

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: Valerian Senior (AD 253-260)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: circa AD 255-8

Weight & Maximum Diameter: 16.46 grams 29.43 millimeters

Obverse: IMP C P LIC VALERIANVS P F AVG, laureate, draped and cuirassed bust of Valerian Senior right.

Reverse: FELICITAS AVGG S C, Felicitas standing left, holding long caduceus and cornucopiae.

References: RIC 157; Cohen 58; Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values III*) 10011.

Grade: good F/F, edge flaw on reverse

Historical & Numismatic Note: Born in the final decade of the 2nd century, Publius Licinius Valerianus came to the throne in the autumn of AD 253 as the avenger of the Emperor Trebonianus Gallus. Valerian, a highly respected aristocrat who had held the consulship during the reign of Severus Alexander, was in command of the legions on the Upper Rhine when he received a summons from Gallus to come to his assistance against a rival emperor, Aemilian. Valerian arrived in Italy too late to save Gallus but he quickly disposed of Aemilian and was confirmed as emperor by the Senate. Soon afterwards, he elevated his son Gallienus to the rank of co-emperor. The joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus was troubled by numerous frontier wars and foreign invasions and was a prelude to the fragmentation of the Empire which threatened the very survival of the state in the following decade. Valerian himself was actually taken prisoner by the Persian king Shapur during the course of an invasion of Mesopotamia in AD 260: he seems to have spent the remainder of his life in miserable captivity. The imperial capital was gradually losing its position of preeminence in supplying the currency needs of the Empire and provincial minting centers began playing an increasingly important role at this time, though *aes*, such as this sestertius, continued to be produced almost exclusively by the mint of Rome. However, the monetary system introduced by Augustus two and a half centuries before was not destined to survive the financial crisis which was about to engulf the Roman state during the sole reign of Valerian's son, Gallienus. The reverse type of Felicitas, the goddess who personified happiness, could hardly have been less appropriate at this time of cataclysmic upheaval for the Empire. Doubtless, it was intended as an expression of optimistic hope for a more settled and secure future.

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