

**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 20, 2024

*David R. Sear*

State: Roman Empire

Ruler: Septimius Severus (AD 193-211)

Denomination: orichalcum sestertertius

Mint: Rome

Date: AD 196 (early summer to end of year)

Weight: 26.95 grams

Maximum Diameter: 33.76 millimeters

Die Axis: ↑

Obverse: L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP VIII, laureate and cuirassed bust of Septimius Severus right.

Reverse: P M TR P III COS II P P S C, Victory advancing left, holding wreath and palm.

References: RIC 725; BMCRE p. 146, 591; Cohen 420; Banti 101; Cayón 143; Hill (CSS) 212; Sear (*Roman Coins & their Values II*) 6424.

Grade: good F/nearly F

Historical & Numismatic Note: A native of Leptis Magna in North Africa, Lucius Septimius Severus was born in AD 145, entered the Roman Senate *circa* 173 and, by the end of Commodus' reign, was governor of Upper Pannonia. On the murder of Pertinax by the praetorian guard and the disgraceful elevation to the imperial throne of Didius Julianus, Severus was one of three provincial governors proclaimed emperor by their soldiers (the other two being Clodius Albinus in Britain and Pescennius Niger in Syria). Severus was closest to Italy and quickly descended on Rome, easily eliminating Julianus. He neutralized one rival, Albinus, by offering him the title of Caesar leaving him free to attack and destroy Niger in the East (AD 195). It was then Albinus' turn to be eradicated and the hapless Caesar was declared a public enemy, falling in battle near Lugdunum early in 196. Severus was now able to turn his attention to foreign wars and departed for the eastern frontier where, in 198, he defeated the Parthians and captured their capital city of Ctesiphon on the river Tigris. Returning to Rome in 202, he devoted most of his attention over the following six years to domestic affairs and an ambitious building program was undertaken in the capital. This included the Arch of Severus in the Roman Forum, which is commemorated on the coinage and still stands to this day; a palace on the Palatine; and the Septizodium, a freestanding ornamental façade, screening the southeast corner of the Palatine Hill, which closed the view of the Via Appia like a stage backdrop. In AD 208 Severus and the entire imperial family — his wife Julia Domna and his sons Caracalla and Geta — set out for Britain where the situation on the northern frontier demanded urgent attention. He was to spend the last two and a half years of his life in the island province and was destined never to return to Rome. Together with his elder son, the co-emperor Caracalla, the old emperor campaigned vigorously, penetrating deep into barbarian territory. The line of his marching-camps can still be detected today by aerial photography. He also restored Hadrian's Wall, the northern barrier to the province first constructed more than 80 years before. Although little is known of the success of these operations, they were to bring peace to the area for the remainder of the 3rd century. Exhausted by these exertions the 65-year-old emperor fell fatally ill at the legionary fortress of Eboracum (York) where he died on February 4, AD 211. His policy had been to pamper the legions that had brought him to power and on whom the security of his regime depended. He increased their pay from 375 to 500 denarii a year and his dying advice to his two sons was to "keep on good terms with each other, be generous to the soldiers, and take no heed of anyone else". This brass sestertertius, worth one quarter of the silver denarius, is dated by the emperor's tribunician power (TR P III) to AD 196. The eighth imperial acclamation (IMP VIII) fixes the time of its issue even more precisely to the period after early summer when Byzantium, which had supported Pescennius Niger, fell to the forces of Severus. The reverse type depicts Victoria, the goddess of victory, and celebrates Severus' military successes.

**DAVID R. SEAR / A.C.C.S.** (P. O. Box 7314, Porter Ranch, CA. 91327, U.S.A.)

**Phone** (818) 993-7363 **Mobile** (818) 312-4903 **E-mail** [david@davidrsear.com](mailto:david@davidrsear.com) **Web site** [www.davidrsear.com](http://www.davidrsear.com)

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