

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 19, 2024

David R. Sear

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161), in the name of his deceased wife Faustina Sr. (†AD 141)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 150s

Weight: 25.75 grams

Maximum Diameter: 32.40 millimeters

Die Axis: ↖

Obverse: DIVA FAVSTINA, draped bust of Faustina right, her hair elaborately waved and coiled.

Reverse: AETERNITAS S C, Juno standing facing, head left, her right hand extended and holding sceptre in left.

References: RIC 1102a; BMC 1480 and pl. 35, 12; Strack 1263; Cayon (*Los Sestercios del Imperio Romano*) 21; Cohen 28; Sear (*Roman Coins & Their Values II*) 4605.

Grade: a pleasing VF, unpatinated and showing the original yellow orichalcum colour

Historical & Numismatic Note: Annia Galeria Faustina was the daughter of M. Annius Verus, three times consul (AD 97, 121 and 126) and grandfather of Marcus Aurelius. She married the future emperor Antoninus about AD 110 and bore him four children, though only one (Faustina Junior) was still living when her husband ascended the throne in 138. Faustina received the title of Augusta the following year, which was unusually early for such advancement at this time (Plotina, wife of Trajan, did not become Augusta until seven years into her husband's reign, and Hadrian's wife Sabina had to wait eleven years). Much to Antoninus' sorrow, his wife died only two years later. He honored her with a posthumous coinage on an unprecedented scale, which continued to be struck throughout most of his long reign. This handsome orichalcum sestertius belongs to the 'Aeternitas' series which commenced on the tenth anniversary of the empress' death and then lasted throughout most of the remainder of Antoninus' reign. The reverse type fittingly depicts the goddess Juno (Greek Hera), consort of Jupiter, the chief deity in the Roman pantheon. In addition to Aeternitas, other deities appearing in this series include Ceres, Fortuna, Providentia, and Faustina herself, as well as the temple erected for her by Antoninus in the Roman Forum. The façade of this structure, bearing the inscription of both husband and wife, still survives to this day. In addition, the emperor established in her memory the *Puellae Faustinae*, a charitable guild devoted to the care of poor orphan girls, and a depiction of this also features on the coinage.

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