

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 11, 2018

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Herennius Etruscus (as Caesar under Trajan Decius, AD 250-51)

Denomination: bronze sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 250-251

Weight: 15.70 grams

Maximum Diameter: 28.67 millimeters

Die Axis: ↑

Obverse: Q HER ETR MES DECIVS NOB C, bare-headed and draped bust of Herennius Etruscus right.

Reverse: PIETAS AVGG S C, Mercury standing left, holding purse and caduceus.

References: RIC 167a; Hunter 14; Cohen 12; Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values III*) 9531.

Grade: good VF/VF, with nice green-brown patina and portrait of great sensitivity

Historical & Numismatic Note: Quintus Herennius Etruscus Messius Decius was the son of Trajan Decius and Herennia Etruscilla and elder brother of Hostilian. His father ascended the imperial throne on the death of Philip in September, AD 249, and some time before the middle of the following year Herennius was given the rank of Caesar. At Rome, he was accorded a share in the coinage in a full range of denominations (probably all produced by a single officina), supplemented by an output of antoniniani from the Antioch mint. The reverse type of this handsome bronze sestertius depicts Mercury (the Greek Hermes), god of merchants and commerce, hence the purse that he holds in his right hand. The head of Mercury appears regularly on the Roman Republican bronze sextans denomination in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, wearing his winged cap (*petasus*) appropriate to his role as the messenger of the gods. However, he seldom appears as the reverse type on the coinage of the Imperial age. Towards the end of AD 250, or early in the following year, Herennius' younger brother, Hostilian, was also elevated to the rank of Caesar and it seemed that a new imperial dynasty had been firmly established. However, storm clouds were gathering on the Empire's northern frontier and in the early summer of AD 251, Decius and Herennius were obliged to give battle to the invading Goths at Abrittus in Moesia Inferior (present-day Bulgaria). Both were slain in the engagement, the first rulers of Rome to fall in battle against a foreign enemy in the 278-year history of the empire. Herennius had been raised to the rank of Augustus and co-emperor shortly before the battle of Abrittus and rare aurei and antoniniani are known according him the senior title (cf. RIC IV, part iii, pp. 139-40). Hostilian survived to become co-emperor with his father's successor, Trebonianus Gallus, but he appears to have succumbed to the plague before the end of the year.

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