

DAVID R. SEAR

Certificate of Authenticity

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This coin has been personally inspected and authenticated by

Issued to: Jens G. Feierabend

On: April 5, 2019

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Trajan Decius (AD 249-251)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 250-251

Weight: 17.86 grams

Maximum Diameter: 28.62 millimeters

Die Axis: ↗

Obverse: IMP C M Q TRAIANVS DECIVS AVG, laureate, draped and cuirassed bust of Trajan Decius right.

Reverse: DACIA S C, Dacia standing left, holding Dacian standard surmounted by wolf's head (*draco*).

References: RIC 112(b); Hunter 32; Cohen 18; Sear (*Roman Coins and Their Values III*) 9399.

Grade: good F/F, light scratches in field

Historical & Numismatic Note: Gaius Messius Quintus Decius, of noble Italian ancestry on his mother's side, was born in the Pannonian village of Budalia probably in the final decade of the 2nd century AD. He served as city prefect of Rome under Philip I and in AD 248 was appointed to the command of the Danubian legions the loyalty of which was suspect in the aftermath of Pacatian's revolt. Having achieved success against the Gothic invaders of the region, Decius was himself proclaimed emperor by his troops. Despite the usurper's private protestations of loyalty to the current regime the issue was finally resolved by armed conflict in which Decius' army was victorious over the numerically superior forces of Philip (battle of Verona, September AD 249). On his arrival in Rome the following month, Decius was showered with honors by the Senate including the addition of the illustrious name of Traianus (Trajan) to his own — Gaius Messius Quintus Traianus Decius. The theme of Decius' 21-month reign was reverence for the memory of Rome's illustrious past and a desire to restore the old virtues that had made her great. In this connection, he issued a remarkable series of silver antoniniani commemorating eleven imperial "*Divi*" (deified emperors) from Augustus through Severus Alexander. Also specially honored on the coinage were the Danubian provinces of Dacia and the two Pannonias, as well as "the Spirit of the Army of Illyricum" (*Genius Exercitus Illyriciani*). However, the new emperor was unable to stem the tide of barbarian pressure on Rome's northern frontiers. In the early summer of AD 251 Decius and his elder son Herennius Etruscus were killed in battle against the Goths at Abrittus — the first emperor of Rome to fall in battle against a foreign enemy in the 278-year history of the Empire. The coinage of Trajan Decius comprised a substantial output of silver antoniniani, mostly from Rome, together with much smaller issues of other denominations in gold and *aes*. An interesting experiment was the production of a medallion double sestertius in bronze and the revival of the semis (half as). This sestertius belongs to the principal issue of the reign from the Rome mint. It depicts the personification of the province of Dacia, the territory incorporated into the Empire by Trajan in AD 106. The curious staff with wolf's head is a distinctive emblem of the country, though its precise origin is unclear.

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 **Web site** www.davidrsear.com

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