

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: June 13, 2018

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Gordian III (AD 238-244)

Denomination: bronze sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 242

Weight: 20.61 grams

Maximum Diameter: 29.81 millimeters

Die Axis: ↗

Obverse: IMP GORDIANVS PIVS FEL AVG, laureate, draped and cuirassed bust of Gordian III right.

Reverse: P M TR P V COS II P P S C, Gordian, in military attire, standing right, holding transverse spear pointing upwards in right hand and globe in extended left.

References: RIC 307(a); Hunter 118; Cohen 267; Brown (*The Coinage of Gordian III*) p. 7, Issue 4(b); Sear (*RCTV III*) 8731 var. (TR P III).

Grade: an attractive VF

Historical & Numismatic Note: Marcus Antonius Gordianus was born in AD 225. He was the grandson of Gordian I and nephew of Gordian II whose 3-week rebellion in North Africa against Maximinus was crushed in April of AD 238. The senatorial nominees as successors to the Gordiani, Balbinus and Pupienus, then adopted the 13-year-old Gordian III as Caesar in a bid to popularize their regime and on their murder by the praetorian guard the young prince was elevated to the imperial throne. During the latter part of Gordian III's brief reign the eastern provinces were invaded by the Sassanid Persians under their powerful new king Shapur I (AD 241-272). The teenage emperor, under the guidance of his able father-in-law the praetorian prefect Timesitheus, marched east and bravely confronted the invaders, achieving considerable success against them. However, on the sudden death of Timesitheus in the winter of AD 243/4 the emperor's position was undermined by the new prefect, Philip the Arab, and Gordian was assassinated early in 244 after a reign of only five and a half years. This bronze sestertius (worth one-quarter of the silver denarius) can be dated precisely to the year 242 by the imperial titles appearing in the reverse legend — the fifth year of the emperor's tribunician power (TR P V) and his second consulship (COS II). The type of the 17-year-old Gordian in a confident military pose was intended to allay fears that, in these dangerous times, the emperor was too young and inexperienced to fill the demanding role of commander-in-chief of Rome's legions.

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