

DAVID R. SEAR

Certificate of Authenticity

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This coin has been personally inspected and authenticated by

Issued to: Jens Georg Feierabend

On: April 10, 2018

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Hadrian (AD 117-138)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: c. AD 131

Weight: 23.79 grams

Maximum Diameter: 30.88 millimeters

Die Axis: ↑

Obverse: HADRIANVS AVGVSTVS, laureate head of Hadrian left.

Reverse: [FELICITATI AVG] (around), COS III P P (in exergue) [S] C (in left and right field), galley travelling right over waves, with steersman and rowers, acrostolium at stern, mast with furled sail in bows.

References: Cayón (*Los Sestercios del Imperio Romano II*) p. 97, 316 (*same dies*), citing Ratto (*Roma Imperiale nelle Monete di Adriano e di sua famiglia*); Cohen 689, citing specimen in Bibliothèque nationale, Paris = RIC 703k = BMCRE p. 451, 1392 note = Strack (*Untersuchungen zur Römischen Reichsprägung des Zweiten Jahrhunderts*) 838; Hill (*The Dating and Arrangement of the Undated Coins of Rome, A.D. 98-148*) 461.

Grade: F/fair and unpatinated, a rare variant of this interesting travel type — possibly only the third recorded specimen

Historical & Numismatic Note: Publius Aelius Hadrianus was born in AD 76 of a family that lived in the Spanish city of Italica. His father died when he was only nine and he entered the childless household of the future emperor Trajan, who also came from Italica. In AD 100, he married Vibia Sabina, the daughter of Trajan's niece, Matidia. It thus seemed that he had been marked out for the imperial succession, though no formal adoption ever took place. Great mystery surrounded the circumstances of his accession, which took place in the East. News of Trajan's sudden death in Cilicia was withheld for several days during which time the Empress Plotina announced that her dying husband had confided to her in secret his desire to adopt Hadrian as his heir. No one wished to challenge the word of the highly respected imperial consort and a somewhat reluctant Senate followed the army in ratifying the new emperor's accession. Hadrian had a keen interest in experiencing first hand the diverse peoples and places of his vast Empire. Accordingly, during the two decades of his reign he undertook three great journeys in which he visited almost every province over which he ruled. Many of his coin types are connected with these imperial tours making the coinage of this reign one of the largest and most varied in the entire Roman Imperial series. This orichalcum sestertius (worth one quarter of the silver denarius) belongs to the middle phase of Hadrian's reign, after he had adopted the title *Pater Patriae* ("Father of his Country") indicated by the "P P" at the end of the reverse legend. The reverse depicts the imperial galley, which carried the emperor and his immediate entourage from port to port on their travels. The issue is dated by Hill (*The Undated Coins of Rome, A.D. 98-148*, p. 164) to AD 131, on the occasion of the return of Hadrian to Rome at the end of his second great journey (AD 128-31). The accompanying legend celebrates the emperor's happiness (*Felicitas Augusti*) on his safe homecoming after such an extended absence. The fine style of the obverse portrait, accentuated by the scarce left-facing rendering, reveals the strong influence of Hellenic art and culture which was such a feature of Hadrian's principate.

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