

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: May 24, 2018

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Balbinus (AD 238, April 22—July 29)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 238

Weight: 18.53 grams

Maximum Diameter: 30.11 millimeters

Die Axis: ↗

Obverse: IMP CAES D CAEL BALBINVS AVG, laureate, draped and cuirassed bust of Balbinus right, viewed from front.

Reverse: CONCORDIA AVGG S C, Concordia seated left, holding patera and double cornucopiae.

References: RIC 22; BMCRE 18 and pl. 44 (same reverse die); Cohen 4; Banti (*I Grandi Bronzi Imperiali*) p. 241, 1 (54 specimens noted); Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values III*) 8494.

Grade: VF but with smoothing in obverse and reverse fields and some light tooling on obverse, surface flaw before emperor's portrait

Historical & Numismatic Note: Decimus Caelius Calvinus Balbinus was of aristocratic descent and twice held the consulship, in *circa* AD 210 and 213, on the latter occasion as the colleague of the emperor Caracalla. Towards the end of March, AD 238, the octogenarian governor of Africa, Marcus Antonius Gordianus, rebelled against the tyrannical rule of the Emperor Maximinus. It seems this must have been with the connivance of the Roman Senate, of which Balbinus was a member, for a considerable coinage in the names of Gordian I Africanus, and his son Gordian II, was produced at the capital even though the rebel regime was toppled after only three weeks. Having thus incurred the active enmity of Maximinus, who was absent on the German frontier, the Senate was obliged to make preparations for the defense of Italy. To this end, they elected two of their number, Balbinus and Pupienus, to be joint emperors in succession to the Gordiani and in opposition to Maximinus (late April, 238). Although their coinage proclaims their mutual esteem Balbinus and Pupienus were ill suited as imperial partners and were fortunate that Maximinus was murdered by his own troops before reaching Rome (June 24th). Little more than a month later, the incompetent and unpopular senatorial nominees were set upon by the praetorian guard and brutally murdered after a reign of only 99 days. Balbinus and Pupienus reintroduced the inflationary double-denarius, with its characteristic radiate crown, almost two decades after its abandonment by Elagabalus. It soon drove the denarius out of circulation and became the standard silver denomination of the imperial coinage. This piece is an orichalcum (brass) sestertius, worth one-quarter of the silver denarius, and the reverse proclaims the "harmony of the emperors" (*Concordia Augustorum*), a sentiment far removed from the reality of the situation. The reverse die appears to match the specimen in the British Museum (plate 44, 18) and it is possible that the obverse is also a die match, though the light tooling prevents certainty on this point.

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