



The Golden Stater of T. Quinctius Flaminius

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The Golden Stater of T. Quinctius Flamininus.

**Ontwaarde muntstempel ontdekt tijdens de opgravingen op de archeologische site Kipdorp.
Numismatiek van Moresnet.**

Cornelius Lantschot (1573 - 1656).

Een 12e en 13e eeuwse zegel van de Lage Landen onder de loep:

Elizabeth / Isabella de Sevorc & Elisabeth / Isabella van Henegouwen.

Een zilveren penning als een belofte van trouw.

Numismatica Tienen "koninklijk".

De tweejaarlijkse ereprijs van Numismatica Tienen.

The Golden Stater of T. Quinctius Flamininus



T. Quinctius Flamininus

Statère d'or - Chalcis (c.196 av. J.-C.)

D'une insigne rareté et du meilleur style.

Exemplaire de la collection N. B. Hunt vente Sotheby's (New York) des 19 et 20 juin 1990, N°111 et de la collection J. C. Williams acheté chez Tradart et de la vente NGSA V des 2 et 3 décembre 2008, N°162

8,50g - Cal. 29. Superbe à FDC - CHOICE AU

Maison Palombo, Auction 17, No. 25, price realized: 600.000 CHF (photo: 200%)

When the British Museum acquired an example of this type in 1955, the curator R.A.G. Carson wrote that the coin was “*one of the most notable acquisitions by the Department and ... certainly the most important single piece ever to be added to the Roman series*”. In its catalogue of the Perfectionist's collection in May 2005, the firm Leu Numismatik wrote of this type that “*This is one of the most historically exciting and important Roman gold coins in existence*”, and referred to this specific example as “*the famous Hunt coin*” (which was reportedly acquired in the early 1980s for US\$ 400,000 – over 1,000 ounces of fine gold at the time).

Independently from its desirability as a perfect specimen of a very rare and beautiful coin, this gold stater is of the utmost importance because of the portrait it presents of Titus Quinctius Flamininus (c.229-c.174 BC). He was a prominent figure in the Roman Republican *imperium*, as explained below; but what is especially significant is that almost no living persons had been depicted previously, the privilege being reserved for deities. The Persians had done this in the late fifth century BC, but Alexander the Great himself hadn't dared to do this, only his general, Ptolemy – king of Egypt and Pharaoh – in 305/304 BC. After the present coin with the effigy of Flamininus, it is necessary to wait a century and a half until a coin presents a comparable portrait: bronze coins struck in 57-55 BC in Nysa-Scythopolis in Syria during the governorship of Gabinius bear his portrait accompanied by the letters ΓΑ (ref. RPC I 4825-8). Then, Pompey had some *aurei* struck in 71 BC to celebrate his triumph; but those show his eldest son standing in a quadriga and do not present his bust (ref. Crawford 402 = Cal. 35). The real successor to this coin is the *denarius* commissioned by Julius Caesar in 44 BC (ref. Crawford 480/2-20). Because the identification of the marble bust from Delphi has been contested by M. Crawford, and because the ‘Hellenistic Prince’ found in 1885 on the Quirinal slopes is now understood to be the portrait of Quintus Caecilius Metellus Jnr. (after 143 BC), this coin remains the only certain portrait of Flamininus.

In the late-third century BC, the Roman army defeated a Greek one – that of King Pyrrhus of Epirus – but this had taken place in Southern Italy, far from Greece. And, when the Romans fought the Illyrians in 228 and 219 BC, it took place in the Balkan peninsula, and it was King Philip V of Macedon (c.238-c.179 BC) who decided not to let the Romans get any closer. The Romans, in any case, had more pressing priorities, such as defeating Carthage (in the Battle of Zama in 202 BC), but around 200 BC they were asked by Greek and Asian allies to intervene against Philip. Over two years, the Romans had little success, but then a new consul was elected in 198 BC, namely, T. Quinctius Flamininus, who had notably served as military tribune in 208 BC and as propraetor in Tarentum in 205-204 BC (205-202 BC?). Flamininus, with the support of the

Achaean League, defeated Philip V of Macedon at the battle of the Aous, and again – decisively – at the battle of Kynoskephalai (in Thessaly) by spring 197 BC. The terms for peace said that Philip would remain king of Macedon, but that he would have to free all Greek cities, so that in 196 BC Flamininus was able to proclaim the freedom of Greece at the Isthmian games, which were held on the Isthmus of Corinth, an event related by Livy (33.33) and repeated at the Nemean games at Argos.

Where and when these coins were issued remains unresolved. The choice to depict Flamininus' bare head, without a wreath or a diadem, as opposed to traditional royal portraits, would have been understood by the Greeks as the symbol of their freedom, depicting him as an individual rather than a ruler. Both Greeks and Romans would have been impressed by the quality of the style of this portrait, simultaneously realistic and idealized. And the Romans would have understood the Latin legend, and it has been said (though contested by Crawford) that some examples have been found in Magna Graecia and Sicily. They could have been issued in the occasion of his three-day triumph in 194 BC in Rome (cf. Livy 34.52), as indeed, Livy described the triumph of 194, and noted an important donative to veterans: *"On the third day one hundred and fourteen golden crowns, gifts from the cities, were carried past; the victims were in the procession, and in front of the chariot there were many noble prisoners and hostages, among whom were Demetrius, the son of King Philip, and the Spartan Armenes, son of the tyrant Nabis. After them Quinctius himself entered the city. Following the chariot were throngs of soldiers, since the whole army had been brought back from the province. Each of these received in the distribution two hundred and fifty asses for the infantry, twice that amount for the centurions, and thrice for the cavalry"* (Livy's Hist. of Rome XXXIV 52.8-10), but that does not seem consistent with the fact that no example was ever found near Rome, and they were more likely brought back from Greece by veterans of the Second Macedonian War.

