

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: April 1, 2020

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Trajan (AD 98-117)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: circa AD 114-116

Weight: 25.75 grams

Maximum Diameter: 33.69 millimeters

Die Axis: ↓

Obverse: IMP CAES NER TRAIANO OPTIMO AVG GER DAC P M TR P COS VI P P, laureate bust of Trajan right, light drapery on left shoulder.

Reverse: SENATVS POPVLVSQVE ROMANVS (around), S C (in field), Felicitas standing left, holding caduceus in raised right hand and cornucopiae at her side in left.

References: Woytek (*Die Reichsprägung des Kaisers Traianus*) 534b and pl. 107 (citing four specimens); RIC 672 var. (laureate and draped bust) = Cohen 352 = CBN 845 – Strack 455; BMCRE 1022-3 var.; Cohen 352; Hill (*The Undated Coins of Rome, A.D. 98-148*) 717.

Grade: F/fair, with excellent late portrait

Historical & Numismatic Note: Marcus Ulpius Trajanus was born at Italica in Spain about AD 53. His father, who bore the same name, had commanded Legio X Fretensis in the Jewish War (AD 67-68) and later went on to hold the consulship, the first of his family to attain this rank. The younger Trajan served as a military tribune during the reign of Vespasian and then went on to hold the offices of quaestor and praetor. As a legionary commander in AD 88-89 he was involved in the suppression of the revolt of Saturninus in Upper Germany and in 91 he held his first consulship. In September of 97 he was adopted by the Emperor Nerva, whose weak regime needed the support of a popular military leader, and four months later he ascended the imperial throne as Rome's thirteenth emperor. Not surprisingly, the 19-year reign of Trajan was one of military conquests and glory, and the emperor did not conceal his ambition of emulating the great conquerors of the past — Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great. In later times the period of Trajan's rule was looked back upon as a golden age: the mid-3rd century emperor Decius even assumed the name of Trajan in the vain hope of reviving past glories at a time of crisis. For the last time in her history Rome added to her empire by military conquest. The kingdom of Dacia, north of the Danube, was annexed as a province in 106 following the defeat and death of King Decebalus. This achievement was commemorated on the famous Column of Trajan erected in his Forum and dedicated in 113: it remains a prominent landmark of Rome down to the present day. Trajan also gave attention to the East where he adjusted the frontier by the creation of the new province of Arabia. His real ambition, however, was to destroy the power of Parthia forever, a task which was left to the latter part of his reign. However, failing health and a situation complicated by a Jewish uprising forced him to abandon the project and he died in Cilicia on his way back to Rome (8 August AD 117). Trajan's coinage is on a vast scale and includes many interesting commemorative types recording the military exploits, building activities, and other achievements of this remarkable ruler. This orichalcum sestertius (worth one-fourth of the silver denarius in circulation) belongs late in the reign at the time of the Parthian War. The elderly portrait of Trajan depicts him still as a strong and forceful ruler despite being in his 60s and the ravages of numerous military campaigns. He is honored in the obverse inscription with the title *Optimus* ('Best') granted by a grateful Senate in AD 114. The goddess Felicitas featured on reverse personifies the happiness of the age brought about by the enlightened rule of Rome's first provincial emperor. The accompanying legend is a rare instance of the unabbreviated form of the celebrated formula S P Q R ('The Roman Senate and People') which was symbolic of the Roman state and its constitution.

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