

NOTAE NUMISMATICAE

ZAPISKI NUMIZMATYCZNE



Tom XV

MUZEUM NARODOWE W KRAKOWIE
SEKCJA NUMIZMATYCZNA
KOMISJI ARCHEOLOGICZNEJ PAN
ODDZIAŁ W KRAKOWIE

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Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present volume XV of *Notae Numismaticae – Zapiski Numizmatyczne* to you. In accordance with the principles that we have adopted, our texts are published in the conference languages with English and Polish abstracts. The whole of the present volume can be found as PDF's on the website of the National Museum in Krakow (<https://mnk.pl/notae-numismaticae-zapiski-numizmatyczne-1>), as are previously published volumes of the journal. The website also contains general information about the journal as well as information for prospective authors and reviewers.

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Regulated Roman Coins and Their Imitations from India: Did Roman Coins Circulate as Money in the Subcontinent?

ABSTRACT: This paper focuses on a relatively unknown group of published and unpublished Roman gold coins and their imitations from India with a large gold plug placed behind the head of an emperor. This phenomenon was briefly discussed by Peter Berghaus, who rightly noticed that the size of the filling on those coins suggests that the purpose for placing such material into the hole was different than simply the repair of a piercing made previously for a piece of jewellery. He considers the possibility that the holes were made in order to check whether those coins were plated or not and were later refilled with gold so that the coins could return to the money market. I would like to present a different explanation of this phenomenon. I would argue that those coins were perforated and plugged in order to adjust their weight. Such an adjustment let them be used as money in the Subcontinent. Similar phenomena from various parts of the world and time periods constitute the key to understand the purpose of plugging those coins and those analogies are examined in this paper as well.

KEY WORDS: aureus, modification of coins, imitations of Roman coins, India, money

ABSTRAKT: *Standaryzacja monet rzymskich i ich imitacji w Indiach. Czy monety rzymskie funkcjonowały jako pieniądz na subkontynencie indyjskim?*

Tematem artykułu jest słabo rozpoznana grupa opublikowanych i niepublikowanych znalezisk złotych monet rzymskich i ich imitacji z Indii, z zaimplementowanym kawałkiem kruszcu umieszczonym w krążku monety za głową władcy.

Zjawisko to zostało odnotowane przez Petera Berghausa, który słusznie zauważył, że duży rozmiar dodanego kawałka złota sugeruje jego inną funkcję niż naprawianie monety, w której wcześniej wykonano otwór, aby przerobić ją na zawieszkę. Badacz ten uważał, że otwór w monecie mógł zostać wykonany w celu sprawdzenia, czy moneta nie jest platerowana. Po wykonaniu testu miał on zostać wypełniony, aby przywrócić ją do obiegu. W niniejszym artykule proponuję inną interpretację tego zjawiska, zgodnie z którą omawiane monety były intencjonalnie dociążane przez wykonanie w nich otworu, który następnie wypełniano rodzajem złotego nitu. Taka modyfikacja umożliwiała ich użytkowanie jako pieniądza na terenie Indii. Kluczem do zrozumienia tych zabytków są analogiczne zjawiska zarejestrowane dla innych części świata i okresów chronologicznych, które również zostały omówione w tym artykule.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: aureus, modyfikacja monet, imitacje monet rzymskich, Indie, pieniądz

Coins constitute the most abundant category of Roman imports found in the Indian Subcontinent. After their arrival they were used not only as media of payment but also in more diverse ways than their primary purpose. Many of them have physical additions and amendments such as loops, piercings, countermarks or slashes, which provide an insight into their social and economic lives. Plugged Roman coins and their imitations from India form another category of modified Roman coins from the Subcontinent. Those objects have a characteristic and distinct feature: a large gold plug attached behind the head of an emperor. Such coins were pierced and then a piece of gold in a form of a blob was plugged into the hole and hammered from one side. Sometimes those plugs were also countermarked with Indian symbols. Most of those coins are double pierced¹ and it suggests their use as jewelry. In their case it is not possible to establish what was made first, the plug or the piercing.

This group is relatively unknown, although some of those objects were already published. The phenomenon of plugging was briefly discussed only by two scholars. Berghaus² rightly states that the size of the fillings suggests that they were made for the purpose different than the repair of piercing made for jewellery purposes and considers the possibility that those coins were pierced in order to check whether they are not plated, and then the hole was refilled to return the coin to the circulation. Godbole,³ who published two such finds coming from a private collection writes

¹ See catalogue in this paper.

