

DAVID R. SEAR

Certificate of Authenticity

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This coin has been personally inspected and authenticated by

Issued to: Jens Feierabend

On: April 16, 2024

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Hadrian (AD 161-180)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 117

Weight: 29.01 grams

Maximum Diameter: 37.69 millimeters

Die Axis: ↓

Obverse: IMP CAES DIVI TRAIAN AVG F TRAIAN HADRIAN OPT AVG GER, laureate bust of Hadrian right, showing bare chest and with drapery on left shoulder.

Reverse: DAC PARTHICO P M TR P COS P P, S — C (in exergue), Trajan, togate, standing right, handing globe to Hadrian, also togate, standing left.

References: RIC p. 77, 30 and pl. 57 (specimens of this type in Paris, Berlin and Vienna); cf. also RIC 2786, pl. 199, for a medallic sestertius of this type; BMC p. 397, 1101 var. (bust draped and cuirassed) = Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values II*) 3589; Strack 500; Banti (*I Grandi Bronzi Imperiali*) 232-3; Cayon (*Los Sestercios del Imperio Romano*) 206; Hill (*Undated Coins of Rome*) 10; cf. Cohen 523 (DAC at end of obverse legend, in error).

Grade: nearly VF/F, rare and struck on an unusually large and heavy flan

Historical & Numismatic Note: Publius Aelius Hadrianus was born of a family which lived in the Spanish city of Italica. His father died when he was only nine and he entered the childless household of the future emperor Trajan, who also came from Italica. In AD 100 he married Vibia Sabina, the daughter of Trajan's niece Matidia. It thus seemed that he had been marked out for the imperial succession, though no formal adoption ever took place. Great mystery surrounded the circumstances of his accession which took place in the East. News of Trajan's sudden death in Cilicia was withheld for several days during which time the Empress Plotina announced that her dying husband had confided to her in secret his desire to adopt Hadrian as his heir. No one wished to challenge the word of the highly respected imperial consort and a somewhat reluctant Senate followed the army in ratifying the new emperor's accession. Hadrian had a keen interest in experiencing first-hand the diverse peoples and places of his vast Empire. Accordingly, during the two decades of his reign he undertook three great journeys in which he visited almost every province over which he ruled. Many of his coin types relate to these imperial tours making the coinage of this reign one of the largest and most varied in the entire Roman Imperial series. This sestertius is dated by its reference to the emperor's initial consulship (COS) to his first year of imperial power (August—December AD 117). Even more precise dating is made possible by the inclusion in the reverse legend of the title "P P" (Pater Patriae, Father of his Country) which was mistakenly added by the mint officials until it was learned that the new emperor had refused to accept it (he finally acquiesced eleven years later, in AD 128). In fact, this was the first sestertius type to be issued under Hadrian and was probably struck in August or September of AD 117, being part of his accession issue. The reverse type symbolizes the actual adoption of Hadrian by his predecessor who is depicted passing on the globe of world rule. It is doubtful if many who saw this design believed that it represented what had taken place. Hadrian did not return to Rome until the following summer and the style of his imperial portrait still retains the characteristics of his predecessor's final coinage, i.e. a small head with full bust. The inscriptions are long and elaborate — another feature retained from the late Trajanic coinage — and even include a string of the late emperor's honorary titles which, like the Pater Patriae, had been mistakenly arrogated to Hadrian by the confused mint officials.

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