

**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 14, 2018

*David R. Sear*

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Philip I (AD 244-249)

Denomination: bronze sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 248

Weight: 17.82 grams

Maximum Diameter: 28.58 millimeters

Die Axis: ↗

Obverse: IMP M IVL PHILIPPVS AVG, laureate, draped and cuirassed bust of Philip I right.

Reverse: SAECLARES AVGG [S C], antelope standing left.

References: RIC 161; Hunter 108 and pl. 71; Cohen 190; Sear (*RCTV III*) 9013.

Grade: VF/F, with excellent portrait

Historical & Numismatic Note: Marcus Julius Philippus was born about AD 204, the son of an Arab chieftain named Marinus who had attained Roman equestrian rank. In AD 243, Philip the Arab held a high command in the Roman army, which was countering the Persian invasion of the eastern provinces, and on the death of Gordian III's father-in-law, Timesitheus, he was appointed to the vacant office of praetorian prefect. It was later suspected that Philip had poisoned his predecessor and it soon became clear that the new prefect had designs on the imperial throne itself. He lost no opportunity to undermine the army's confidence in the 18-year-old Emperor Gordian, blaming him for shortages of rations, and when mutiny broke out instead of helping his commander-in-chief, he expressed his own willingness to take on the responsibilities of government. Gordian was murdered on 25 February AD 244 and the army proclaimed Philip as his successor. His five-year reign was troubled both by invasions across the Danube frontier and by a number of military revolts within the Empire. The most serious of these were the uprisings of Pacatian on the Danube and of Jotapian in the East: both usurpers had time to produce coinage before they were suppressed. The most noteworthy event of the reign was the celebration in AD 248 of the thousandth anniversary of the foundation of Rome. Lavish games and other spectacles were staged for the amusement of the population and an extensive series of coins was issued to commemorate the occasion. However, the following year the army on the Danubian frontier again mutinied, this time saluting as emperor their able general Decius. Philip marched northwards against him but was defeated and killed in the battle of Verona. His son, Philip II, who had been given the rank of Caesar at the outset of the reign and made co-emperor three years later, also perished leaving Decius in undisputed possession of the throne. The coinage of Philip's reign comprised principally silver antoniniani and bronze sestertii. The denarius was hardly struck at all (the reign of Gordian III was the last to see the large scale production of the most famous of all Roman coin denominations). This sestertius belongs to the *Saeculares* series initiated in AD 248 to commemorate Rome's millennium. The antelope was one of the wild beasts exhibited in the arena at this time for the amusement of the Roman populace. These animals had originally been collected for the emperor Gordian III's Persian triumph, but following his assassination in 244 they were instead kept in readiness for the festivities of the millennium.

**DAVID R. SEAR / A.C.C.S.** P. O. Box 7314, Porter Ranch, CA. 91327, U.S.A.

**Phone** (818) 993-7363 **Mobile** (818) 312-4903 **E-mail** [david@davidrsear.com](mailto:david@davidrsear.com) **Web site** [www.davidrsear.com](http://www.davidrsear.com)

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