² BERGHAUS 2000.

³ GODBOLE 2007; IDEM 2008.

that those coins were “restruck (...) and put to use as a pendant”.⁴ I would like to propose a different explanation of this phenomenon assuming that those coins were perforated and plugged in order to adjust their weight which enabled them to be used as money.

To the best of my knowledge there are forty four examples of plugged Roman coins and their imitations from India, of which thirteen have recorded findspots (Map 1). Twelve of them come from six hoards which were already partially or fully published. An additional three were published by Berghaus⁵ and another two by Godbole.⁶ The rest comes from auction catalogues. The oldest coin in this dataset is a Nero pre-reform coin while the youngest are the coins of Caracalla. Thirteen of those issues are locally produced imitations of Roman coins (Pl. 1, Chart 1). Some of them are well executed, suggesting the presence of genuine Roman coins used as direct prototypes during the process of their production; others are crude and resemble the genuine coins only at a very basic level, so it is impossible to identify their prototypes. They also show some traces of the “Indianisation” of Roman coins designs.⁷ Another one is a hybrid imitating the obverse of a Roman coin and the reverse of the Sasanian issue,⁸ and another similar imitation also appeared on the market.⁹ An imitation combining designs derived from two different coinages is also known from the medallion that can be found in the British Museum, with a hybrid combination of representations copied from the coins of Constantine the Great (324–337) and of Kanishka I (c. 127–151) or Huvishka (c. 151–190).¹⁰

THE HOARDS

The oldest recorded find of plugged coin from India is the aureus of Caracalla¹¹ which comes from the hoard found in 1889 in Vinukonda (Guntur Dt., Andhra Pradesh)¹² during the digging in the old fort. The hoard consisted of fifteen aurei, of which the two issues of Tiberius are the oldest and the plugged coin is the youngest. Unfortunately, most of them were stolen in 1906, but Turner was able to identify three coins from this hoard in the Madras Museum Stock Registers and published

⁴ IDEM 2008: 41.

⁵ BERGHAUS 2000.

⁶ GODBOLE 2007; IDEM 2008.

⁷ Cat. nos. 43–44; for Indianisation of Roman coin design SMAGUR (forthcoming a).

⁸ Cat. no. 40.

⁹ CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 366, lot 52, 13.01.2016.

¹⁰ ERRINGTON, CRIBB and CLARINGBULL 1992: 16; GÖBL 1999; ALRAM 2011: 46. All dates in this paper refer to the Common Era unless stated otherwise.

¹¹ Cat. no. 30.

¹² In this paper the current names of administrative units are given. Therefore, they can differ from those quoted in the literature.

a photo of the Caracalla aureus with a plug.¹³ Those coins were earlier catalogued by Thurston,¹⁴ who mentions that some of them were bent and perforated, but, like Turner, he does not mention the plug. Therefore, it is possible that the hoard also contained other examples of plugged coins. Two coins of Tiberius from that hoard are slashed.

The second find comes from the hoard of twenty three coins found in 1928 in Gumada (Vizianagaram Dt., Andhra Pradesh), twenty of which were studied and published by Turner.¹⁵ This is a hoard consisting mostly of imitations of the second century aurei, except the last two, which are imitations of solidi but they weigh as much as aureus. According to Turner only one coin in this hoard is a genuine issue of Septimius Severus,¹⁶ but Berghaus rightly identifies another one with a plug, which is also double pierced as a genuine issue of the same emperor.¹⁷ Some of the coins in this hoard are slashed.

The next plugged coin was issued by Antoninus Pius for Faustina¹⁸ and was found in Nagarjunakonda (Guntur Dt., Andhra Pradesh) in 1956 together with gold beads and earrings in a small earthen pot in one of the residential houses outside the citadel.¹⁹ It is interpreted as a central pendant within a necklace made of those beads, and this is how it was reconstructed by the curators of the ASI Site Museum in Nagarjunakonda.²⁰ However, this coin was plugged and was most probably never a part of this pendant since it is neither double pierced nor looped like Roman coins used as jewellery in India, which is their distinguishing feature. I can only guess that the reason why it is believed to be a part of a pendant (besides being found with other jewellery items) is that the plug is displaced, enabling a string to be tied to the coin.

