distr.)⁴², in Nowa Cerekwia (Głubczyce distr.; the latter is an aureus issued for Herennia Etruscilla)⁴³. Others come from Rypin (the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodship)⁴⁴, or from Białobrzegie⁴⁵. The aureus from Gąski discussed here is another one discovered in the lands of the Przeworsk culture.

The question of the provenance of coins from the mid-3rd century AD discovered in the lands of the Przeworsk culture was convincingly answered by Aleksander Bursche in his article from 2013 on gold coin finds in Poland⁴⁶. The largest number of these finds are the issues of Trajan Decius, the second largest constitute those of Gordian III, and the smallest is combined of those of Philip the Arab. According to Bursche, aurei from the present territory of Poland and Belarus from the mid-3rd century AD, found in areas once occupied by the Wielbark and Przeworsk cultures, should be linked to the Goths and their allies, and more specifically to the Battle of Abritus, which took place in 251 AD. In present day Ukraine, their distribution coincides mainly with the lands of the Cherniakhiv

Bursche, B. Niezabitowska, *Two Antique Gold Coins from Ulów in Roztocze*, in: *Studia Barbarica*, eds. B. Niezabitowska-Wisniewska et al., vol. 2, Lublin 2018, pp. 249–261.

⁴² R. Ciołek, *op. cit.*, p. 139, no. 217, found in 1886, RIC IV.3, Traj. Dec. 1 or 11, with hole; A. Bursche, *Dawne*, p. 231, no. 13; idem, *Later*, p. 197, no. 109; W. Łonak, *Znaleziska monet rzymskich na Śląsku*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 129, no. 175C. A. Bursche, *The Battle*, p. 157.

⁴³ R. Ciołek, *op. cit.*, p. 169–170, no. 253.2 (literature here). The coin found before 1878, does not have a hole; A. Bursche, *The Battle*, p. 157.

⁴⁴ RYPIN, the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodship, isolated finds from the period before 22 of September 1890. See: A. Romanowski, *Die Fundmünzen der Römischen Zeit in Polen. Rechtsufriges Masowien und Podlachien*, Wetteren 2008, p. 113, no. 179; A. Bursche, *Later*, p. 156, no. 73.

⁴⁵ Aureus found in 1891. See: R. Ciołek, *op. cit.*, p. 18, no. 1 bottom of page; A. Bursche, *Dawne*, p. 231, which classifies this coin as a 'verdoppelte Fundgabe' and refers it to the aureus from Łagiewniki.

⁴⁶ A. Bursche, *The Battle*. The article was subsequently published in a Russian-language version: Бурсча при Абрите, императорская казна и ауреусы в Барбарикуме, "Oium" 2016, 5, pp. 127–140. This thesis has gained wide acceptance in science: R. Bland, *What Happened to Gold Coinage in the 3rd c. AD?*, "The Journal of Roman Archaeology" 2013, 26, p. 273; idem, *The Gold Coinage of Philip I and Family*, "Revue Numismatique" 2014, 171, pp. 95–99; M. Kulikowski, *Imperial Triumph: the Roman World from Hadrian to Constantine, AD 138–363*, London 2016, pp. 150–154; A. Hostein, *Note sur les dariques de Cniva (Dexippus Vindobonensis) et autres curiosités 'barbares'*, "Revue Numismatique" 2017, 174, p. 48; A. Ziolkowski, *Trasfondo de la crisis del Imperio Romano en el siglo III*, in: *Aspectos de la historia del Imperio Romano: textos de Morstein-Marx, Rosenstein, Mattingly, Ziolkowski, Grey y Drinkwater*, ed. D. Santos, La Plata 2017, pp. 67–95; G.A. Cecconi, A. Hostein, *L'imperatore Decio, Germanicus Maximus. A proposito di un'iscrizione recentemente scoperta in Palazzo Vecchio a Firenze*, "Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz" 2018, 29, pp. 73–86.

culture, partly also with the Wielbark culture. In the aforementioned Battle of Abritus in 251 AD, the Goths crushed the Roman army. As mentioned earlier, the emperor and his son Herennius Etruscus were killed⁴⁷. It was under these circumstances, according to Bursche, that the Goths seized Roman gold – presumably in the form of coins (although bullion is not ruled out). Roman soldiers setting out on the long march to war took large quantities of gold and silver with them. However, given the total defeat suffered by the Roman army at the Battle of Abritus, it cannot be excluded that a significant part of the imperial treasury may also have fallen into the hands of the barbarians as spoils of war. The coins, therefore, most likely found their way to the area of the Przeworsk culture not so much in connection with political or trade contacts with the Roman Empire, but ‘in consequence of an indirect relationship with representatives of the Gothic elites’⁴⁸. The study of Roman gold from the mid-3rd century AD was further explored by Aleksander Bursche and Kyril Myzgin in their article in the ‘Journal of Roman Archeology’ in 2020, where the authors traced the presence of gold coins at archeological sites of the Wielbark and Cherniakhiv cultures, particularly in graves (phase C1b–C2 of the Later Roman Empire). The researchers put forward a hypothesis that the acquisition of huge amounts of gold by barbarians may have been a direct cause of the deterioration of the aureus under the successors of Decius.

Aureus of Herennia Etruscilla discovered in Kuyavia in 2009 during prospective archeological investigations carried out with a metal detector is one of the rare finds of this type (aurei from the time of Trajan Decius) in the lands of the Przeworsk culture. It was discovered on a site where once existed a settlement inhabited by a wealthy community, as evidenced by archeological finds, including imports. The settlement in GaŃski was a central place of the regional group of the Przeworsk culture and at the same time one of the nodal points on the Amber Road.

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⁴⁷ G. Radoslava, G. Dzanev, N. Nikolov, *The Battle at Abrittus in AD 251: Written Sources, Archaeological and Numismatic Data*, “Archaeologia Bulgarica” 2011, 15, 3, p. 23–49.

⁴⁸ A. Bursche, *The Battle*, p. 158.

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