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African Pentanummium ? Of Justinian I -- Certificate Of Authenticity



420 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Bon état

Description

Analysis & expertise
This bronze pentanummium (5 nummi) of Justinian I (527-565), attributed to Carthage and dated AD 539-543, belongs to the most emblematic African issues of the reign. It is instantly recognizable by the large ? (value 5), paired with a cross and enclosed within a laurel wreath. The type is firmly referenced in DOC 300 / MIBE 203 / SB 274.
Careful observation under ×10 magnification and raking light (based on the photographs): the coin shows a stable patina in honey-brown to warm brown tones, with localized verdigris (stable copper oxidation) visible especially in recesses and along the reverse wreath. The principal reliefs display lighter highlights on exposed points (diadem, facial profile, edges of the ?),

Dealer

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consistent with natural friction from prolonged circulation. The fields present a fine micro-texture and a few superficial traces (micro-marks and light contacts), with no "cast" appearance or abrupt material breaks; relief-to-field transitions remain continuous and organic.
The edge is generally regular for a small module, with minor peripheral weakness and tiny incidental nicks consistent with hammer striking.
Within the strict limits of non-destructive visual assessment, the whole (metal, patina, style, iconographic arrangement, and strike logic) remains fully consistent with this African type.

Obverse
The obverse shows the imperial bust right, diademed, draped, and cuirassed. In the images, the diadem reads as a structured band with raised elements; the profile remains clearly readable (forehead, nose, mouth, chin), and the drapery forms converging folds beneath the neck, still perceptible despite wear.
The circular legend is partially legible, yet aligns with the expected form DN IVSTINIANVS PP A: surviving segments are distributed coherently around the portrait, with letter loss attributable to centering and rim wear--common on this small module.

Reverse
The reverse is dominated by a large, boldly cut ? at center, with a cross placed to the right, all enclosed within a laurel wreath (two branches meeting below). Under raking light, the wreath shows a regular leaf rhythm and a well-set inner border; the cross, though slightly softened, remains immediately identifiable.
The combination "? + cross at right + wreath" corresponds precisely to the typological layout recorded for DOC 300 / MIBE 203 / SB 274, and the reading remains particularly secure thanks to the strong engraving of the value mark.

Specifications
Authority: Justinian I (527-565)
Denomination: Æ Pentanummium (5 nummi, mark ? = 5)
Mint: Carthage
Date: 539-543
Obverse: DN IVSTINIANVS PP A -- diademed, draped and cuirassed bust right
Reverse: large ?, cross at right, within a laurel wreath
References: DOC 300 ; MIBE 203 ; SB 274
Metal: bronze
Weight: 2.80 g
Diameter: 15 mm
Die axis: 9h

Historical context
These small African fractions belong to the consolidation of Byzantine power in Africa after the recovery of Carthage under Justinian, following Belisarius' Vandal campaign (533-534). In this setting, Carthage coinage answered a very practical need: supplying local circulation with fractional bronze, using an explicit value mark--here ? for 5 nummi--designed to be read instantly even on a small diameter.

Cultural value
For collectors, this type offers three major strengths:
a regional issue (Carthage) directly tied to the history of Byzantine Africa;
a highly graphic "numeral" reverse (large ? + cross) that is instantly recognizable in hand;
straightforward documentation, securely framed by DOC / MIBE / Sear, and easily comparable to many published and market-recorded parallels.

Traceability & guarantees
In accordance with our practices, each specimen is examined, described, and accompanied by a certificate of authenticity consistent with the standards of the art and heritage market; the study is conducted under ×10 magnification and raking

light, and relies on non-destructive technical criteria (typological coherence, legend logic, style, strike structure, and surface assessment within observable limits).
The provenance is professional European; the acquisition results from a specialized international transaction within a recognized numismatic network and validated by expertise.

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