The Akki Alur hoard, found in the village of the same name (Haveri Dt., Karnataka) in 1977, yielded one double pierced and plugged coin of Septimius Severus.²¹ It was discovered in a pot unearthed while ploughing a field, along with two other aurei and forty three solidi, of which the youngest is the issue of Justin I. Most probably some of the solidi are imitations. Many specimens in this hoard were pierced and one was looped. Some of them also have intentional scratch marks.²²

¹³ TURNER 1989: 84–85, pl. IV: 180. The same coin was published by Berghaus (2000: 499, 501: ill. 7).

¹⁴ THURSTON 1889: 325–328; IDEM 1894: 22–24.

¹⁵ TURNER 1989: 54, 115, pl. I: 162–167, pl. II: 168–184.

¹⁶ Madras Museum no. 169.

¹⁷ Cat. no. 16; TURNER 1989: pl. I: 167; BERGHAUS 1992: 245, pl. 2: 13; IDEM 2000: 499, 501: ill. 5.

¹⁸ Cat. no. 9.

¹⁹ GHOSH 1957: 38, pl. LX: B and C; SARMA 1996: 68; SARKAR and MISHRA 2006: 20–21.

²⁰ This coin reconstructed as a part of a necklace, together with its description can be found in the database: Museums of India. National Portal & Digital Repository. (http://museumsfindia.gov.in/repository/record/nkm_hyd-gsmo-reg-0001-7056).

²¹ Cat. no. 15.

²² NAGARAJA RAO 1980: 111–112; IDEM 1987; GUPTA 1984: 37–43; TURNER 1989: 48; BERGHAUS 2001; IDEM 2000: 500; DAY 2012.

Another five examples come from the hoard which was found in 1992 in Choraippattu village near Tirukoilur town (Kallakurichi Dr., Tamil Nadu) by some workers who were digging the land to lay a pipeline. Apart from the 191 coins recovered by the police there were also a gem-studded gold ring and four coin loops,²³ perhaps coming from the same hoard. The hoard contained slashed, punchmarked, double pierced and looped issues. According to Berghaus²⁴ 163 specimens from this hoard were imitations, while Santhi²⁵ claims that 183 specimens were not genuine issues. Unfortunately, this hoard was never fully published so their statements cannot be verified.²⁶ Five plugged coins from this hoard being the issues of Vespasian, Trajan, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius and Septimius Severus²⁷ were published by Berghaus²⁸ and all of them are genuine, although Berghaus wrongly identified the coin of Vespasian as a hybrid imitation of the Vespasian/Antoninus Pius coins. The youngest coin in this hoard is an aureus of Caracalla.

The latest find of plugged aurei comes from the hoard discovered in 2002 in Penuganchiprolu (Krishna Dt., Andhra Pradesh) during the digging on the eastern side of Sri Tirupatamma Ammavari Devasthanam Choultry. It is believed that apart from thirty five aurei and twenty four imitations, it also contained one lead coin of the Ikshavaku ruler and one copper coin of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, but most probably those are intruders in the hoard. The oldest coin is the Augustus issue, while the latest is a coin of Septimius Severus.²⁹ This hoard not only contained plugged coins but also double pierced, countermarked and slashed examples. Three plugged coins from this hoard³⁰ are the issues of Nerva, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius.³¹ It is interesting to note that the plugged aureus of Nerva also has two refilled piercings.

²³ KRISHNAMURTHY 1998: 145. Krishnamurthy mentions 193 coins, while Berghaus (2006) writes of 191 coins. Their reports vary also with regard to the date of the discovery of the hoard. According to Krishnamurthy the hoard was found in 1992, while Berghaus states that it took place in 1993.

²⁴ BERGHAUS 2006.

²⁵ SANTHI 1998: 40.

²⁶ Some imitations were analysed by Berghaus (2006) who demonstrates that the part of them is mould-linked by their reverse. Another seventeen imitations were published by Krishnamurthy. Both scholars emphasise the fact that many imitations from the hoard are hybrids. Another two coins from the hoard were published by Santhi (1998).

²⁷ Cat. nos. 2, 4, 6, 12, 22.

²⁸ BERGHAUS 2000: 501: ill. 8–12, 502.

²⁹ SUBRAHMANYAM, RAMA KRISHNA RAO and BRAHMA CHARY 2008. According to the authors the two youngest coins in this hoard are the issues of Elagabalus and Maximinus Thrax, but they were wrongly identified.

