

DAVID R. SEAR

Certificate of Authenticity

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Issued to: Jens G. Feierabend

On: February 6, 2021

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Aemilian (AD 253, c. July/August-October)

Denomination: bronze sestertertius

Mint: Rome

Date: August-September AD 253

Weight: 11.22 grams

Maximum Diameter: 28.81 millimeters

Die Axis: ↑

Obverse: IMP CAES AEMILIANVS P F AVG, laureate, draped and cuirassed bust of Aemilian right.

Reverse: VOTIS / DECENNA / LIBVS / S C in four lines within laurel-wreath.

References: RIC IV, iii, p. 200, 54a; Cohen 67; Hunter III, p. 276, 25 and pl. 88; Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values III*) 9862.

Grade: F/nearly F, some tooling in obverse legend

Historical & Numismatic Note: Marcus Aemilius Aemilianus, governor of Moesia under Trebonianus Gallus and Volusian and a native of Mauretania, was forced by the army to accept the purple following his success in repulsing a Gothic invasion of his province. The threatened emperors appealed to the distinguished general Valerian to come to their assistance from his base on the Rhine. However, the troops of Gallus and Volusian, believing themselves confronted by a superior adversary, murdered the joint emperors and Aemilian entered the capital unopposed. He seems to have enjoyed about three months of imperial power before he, too, suffered the same fate as his predecessors. Valerian, now posing as the avenger of the deceased emperors, was also proclaimed emperor and Aemilian was assassinated before the issue could be contested by arms. The chronology of this period is very confused in the ancient sources but the Alexandrian coins provide valuable evidence. Tetradrachms of Aemilian of regnal year one ("L A") appear to be unrecorded, indicating that his rise to power occurred shortly before the end of the Alexandrian year on August 28, while the rarity of the coins (Milne has only three examples and the Cologne Catalogue one) suggests a very brief period of undisputed power in Egypt. The coinage of the Rome mint used two forms of obverse legend. One of these, represented by this sestertertius, resembles that of his predecessor and is thus probably the earlier. The reverse records vows undertaken by Aemilian for the safe completion of a period of ten years of rule, an ambition that proved to be hopelessly optimistic. The obverse legend of this piece shows signs of tooling, though there seems no reason to doubt the correctness of the reading. The small, thin flan shows just how far the sestertertius had declined by the mid-3rd century, as this piece weighs no more than the dupondius of the early empire.

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