

**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: August 11, 2018

*David R. Sear*

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Pupienus (AD 238)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 238 (April 22—July 29)

Weight & Maximum Diameter: 23.79 grams 32.04 millimeters

Obverse: IMP CAES M CLOD PVPIENVS AVG, laureate, draped and cuirassed bust of Pupienus right, viewed from behind.

Reverse: VICTORIA AVGG S C, Victory standing facing, head left, holding wreath in raised right hand and palm-branch at her side in left.

References: RIC 23(a); BMCRE 58-60 and pl. 46; Cohen 38; Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values III*) 8539.

Grade: a strong VF, struck on a heavy flan and with attractive reddish brown patina

Historical & Numismatic Note: Marcus Clodius Pupienus Maximus was, according to the author of the *Historia Augusta*, of humble birth. However, this statement would appear to be contradicted by the record of his public career, which included two consulships (*circa* AD 217 and 234) and the governorships of Germany and Asia. His precise date of birth is uncertain though it seems likely that he was younger than his imperial colleague, Decimus Caelius Balbinus. 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 Pupienus and Balbinus were members, 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 Pupienus and Balbinus to be joint emperors in succession to the Gordiani and in opposition to Maximinus (late April, 238). Although their coinage proclaims their mutual esteem, the new co-emperors were ill-suited as imperial partners and were fortunate that Maximinus was murdered by his own troops before reaching Rome (June 24). Little more than a month later, the incompetent and unpopular senatorial nominees were set upon by the Praetorian Guards and brutally murdered, after a reign of only 99 days. Balbinus and Pupienus reintroduced the inflationary antoninianus (double denarius) two decades after its abandonment by Elagabalus. It soon drove the denarius out of circulation and became the new standard silver denomination of the imperial coinage. The reverse of this handsome orichalcum sestertius portrays the goddess Victoria. It optimistically anticipates success against the forces of Maximinus which were descending on Italy fresh from their spectacular victories over the German tribes beyond the Empire's northern frontier.

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