³⁰ Cat. nos. 3, 7, 10.

³¹ This coin has been wrongly identified as the issue of Maximinus Thrax, SUBRAHMANYAM, RAMA KRISHNA RAO and BRAHMA CHARY 2008: 33.

THE DATING

Berghaus's dating³² of the practice of plugging Roman coins and their imitations in India is based on the example from the British Museum.³³ In the case of this specimen, the plug is stamped with a punch depicting a conch shell. He claims that this symbol appears in the South Indian coinage from the 7th century onwards, so the refilling could not have been made before the 6th–7th century. However, the conch is one of the ancient Indian symbols and emerged in the Indian coinage much earlier. It can be seen for example on punch-marked coins issued in ancient Vanga and dated to the end of the Mauryan Empire,³⁴ on coins of the Pandyas³⁵ and the Cheras³⁶ issued in the period between c. the 2nd century BC and 2nd century and on the Yaudheya coins of the Karttikeya-Devasana type³⁷ of 3rd–4th century. Finally, the conch motif, very similar to the one the British Museum specimen was punched with is depicted alone or together with a shrivatsa on the coins from Khlong Thom in Thailand dated as early as to the 3rd century. Khlong Thom was a hub for maritime trade and intercultural contacts and those auspicious symbols, according to Borell,³⁸ could have derived directly from South Asia. Therefore, the Berghaus argument cannot be upheld.

According to the same scholar,³⁹ gold imitations of Roman aurei should be dated no earlier than to the 4th–5th centuries. But he also favoured the later date as the time of transformation of the coins and its imitations into pendants which, in his opinion, took place not before the 4th century, more probably in the 5th–6th centuries. However, the existing evidence is convincing enough to change the dating regarding the practice of double piercing to as early as the 2nd century.⁴⁰ The coin-like ornaments from the archaeological sites at Óc Eo (Vietnam), Khlong Thom and U Thong (Thailand) imitate the coin designs of Antoninus Pius, Commodus and Septimius Severus and are dated to the early 3rd century.⁴¹ Also the chronological structure of Indian finds of the 2nd and 3rd century Roman coins reflects the chronological structure of imitation prototypes, which suggests that those issues most probably started being imitated, just like Julio-Claudian specimens,⁴² soon after their arrival to India, that is from the 3rd century onwards.

³² BERGHAUS 2000.

³³ Cat. no. 38.

³⁴ GUPTA and HARDAKER 2014: 195, type 627.

³⁵ PIEPER 2013: 298, type 769.

³⁶ *Ibidem*: 302, types 783, 784.

³⁷ HANDA 2007: 160, 204, pl. LXXII.4–7 and 9–10.

³⁸ BORELL 2017.

³⁹ BERGHAUS 1991: 110; IDEM 1992; IDEM 1994: 35.

⁴⁰ SMAGUR (forthcoming b).

⁴¹ BORELL 2014; IDEM 2017: 170.

⁴² SMAGUR (forthcoming b).

The oldest example in the dataset is a plugged coin of Nero.⁴³ However, hoards consisting only of coins minted before the reform of Nero do not contain plugged issues. This particular Nero coin is very worn in contrast to its plug, which must have been added much later. The remaining coins belong to the second (Vespasian to Commodus) and third pool of coins (Septimius Severus to Caracalla), which most probably arrived in India in the late 2nd and in the first half of 3rd century respectively. The youngest plugged examples are the coins of Caracalla, and the coins of this ruler constitute the youngest identifiable prototypes of plugged imitations. The Caracalla plugged coin from Vinukonda, which is the youngest in the hoard, is in very good condition that suggests that it was plugged soon after its arrival to India and not much later it slipped out from circulation. The same is true for the plugged coins from the Choraippattu hoard. Therefore, it can be assumed that Roman coins might have started to be plugged in the 3rd century. More information about the dating the phenomenon is provided by the imitation which is inspired by the Roman and Sasanian coin designs. A fire altar entwined in a diadem band appears for the first time in the coinage of Ardashir I issued after he employed the title King of Kings (224–240),⁴⁴ providing a TPQ for this imitation and its plug.

A similar timeframe may be adopted when examining the find from Nagarjunakonda. The plugged coin of Antoninus Pius was found there in the structure from the Ikshvaku period, which is roughly dated to the period between the second quarter of the 3rd century and the middle of the 4th century.⁴⁵ The coin together with its plug is in very good condition; therefore, it can be assumed that it did not circulate in India for a long time. However, the dataset contains also coins which are more worn but their plugs remain in good condition⁴⁶ suggesting that the practice continued also in the 4th century.

