

**DAVID R. SEAR**

# *Certificate of Authenticity*

*issued by the Ancient Coin Certification Service (A.C.C.S.)*



*This coin has been personally inspected and authenticated by*

Issued to: Jens G. Feierabend

On: March 25, 2019

*David R. Sear*

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Julia Soaemias (mother of Elagabalus)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 220

Weight: 17.78 grams

Maximum Diameter: 30.20 millimeters

Die Axis: ↗

Obverse: [IVLIA] SOAEMIAS AVG, diademed and draped bust of Julia Soaemias right, her hair waved and knotted in queue and small bun at back.

Reverse: [V]ENVS CAELESTIS S C, Venus seated left, holding apple in extended right hand and resting on sceptre held in left, child standing right at her feet.

References: RIC 406; BMCRE 378; Cohen 18; Thirion (*Le Monnayage d'Elagabale*) 391; Banti (*I Grandi Bronzi Imperiali*) p. 57, 5 — citing 30 specimens; Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values II*) 7725.

Grade: VF with excellent portrait, edge hammered in antiquity resulting in flattening behind and before the empress's effigy

Historical & Numismatic Note: Julia Soaemias was the elder daughter of Julia Maesa (sister of Julia Domna) and the mother of Varius Avitus Bassianus, later the Emperor Elagabalus. After her mother had successfully engineered the restoration of the Severan dynasty Soaemias traveled to Rome with the rest of the imperial family. There she foolishly encouraged her son in the religious fanaticism and moral depravity that eventually were to bring about his downfall. She also shared his fate when, in early March of AD 222, the imperial guard rose in open mutiny. Both Elagabalus and Soaemias were murdered in the praetorian camp, their bodies being dragged through the streets of Rome and thrown into the Tiber. The coinage of Julia Soaemias was not on a large scale and was mostly struck at Rome, though a few types were minted in Antioch. It all belongs to the final two years of the reign following Soaemias' elevation to the rank of Augusta in AD 220. Prior to this, she had only borne the inferior rank of Clarissima. The principal reverse type of Soaemias' coinage depicts Venus Caelestis ("the heavenly Venus"), an unusual representation of the goddess of love and beauty which otherwise occurs only on the coinage of the late 3rd century empress Magnia Urbica. Base metal denominations of Soaemias are especially scarce and the larger flans of the sestertii accorded the die-engraver more scope in accurately depicting her facial features.

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