

**DAVID R. SEAR**

# *Certificate of Authenticity*

*issued by the Ancient Coin Certification Service (A.C.C.S.)*



*This coin has been personally inspected and authenticated by*

*Issued to:* Jens Feierabend

*On:* June 6, 2017

*David R. Sear*

*Ruler:* Otho (AD 69, January-April)

*Denomination:* bronze as or 4 chalkoi (?)

*Province:* Syria

*Mint:* Antioch-on-the-Orontes

*Date:* AD 69

*Weight:* 9.28 grams

*Maximum Diameter:* 24.76 millimeters

*Die Axis:* ↑

*Obverse:* [IMP M OTH]O CAE AVG (clockwise), laureate head of Otho right.

*Reverse:* large S C within laurel wreath.

*References:* RPC 4319 and pl. 164 (6 specimens cited); McAlee (*The Coins of Roman Antioch*) 323; BMCG p. 177, 213.

*Grade:* nearly EF with excellent portrait and nice brown patina, rare

*Historical & Numismatic Note:* destined to become one of the greatest cities of the ancient world, Antioch-on-the-Orontes, the capital of Seleucid and later of Roman Syria, was founded in 300 BC by Seleucus I Nicator. Named after the king's father Antiochus, a Macedonian noble, the city was situated on the left bank of the Orontes some fifteen miles from the sea, on the edge of a large and fertile plain. Strategically, it was ideally placed between the Anatolian and Eastern possessions of Seleucus' kingdom. The city of Seleucia, founded about the same time at the mouth of the Orontes, became the harbor of its more important neighbor. Originally populated by 5,300 Athenian and Macedonian settlers whom Antigonus had planted at nearby Antigoneia, Antioch, like most capital cities, soon developed a very cosmopolitan population. This included a large Jewish community whose privileges were said to date from the time of Seleucus himself. As the royal capital, Antioch-on-the-Orontes naturally became the principal mint for the Seleucid coinage and remained so throughout the two and a half centuries of the kingdom's existence. Pompey the Great annexed the city in 64 BC and it became the capital of the Roman province of Syria and the seat of its proconsular governor. Its coinage continued on a large scale and under the emperors the Antiochene mint became one of the most important in the eastern half of the Empire, supplying local currency in both silver and bronze for circulation over a wide area. In periods of emergency, such as civil wars and foreign invasion, the mint was also utilized for the striking of regular Roman denominations in silver and gold, especially under Vespasian and several of the Severan emperors. Eventually, in the later 3rd century, Antioch became a regular Roman mint as part of the decentralization of currency production. It was to remain an important supplier of coinage to the eastern provinces down to the time of the Persian and Arab invasions of the early 7th century. This nicely preserved bronze denomination was issued from Antioch during the reign of Marcus Salvius Otho, one of the emperors who held power briefly during the period of civil wars following the suicide of Nero in AD 68. It belongs to a large class of Antiochene bronzes lacking the mint name but bearing the formula S C (*Senatus Consulto*, "by Decree of the Senate") on the reverse. The denomination is uncertain but it may have circulated as the equivalent of an as in the Roman currency system (cf. RPC I, pp. 623-4).

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