The Gumada hoard was deposited later, which is demonstrated by the fact that it contains imitations of solidi; however, their prototypes cannot be identified with certainty. The Akki Alur hoard is also of a late date. Three aurei, of which one is plugged, dated to the 2nd century are in poor condition in comparison with the Byzantine solidi, but it seems they were in use alongside with the newer issues until they were deposited sometime in or after the 6th century.⁴⁷ Based on that evidence, it can be assumed that the phenomenon of plugging Roman coins and their imitations in India might have started somewhere in the 3rd century and probably continued in the 4th century. Such coins were in circulation until at least the 6th century.

⁴³ Cat. no. 1.

⁴⁴ ALRAM 2003: 24–25.

⁴⁵ SARKAR and MISHRA 2006: 13–17.

⁴⁶ E.g. Cat. nos. 17, 31.

⁴⁷ DAY 2012.

THE PURPOSE

Due to the lack of the written sources on this subject, the plugged Roman coins and their imitations from India can be understood in light of similar phenomena from various parts of the world and different time periods. In most cases, plugs were applied in order to fill in the piercings made for jewellery purposes and such examples are also known from India. They can be distinguished by their small size and their location. However, they are of a different kind than the plugs this paper deals with.

In numismatic history, the plugging of coins might have had various purposes. Many silver coins of Sandan, the ruler of the Western Turk period,⁴⁸ dated to the first half of the 8th century, have one or two tiny plugs, in most cases made of gold (Pl. 2, Fig. 1). The plug was always placed on the neck of the ruler. When the second plug was added, it was placed in the middle of his crown. However, the small size of the added piece of gold and the difference between the kind of metal used for striking a coin and a plug might point to its symbolic, not economic meaning.⁴⁹ The English tin farthings issued between 1681 and 1692 had a square plug of copper in the centre placed with intent to deter counterfeiting.⁵⁰ The Irish pewter money struck by James II between 1689 and 1690 had a plug of brass to distinguish them from counterfeits which might have been cast in lead.⁵¹

Berghaus⁵² correctly points out that a practice similar to that observed in the case of Indian finds is confirmed by the two solidi of Valentinian III and Theodosius II found in Öland (Sweden). On those coins the plugs were also marked with some symbols and placed near the neck of the emperor. Fagerlie, when publishing those finds, assigned them to the group of coins transformed into jewellery together with other finds which were pierced for ornamental purposes and later refilled in order to restore the coin's original function as currency.⁵³ She does not notice that those two coins differ from the others regarding the plug, which is bigger and marked with symbols. Plugs also appear on some of the imitations of Thasos tetradrachms from Thrace dated to the 1st century BC, on which a silver rivet is fitted into a coin flan (Pl. 2, Fig. 2). Prokopov⁵⁴ proposes two possible explanations of this phenomenon: the refilling of coins already drilled for decoration purposes in order to return them to circulation, or the refilling of piercing that was made when coins were tested for metal. But he also writes that "so far there is not a unanimous and satisfactory explanation" of this phenomenon.

⁴⁸ VONDROVEC 2014: 643–644, type 244.

⁴⁹ MICHAEL ALRAM: personal communication.

⁵⁰ MISSMAN 1993.

⁵¹ PITTOCK 1997: 82.

⁵² BERGHAUS 2000: 500.

⁵³ FAGERLIE 1967: 137–144, pl. XXIII: 47, 241.

⁵⁴ PROKOPOV 2011: 340, pl. IV: 18, 19.

