

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: May 31, 2019

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Nerva (AD 96-98)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 97 (January-September)

Weight: 31.20 grams

Maximum Diameter: 35.13 millimeters

Die Axis: ↓

Obverse: IMP NERVA CAES AVG P M TR P COS III P P, laureate head of Nerva right.

Reverse: FORTVNA AVGVSTI S C, Fortuna standing left, holding rudder resting on ground in right hand and cornucopiae at her side in left.

References: RIC 83; BMCRE 107-9 and pl. 5, 6; Cayon 24; Cohen 67; CBN III, p. 330, 98 and pl. CXXV.

Grade: an attractive VF with excellent portrait, struck on a thick, heavy flan

Historical & Numismatic Note: Marcus Cocceius Nerva was born in the Umbrian hill town of Narnia about AD 30. He became a distinguished lawyer and was a close friend of the Emperor Nero, who appears to have admired his poetry. Fortunately, this connection did not have a detrimental effect on his future career and he held two consulships under the Flavian Emperors — as the colleague of Vespasian in AD 71 and of Domitian in 90. It appears likely that he was implicated in the plot that led to Domitian's assassination on September 18, AD 96, as he was elevated to the vacant throne on the very same day. His brief reign of little more than sixteen months was much troubled by the threat of military uprising, as Domitian had been popular with the army and the soldiers were resentful of the palace revolution that had brought the new lawyer-emperor to power. Nerva was even obliged to hand over to the praetorians the two principals in the plot against the late emperor and was powerless to prevent their execution. At this critical juncture Nerva, whose authority appeared to have been hopelessly compromised, made the brilliant decision to adopt as his heir the most popular general of the day, Marcus Ulpius Traianus, who was currently serving as governor of Upper Germany. This had the immediate effect of defusing the potentially explosive situation and Nerva lived out the remaining four months of his life in relative peace and security. On his death on 25 January, AD 98, the imperial power passed smoothly to his designated successor, Trajan. Despite the brevity of his reign, Nerva's coinage is full of interest and many of the types, especially on the sestertii, commemorate the ambitious program of reforms that he undertook. This attractive orichalcum sestertius (worth one quarter of the silver denarius) was struck between Nerva's assumption of his third consulship on January 1, AD 97, and the completion of his first year of tribunician power on September 18. The reverse type depicts the goddess Fortuna, personifying good luck and success. The accompanying legend indicates that it is the emperor's good fortune (*Fortuna Augusti*) that is being invoked.

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