

Athens, Attica, Greece
C. 86 - 84 B.C.
"New Style" Silver Tetradrachm
Issued By Sulla
Silver Tetradrachm



The ancient slang names for the coins of Athens were "owls" and "girls" (but in Greek of course). "Owls" were so popular as a central currency of the ancient world that the design remained essentially unchanged and somewhat archaic long after other cities began to produce coins of a more refined artistic style. "Owls" are still very popular. For collectors they are perhaps the most popular ancient coin type.

After 1 March 86 B.C., Sulla was the master of Athens. He recovered from the Pontic king Mithradates, who had taken it by force. This issue was struck for Sulla, either at Athens or outside Athens during the siege, to pay his legions and expenses during the war against Mithradates. The silver was collected from Greeks who supported the Romans against Mithradates and requisitioned from the sacred temple treasuries at Epidaurus, Olympia and Delphi. The ancients admired these Roman-Athenian coins and called them "flats of Lucullan." The MARKOY monogram may refer to Marcus the brother of the Roman general and politician Lucullus.

Forum Number: SH70948

References: Cf. Thompson Athens 1293; Svoronos Athens pl. 78, 11; Dewing 1653; Boehringer AMUGS V, pp. 28-31 and pl. 9, 10; Kraay-Hirmer pl. 120, 366

Grade: gVF, attractive style, well struck, nicely toned, centered on a crowded slightly irregular shape flan

Weight: 16.581 grams

Maximum Diameter: 29.5mm

Die Axis: 0°

Mint: Athens mint

Date Struck: C. 86 - 84 B.C.

Obverse Description: Helmeted head of Athena Parthenos right, triple-crested helmet decorated with a griffin right above the raised earpiece, protomes of horses above visor

Reverse Description: Owl standing right on amphora on its side right, head facing, MARKOY monogram left, TAMIOY monogram right, A on amphora, all within olive wreath

Comments: Ex John Jencek. Rare.

FORVM ANCIENT COINS certifies this item is genuine as described above.

Joseph T. Sermarini



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