The understanding of the purpose of plugging Roman coins and their imitations in India is provided by other examples. Just like in the case of finds from the Subcontinent, the plug is relatively large, made of the same metal as the coin and placed in its centre. Plugs appear on some Merovingian tremisses from England, especially from Kent (Pl. 2, Fig. 3). Those coins were modified by fastening a gold blob to their reverse in order to bring the underweight examples to the proper weight standard. They are interpreted as one of the indicators of the existence of the gold bullion economy in that period.⁵⁵ Wagner⁵⁶ describes a slightly different phenomenon and shows that some flans used for striking Byzantine coins were already regulated in the mint. Too heavy examples were cut or sanded while those which were too light were plugged by making a hole and filling it with gold. Then the coin was struck. Such a practice can be observed in the case of some gold and silver coins dated from Anastasius I to Constans II. Furthermore, three plugged eastern imitations of Alexander tetradrachms come from the hoard that was said to have been found near Quetta in western Pakistan, and was deposited in 206 or 200 BC (Pl. 2, Fig. 4).⁵⁷ Those coins had been pierced or drilled and later the hole was filled with a silver rivet or a plug. Those specimens are underweight; therefore, the plug was most probably applied to add weight and adjust them to the required weight or denominational standard.⁵⁸ According to Miller⁵⁹ their inclusion in the hoard tends to support the use of foreign or worn flans used as hosts for the local imitations.

However, the closest analogy to the finds from India in terms of the technical aspects would be the regulated gold coinage of the North America and West Indies of the late 18th century. In the colonial period, gold coins from many countries circulated as legal tender on these territories following their own weight standards. Moreover, they were often clipped, worn or “sweated”.⁶⁰ Therefore, they started to be regulated to certain weight according to the decrees of the local authorities. A goldsmith or silversmith could have clipped the coin or drilled it and then added a gold plug in order to increase its weight. Gold- or silversmith counterstamps on the plugs identifying the regulator and guarantying the gold content of the piece are further evidence of this practice, which also continued after Independence (Pl. 2, Fig. 5).⁶¹

⁵⁵ See <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/914623>; also ABDY and WILLIAMS 2006: 17, no. 8.

⁵⁶ WAGNER 2011: 214–216.

⁵⁷ HOUGHTON and LORBER 2002: 123–124.

⁵⁸ VAN ALFEN 2002: 185–186, nos. 463–465; pl. 29, nos. 9, 10 and 11.

⁵⁹ MILLER 2010: nos. 131, 153, and 157.

⁶⁰ The process of placing coins in a bag and shaking. The resulting dust and other gold residue might have been recovered and sold.

⁶¹ SEDWICK; see also WOOD 1914: 92.

Therefore, I would argue that plugged Roman coins and their imitations from India were regulated in order to adjust them to the desired weight. The plug was often countermarked, most probably in order to confirm that the coin was regulated by a trustworthy person. The practice was not common; those coins are found in small numbers in comparison to the total amount of finds of Roman gold coins from the Subcontinent. However, none of the modifications of Roman coins from India (piercing, slashing, countermarking, bending, scratching) can be observed in the case of all finds. This differentiation is most likely associated with the variety of the functions of Roman coins within the Subcontinent which was ruled by different political entities at various stages of monetization.

That also means that they were considered underweight in certain contexts. It seems that their point of reference was Nero's pre-reform aureus. Pre-reform⁶² coins were preferred in India and when they had stopped arriving to the Subcontinent, their Indian users also stopped being interested in denarii.⁶³ Also a two-drachm gold coin of the Kushan Empire introduced by Wima Kadphises (c. 113–127) had a very similar weight to the pre-reform *denarius aureus*, so at some point before the reign of Kanishka II (c. 230–247) it came to be known as a *dinar*. To some extent the weight standard introduced by the Kushans was continued to be maintained by the Kushano-Sasanian and Kidarite Huns and was borrowed by the Guptas.⁶⁴ Moreover, I am not aware of any regulated solidi or their imitations from India; however, imitations of solidi, the weight of which was equal to that of the aureus are known from the Gumada hoard.⁶⁵

In the presented dataset there is only one pre-reform coin of Nero and this was already very worn when the plug was added, so it might have weighed far less than a similar, unworn coin of this type. Plugs also do not appear in coin hoards which consist only of pre-reform aurei. It can be seen on the chart showing the weight of plugged coins (Pl. 1, Chart 2)⁶⁶ that the specimens which arrived with the second pool of coins ending with the Commodus issues⁶⁷ were plugged with a smaller amount of gold than the coins of Septimius Severus, Geta and Caracalla.⁶⁸

⁶² In this paper the expression “pre-reform coins” refers to the coins struck before Nero's reform in 64.

⁶³ See i.e. MACDOWALL 2008.

⁶⁴ JONGEWARD, CRIBB and DONOVAN 2015: 7–8.

⁶⁵ The weight of Indian imitations of aurei varies, in this case it is 7.04 and 7.02 g.

⁶⁶ The coins are arranged like in a catalogue, from the oldest issue to the latest.