In the words of Crawford, *"the reverse type is that of the gold staters of Alexander, still in circulation in Greece in the second century"* (with the Macedonian stylis replaced by a palm-branch), and this confirms his belief that the coin was struck in Greece – making it the only Macedonian gold issue of the period. They would have been struck as homage of gratitude, after his proclamation of 196 BC: according to the historian Polybius who reported the ceremony, the crowd cheered Flamininus in such a great way after the proclamation that the ovation shocked passing birds who fell from the sky. Plutarch (Flam. 12) reports that among other honours received by Flamininus from the Greeks, he was deified in life in Chalkis in Euboea (in gratitude for his support of the invasion of Antiochus III of Syria), which had an active mint and it is therefore a possibility that this was the place where the coins were struck. But, after Cynoscephalae, Philip also had to pay a thousand talents (a weight unit: 26 kilograms of silver i.e. 2.6 kg of gold), forfeit most of his vessels, and deposit hostages at Rome – including his own son, Demetrius, who was restored to him in 190 BC. Might the Romans have had the idea of ordering him to pay in gold and strike a coin with the portrait of his defeater? A Macedonian or Greek strike seems quite likely, considering the choice of an Attic-standard stater-weight. And might Flamininus then have used them as donative to his legionaries? The emission was seemingly fairly-large, with five dies known each for the obverse and the reverse: Campana estimated the emission to have amounted to about 30,000 coins, but de Callatay hypothesizes the use of a dozen dies and a total emission of over 100,000 coins. Undoubtedly, then, these coins were heavily melted – a fact coherent with the possibility of "Greek" coins being brought back to Roman republican territories. Moreover, a metal analysis was done of an example in private hands, and Botrè summarized the results as follow: *"Dal tipo di lega aurea usata nella coniazione dello statere di Flaminio si è potuto stabilire che questa è praticamente identica alle leghe usate per coniare monete d'oro in Grecia e nettamente diversa da quelle usate successivamente a Roma in età repubblicana"* (i.e. the gold used is almost identical to that of Greek coins whilst it is very different from that used in Republican Rome – notably because of the presence of nearly 1% of silver). Brisson even noticed, on the Berlin-museum example, that the Q in the legend is not well engraved and rather resembles the Greek letter rho.

D. von Bothmer noticed that *"the lack of associated silver suggests its purpose was honorary or commemorative rather than practical"*, and he elegantly described the obverse: *"his portrait has the disheveled hair and upward gaze in vogue since Alexander and has been shown to be closely modeled on the coin portraits of Flamininus' erstwhile enemy Philip V [i.e. his tetradrachms]. Its baroque style belongs to the Asian rather than the Alexandrian school. It features rugged, expressive modeling, softened a bit since the days of the Diadochi. It also displays a sympathy for lean,*

aquiline features which is evident in contemporary Seleucid as well as Macedonian portraiture". And in the words of A. Stewart, the philhellene consul appears "in quasi-Hellenistic style, with flamboyantly tousled hair and a prominently aquiline nose; his receding chin and scruffy sideburns are realistic touches. The portrait matches Plutarch's comment that he was equally passionate both in anger and in kindness, and always thirsting for honor and glory".

When this specimen was published in 1983, there was only one other known in private hands. There are two varieties, both with the legend T QVINCTI going upwards or downwards (it must be noted that it was the Greeks – not the Romans – who traditionally used the *nomen* with a shortened *praenomen*). Of the downwards type (Crawford 548/1a), three examples are known: in the Berlin museum (inv. 18201660 supposedly found in 1883), in the London museum (inv. BM 1954-1009.1), and in a private collection (M&M 61 of 1982 lot 104 = NAC 4 of 1991 lot 110 = Ley 70 of 1994 lot 65 = Triton III of 1999 lot 815). Of the upwards type (Crawford 548/1b), eight examples are known: in the Paris museum (inv. FG 1637), in the Athens museum (inv. NM 1669), and in private collections (Leu 20 of 1978 lot 79 = Triton IV of 1999 lot 79 = NAC 39 of 2007 lot 85, Leu 81 of 2001 lot 187 = Leu 93 of 2005 lot 1 = NGSA 4 of 2006 lot 130, M&M 73 of 1988 lot 149 = NAC 83 of 2015 lot 264, NAC 100 of 2017 lot 210 = Oslo Myntgalleri 14 of 2018 lot 853, an example published by Boyce in 1962 and then by Botrè in 1989, and this specimen first published in 1983). This is the best-preserved example of all eleven known.

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