

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: February 7, 2023

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Domitian (AD 81-96)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 85

Weight: 25.76 grams

Maximum Diameter: 34.96 millimeters

Die Axis: ↙

Obverse: IMP CAES DOMIT AVG GERM COS XI CENS POT P P, laureate head of Domitian right, with aegis on neck.

Reverse: GERMANIA CAPTA (around), S C (in exergue), trophy between German captive on right, standing right, looking left, his hands bound behind his back, and Germania on left, seated left amidst arms, in attitude of sadness.

References: RIC 351 and plate 144; BMCRE 325-6 and pl. 72, 8; CBN 350; Cohen 136; Cayón (*Los Sestercios del Imperio Romano I*) p. 376, 17; Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values I*) 2765.

Grade: F, a rare and interesting historical type

Historical & Numismatic Note: Titus Flavius Domitianus, the younger son of Vespasian and Flavia Domitilla, was born on 24 October AD 51. He was in Rome at the time of his father's rebellion against Vitellius in the summer of AD 69 and was lucky to escape with his life when he and his uncle, Flavius Sabinus, were besieged on the Capitol in the final days of Vitellius' regime. Although given the rank of Caesar like his elder brother Titus, he was kept very much in the background during the 10-year reign of Vespasian. The bitter resentment which he felt over his treatment at this time and the inferiority of his status in the imperial family eventually found expression in the highly autocratic behavior which he exhibited when he succeeded to the imperial throne on the death of Titus in AD 81. Despite a promising start to his 15-year rule the discovery of a number of conspiracies seems to have unbalanced the emperor's mind. The situation finally degenerated into a reign of terror and many prominent members of the Roman aristocracy were executed following mock treason trials. Eventually, a conspiracy was formed involving the court chamberlain and even the Empress Domitia Longina, and Domitian fell victim to the assassin's knife on 18 September AD 96. This orichalcum sestertius, valued in circulation at one-quarter of the silver denarius, is dated by the emperor's eleventh consulship (COS XI) to AD 85. Domitian is described as possessing the Censorial Power (CENSORIA POTESTATE), a title assumed in AD 85 and which later in the year became perpetual (CENSOR PERPETUUS). The reverse records the commencement of the celebrations of the emperor's German victories, this year seeing the extension of the imperial frontier on the Upper Rhine and Main. Incidentally, AD 85 also saw the recall of the successful Roman governor of Britain, Gnaeus Julius Agricola, whose great victory over the barbarians in northern Scotland threatened to overshadow Domitian's achievements.

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