⁶⁷ I.e. the plugged coin of Vespasian (No. 2) weighs 7.2 grams. The examples of the same type in the OCRE database in mint condition weigh 7.27, 7.29, 7.20 and 7.28 g. The more worn coin weighs 6.97 g. The plugged Hadrian coin (No. 5) weighs 7.56 g while the example in the OCRE weighs 7.25 g. The plugged coin of Antoninus Pius (No. 6) weighs 7.4 g, and coins from the OCRE weigh 7.12, 7.09, 7.25 and 7.3 g. Another plugged coin of the same emperor (No. 9) weighs 7.60 g while the OCRE examples weigh 7.35 and 7.09 g.

⁶⁸ I.e. the plugged coin of Septimius Severus (No. 18) weighs 8.34 g while the average weight given in the OCRE is 7.19 g. Another plugged coin of this emperor weighs 7.81 g and the average weight in the OCRE

Some weight must have been lost through wear and while double piercing. However, it seems that the Indian merchants were aware that the weight of Roman aurei had decreased following the Nero reform, falling to the c. 6.5 g during the reign of Caracalla in 215.⁶⁹ Therefore, the later coins were issued, the larger the amount of gold that was used to regulate them. Such a regulation was not very precise, as the weight of the plugged coins indicates, with a consequent relatively wide weight span. However, those examples with a countermarked plug, being the evidence of the existence of some sort of guarantee of the proper weight of the piece, have a weight much closer resembling the weight of an ideal old aureus (Pl. 1, Chart 3).

THE FUNCTION

The function of Roman coins in India remains a subject of debate. One of the most important questions is whether any of them were used as money. The “circulation theory” has been supported by various arguments, possibly by as many as the “non-circulation theory”, according to which they were valued not as denomination but as a bullion. Many scholars favour the “partial circulation theory” assuming that certain varieties of Roman coins were used as money in specific regions of the Subcontinent. Suresh⁷⁰ published an overview of this debate, including the summary of the relevant literature which therefore need not be repeated here. However, the plugged coins constitute evidence that Roman coins and their imitations at least at some point or in some regions of India were considered money.

As Wang⁷¹ quite aptly said, “money is an abstract concept and one that has proved remarkably difficult to define”. She also discusses various definitions and their usefulness for opening our minds to new ways of thinking about money. In some of them the importance of the political authority of the issuer ensuring that the money would be accepted at a certain value is stressed as one of the characteristics of money. Therefore, outside of the territory of the issuing state this guarantee does not work. However, Cribb⁷² proposes a definition, according to which “money is any object (or record of the same) which is regularly used to make payments according to a law which guarantees its value and ensures its acceptability”. But he also states that just like the law formulated by the king, the unwritten law upheld

is 7.19 g. The worn coin of this type with a missing plug weighs only 6.64 g. Coin No. 21 weighs 8.35 g while the example in the OCRE weighs 7.18 g. The Caracalla plugged coin (No. 32) weighs 7.91 g while the average weight in the OCRE for this type is 7.26 g. Another plugged aureus of the same emperor (No. 33) weighs 8.23 g.

⁶⁹ DUNCAN-JONES 1994: 215–218.

⁷⁰ SURESH 2004: 66–71.

⁷¹ WANG 2013.

⁷² CRIBB 2005: 431.

by custom and maintained by practice can also guarantee and ensure the value and acceptability of money.

Bates⁷³ indicates the fact that, due to the existence of full-bodied coinage in the pre-industrial world, foreign coins easily circulated and sometimes they were even preferred over than the domestic coinage. Such coins did not circulate because a government guaranteed or mandated their acceptance; they could have been used because they had a value of their own, which was recognizable in the money market. That was also the case during the American colonial period when sometimes it was not clear which government, if any, was in control in any given area. Therefore, people relied on the intrinsic value of the metal to define the value of a particular piece of money. Its legitimacy was gained through common consent of the users.⁷⁴ Finally, money in light of the classical economic definitions has three main functions: a medium of exchange, a standard of value and a store of wealth. Additional characteristics of money are that it is durable, portable, quantifiable in a system of small gradations and fungible. Do plugged Roman coins and their imitations fulfil those requirements? I argue that they do.

