

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 4, 2020

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Gallienus (AD 253-268)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: circa AD 253/254

Weight: 21.20 grams

Maximum Diameter: 30.14 millimeters

Die Axis: ↙

Obverse: IMP C PLIC GALLIENVS AVG, laureate and cuirassed bust of Gallienus right.

Reverse: VICTORIA AVGG (around), S — C (in field), Victory standing left, holding wreath in uplifted right hand and palm-branch at her side in left.

References: RIC 243; Cohen 1140; Göbl (*MIR 36*) pl. 84, 30dd; Sear (*RCTV III*) 10490.

Grade: nearly VF with glossy green patina, struck on a small, thick flan typical of the sestertii of this reign

Historical & Numismatic Note: P. Licinius Egnatius Gallienus was the son of the Emperor Valerian who raised him to the rank of Augustus and co-ruler in October of AD 253. The seriousness of the military situation at this time demanded that the supreme authority should be divided between two equal partners and the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus was to set an important precedent for the future government of the Empire. Gallienus was given the responsibility of defending the western provinces and campaigned with some success on the Rhine frontier. Meanwhile, however, his father was having serious difficulties in the East where the problems created by successive waves of Gothic invaders from the north were compounded by the aggressive policies of the Persian King Shapur, who was constantly threatening the security of the eastern frontier. Eventually, in AD 260, Valerian was captured by the Persians during the course of an invasion of Mesopotamia: he was fated to spend the remainder of his life in miserable captivity. At about the same time the northwestern provinces were detached from the control of Rome by the rebellion of Postumus, commander of the Rhine legions, who succeeded in establishing an independent state (the Gallic Empire) that was destined to survive for some 14 years. Gallienus, during the course of his sole reign (AD 260-268), was thus obliged to exercise his authority over a greatly diminished realm: the eastern provinces were largely under the control of the Palmyrene ruler Odenathus whilst much of the West acknowledged the rule of Postumus. Under these trying circumstances, Gallienus was remarkably successful in maintaining his position in those areas still loyal to him, and Odenathus actually recognized his supreme authority without, however, surrendering his own independence as overlord in the East. The emperor even found time to undertake an extensive military reform that was to greatly assist his successors in reuniting the Empire. This took the form of a powerful new cavalry force that was based at Mediolanum (*Milan*) in northern Italy, initially under the command of the general Aureolus. Being highly mobile, this force could quickly and efficiently be deployed to counter any invasion threat. However, despite his energetic efforts Gallienus ultimately fell victim to a conspiracy of his senior officers and was succeeded by the general Marcus Aurelius Claudius (Claudius II Gothicus, AD 268-270). Because of the confused political situation prevailing throughout his reign, the coinage of Gallienus is very complex. In addition to Rome, it was issued from a number of provincial mints the precise locations of some of which still remain elusive. Bronzes, however, were confined to the mint of Rome. During the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus (AD 253-260) coinage was issued not just in the names of the two emperors but also for Gallienus' wife, the Empress Salonina, and their two sons, the Caesars Valerian Junior and Saloninus. However, for the last eight years of the reign coinage was all in the names of Gallienus and Salonina. This sestertius belongs the earliest phase of the joint reign and its reverse proclaims "the Victory of the Emperors" (*Victoria Augustorum*). This was a generic type for the coinages of many emperors and in this case, it is an expression of anticipated future successes rather than a commemoration of actual achievements.

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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