

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: February 4, 2021

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Plotina (wife of Trajan)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 112

Weight: 27.97 grams

Maximum Diameter: 34.56 millimeters

Die Axis: ↓

Obverse: [PLOTI]NA AVG IMP [TRAIANI], diademed and draped bust of Plotina right, with elaborate high coiffure.

Reverse: [FIDES AVGVST S C], Fides standing facing, head right, holding ears of grain downwards in right hand and dish of fruit on uplifted left.

References: Woytek (*Die Reichsprägung des Kaisers Traianus, 98-117*) p. 498, 711 and pl. 124; RIC 740; BMCRE 1080-82 and pl. 44, 5; CBN IV, p. 94, 730-31 and pl. 41; Strack 441; Cohen 12; Hill (*The Undated Coins of Rome, A.D. 98-148*) 550; Cayon (*Los Sestercios del Imperio Romano*) pp. 566-7, 1; Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values II*) 3376.

Grade: fair/mediocre, large striking-crack at 2 o'clock

Historical & Numismatic Note: Pompeia Plotina, a native of Nemausus (Nîmes) in southern Gaul, was the wife of the Emperor Trajan (AD 98-117) whom she married long before his accession. The union, though happy, produced no children. Plotina refused the title of *Augusta* when it was first offered to her in AD 100 but eventually accepted it five years later along with her close friend Marciana, her husband's sister. Plotina embodied the traditional Roman matronly qualities of simplicity, dignity, fidelity, and virtue. She was much attached to her husband's kinsman, Hadrian, and was largely responsible for his succession to the imperial throne on Trajan's death in AD 117. She died *circa* AD 123 and was deified, her memory being honored by the erection of a basilica in Nemausus. This orichalcum sestertius in the name of Plotina was part of a special coinage honoring the ladies of the Imperial family, produced on the occasion of the death of Marciana and the elevation to the rank of *Augusta* of her daughter Matidia (AD 112). It features on the reverse the goddess Fides, who personified the abstract idea of good faith, loyalty and trustworthiness. Her attributes of ears of grain and a dish of fruit relate to the promised reliability of the imperial grain supply to Rome, a theme very dear to the hearts of the plebs. The emperors were ever vigilant in their care for Rome's annual sea-borne supply of grain from Sicily, Sardinia, Egypt and Africa. On the arrival of the fleets at Ostia imperial agents arranged for the rapid distribution of the food to the Roman populace, much of it at a subsidized price or even free of charge. The emperor's popularity in the capital depended largely on the efficient handling of this process and many coin types are devoted to its publicity.

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