

**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 18, 2024

*David R. Sear*

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 153-154

Weight: 21.55 grams

Maximum Diameter: 33.84 millimeters

Die Axis: ↑

Obverse: ANTONINVS AVG PIVS P P TR P XVII, laureate head of Antoninus Pius right.

Reverse: INDVLGENTIA AVG COS IIII S C, Indulgentia seated left, her right hand extended, holding sceptre in left.

References: RIC 914; BMC 1939; Strack 1091; Cayon (*Los Sestercios del Imperio Romano*) 167; Cohen 454; Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values II*) 4183 var. (TR P XVI).

Grade: F, surface blemishes on reverse

Historical & Numismatic Note: Titus Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Arrius Antoninus was born in AD 86 at the ancient Latin city of Lanuvium in the Alban Hills. He came of a distinguished consular family which originated from Nemausus (Nîmes) in Gallia Narbonensis. Wealthy and with many good connections, he followed a successful public career and held his first consulship at the age of 34 (AD 120). He gained a reputation for integrity during his proconsular governorship of Asia (AD 133-136) and attracted the attention of the emperor Hadrian, whose health was beginning to fail. With the death of Hadrian's intended heir, Aelius Caesar, on New Year's Day 138, Antoninus was adopted as the new successor, and he ascended the imperial throne on July 10th. The adoption had been complicated by Hadrian's stipulation that Antoninus himself (now aged 52) should adopt as his joint heirs the 17-year-old Marcus Aurelius, nephew of Antoninus' wife Faustina, and the 8-year-old Lucius Verus, son of the late Aelius Caesar. Aurelius' public career was quickly advanced under Antoninus and he received the title of Caesar as early as AD 139, but Verus was kept very much in the background. A serious constitutional crisis had developed at the beginning of Antoninus' reign when the new emperor insisted on the deification of his predecessor and the ratification by the Senate of his acts. Hadrian had always had a very bad relationship with the Conscript Fathers and they were most reluctant to accord him any official recognition on his death. It took a threat of abdication on the part of Antoninus to persuade the Senate to change its mind, and for his filial devotion to the memory of his predecessor he was granted the title of Pius. Despite his advanced age at the time of his accession Antoninus reigned for nearly 23 years, a period of peace and prosperity for the Empire marred only by minor disturbances in northern Britain. On his death in AD 161, he was succeeded by the 40-year-old Marcus Aurelius who, in accordance with Hadrian's wishes, immediately associated Lucius Verus with him as co-emperor — the first joint reign in Roman imperial history. The coinage of Antoninus' reign is abundant and was issued not only in his own name but also in that of his wife, Faustina Senior, the Caesar Marcus Aurelius, and his daughter Faustina Junior, who married Aurelius in AD 145. This orichalcum (brass) sestertius, worth one-quarter of the silver denarius, is dated by Antoninus 17th year of tribunician power (TR P XVII) to AD 153-154. The reverse features the Roman goddess Indulgentia, the personification of indulgence and mercy, a fitting sentiment for the rule of this most moderate of emperors. The letters S C in exergue represent *Senatus Consulto*, "by decree of the Senate", and refer to the theoretical authority by which the issue of base metal imperial coinage was made.

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