

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 11, 2023

*David R. Sear*

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Agrippina Junior (daughter of Germanicus, wife of Claudius)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Thrace, possible Perinthus

Date: circa AD 50-51

Weight: 27.05 grams

Maximum Diameter: 32.77 millimeters

Die Axis: ↓

Obverse: AGRIPPINA AVG GERMANICI F [CAESARIS AVG], bust of Agrippina Junior right, her hair in long plait hanging down the back of her neck.

Reverse: No legend, carpentum (two-wheeled passenger wagon) drawn left by two mules.

References: von Kaenel (*Britannicus, Agrippina Minor und Nero in Thrakien*) in SNR 63, 1984, p. 141, A6 and pl. 24, 30 (same obverse die); RIC (Claudius) 103; cf. BMCRE (Claudius) note \*, and pl. 37, 3 (no example in BM, but illustrating one of the Berlin specimens); cf. CNR, vol. xvi, pp. 45-6, no. 1 (illustrating another Berlin specimen and also the example formerly in the Ryan Collection); Cayón (*Los Sestercios del Imperio Romano*) p. 75, 1 (same reverse die as second illustrated specimen); Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values I*) 1910.

Grade: nearly VF/good F for this very rare and desirable Julio-Claudian type

Historical & Numismatic Note: Agrippina Junior was born in AD 15, the eldest daughter of Germanicus and Agrippina Senior. At the age of 13 she was betrothed to Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus to whom, in AD 37, she bore a son, the future Emperor Nero. In 39, she was banished by her brother, the Emperor Gaius (Caligula), who believed her to be implicated in a conspiracy against him. Fortunate to escape with her life, she was later recalled by her uncle Claudius who took her as his fourth wife in AD 49. The following year she was granted the title of Augusta, which was probably the occasion for the issue of this rare sestertius type. In the obverse inscription she is named as the daughter of Germanicus — GERMANICI F[ilia] — and the wife of the emperor — CAESARIS AVG[usti Uxor]. The reverse type recalls the sestertii issued posthumously in the name of Agrippina Senior by Caligula. The carpentum was a two-wheeled wagon designed to carry two or three passengers and had been in use from the early days of the Republic. It was also the standard small vehicle of the Roman postal service and was used even by emperors on their travels. The historian Tacitus (*Annals* xii, 42) records that Agrippina Junior claimed the rare honor (for a woman) of using the carpentum to ride in and this may explain its appearance as the reverse type on this exceptional issue. About 44 specimens of this sestertius are currently known. Four of them are in the Berlin Cabinet, all of which were found in the Balkans (Moesia-Thrace district), whilst a fifth example is in the Sofia Museum in Bulgaria. The Balkan provenances of a large proportion of the known specimens would seem to suggest that this was some kind of provincial issue, perhaps from Perinthus, capital of Thrace after the formation of the province in AD 46. The absence of the normal formula 'S C' (senatus consulto) on the reverse certainly suggests a non-Roman origin for the issue. The sestertii of Agrippina Junior are probably to be associated with the very rare issues in the names of Nero (cf. BMC pl. 37, 4) and Britannicus (BMC pl. 37, 5-6).

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