The Roman aureus in India was full-bodied money, the value of which was the same as the value of the metal in it plus something for its value as a functional object. Plugging coins had unavoidable cost for labour, which means that such coins were used differently than bullion of the same weight. Otherwise, what would be the purpose of plugging them? The circulation of Roman coins as money is also confirmed by the practice of refilling their piercings made for jewellery purposes, which aimed to restore them their original monetary appearance and required some labour.⁷⁵ Two examples of Indian imitations of aurei with refilled perforations made for ornamental purposes which appeared on the market⁷⁶ also constitute the examples of the attempts to restore their original appearance by trying to reconstruct the lacking letters. One of them even has a countermark next to the filling.

The use of Roman coins as a mean of exchange in the international trade with India is a well-known fact and their use in the local and regional transactions is confirmed by their spatial distribution within the Subcontinent. They are often found along the trade routes or in places which did not participate directly in the international trade. They must have been passing from hand to hand what is confirmed by examples having many physical traces of various modifications, like piercing, countermarking and slashing or their combinations. Most probably different

⁷³ BATES 2015.

⁷⁴ AKIN, BARD and AKIN 2016: 20.

⁷⁵ See BERGHAUS 2000; SMAGUR (forthcoming b).

⁷⁶ The New York Sale; Auction 25, 05.01.2011, lot 332; Auction 30, 09.01.2013, lot 301.

individuals were involved at different stage of their use. The exchange must have been the mechanism which enabled the coins to change the owner in many cases. The same is true for plugged coins, which, as the evidence from the hoards shows, were in circulation at least up to the 6th century.

The function of plugged coins as a store of wealth is confirmed by their finds in coin hoards. Their physical form made them durable and portable. The phenomenon of plugging confirms the need to adjust them to the desired weight, which must have enabled them functioning within certain type of system and economy, and made them acceptable. Their value must have been considered measurable and comparable, helping to assess the equivalence of the payment or exchange.⁷⁷ Having the desired weight standard, they were also quantifiable and fungible. Therefore, plugged coins fulfilled all the functions attributed to money and in economic contexts they might have been used as such.

However, it is worth mentioning that the function of Roman coins was much more complex than just serving as money in such Indian societies. It depended on their owner and the context they were used in – economic, social, ornamental, magical or ritual – and might have varied during their lifetime. When used in trade, both international and regional, they were “common” objects, which means that they were saleable or exchangeable. Due to their lifetime they must have been singularized many times (i.e. when they were turned into ornaments) with the possibility of their later recommoditization.⁷⁸

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⁷⁷ See VON REDEN 2012: 3.

⁷⁸ See KOPYTOFF 1986.

CATALOGUE

Nero (54–68)

1. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 60–64; wt. 7.52 g; dia.: 20 mm (Pl. 3, Fig. 6)

Obv.: head of Nero, bare, right; [N]ERO C[AESARAVGIMP]

Rv.: Virtus, helmeted, in military dress, standing left, right foot on helmet among shield, holding long spear in left hand and parazonium in his right hand and resting it on right knee; [PONTIF MAXTR PV...]COS[...]PP [EX SC] in field

RIC I 25 or 31 or 36 or 40

Remarks: double pierced, countermark on the obverse, countermark on the plug (obverse side)

CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 219, lot 437, 30.09.2009

Vespasian (69–79)

2. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 76; wt. 7.2 g; dia.: unknown

(Hoard, Choraippattu, Kallakurichi Dt., Tamil Nadu, found in 1992)

Obv.: head of Vespasian, laureate, right; IMPCAESAR VESPASIANVSAVG

Rv.: Aeternitas, veiled, wearing long tunic, standing left, in front of low garlanded altar, holding in her hands heads of Sun and Moon; AETER NITAS

RIC II² 838

Tirukoilur Taluk Office

Ref.: BERGHAUS 2000: 499–501, ill. 12

Nerva (96–98)

3. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 97; wt. 7.40 g.; dia.: 18 mm

(Hoard, Penuganchiprolu, Krishna Dt., Andhra Pradesh, found in 2002)

Obv.: head of Nerva, laureate, right; IMPNERV[A]CAESAVG[PMTRCOSIII]PP

Rv.: Fortuna, draped, standing left, holding rudder set on ground in right hand and cornucopia in left; FO[RTVNA]AVGVST

RIC II 16 (?)

Remarks: two countermarks on the obverse, refilled piercing

Department of Archaeology and Museums Government of Andhra Pradesh, Acc. No. 15 157

Ref.: SUBRAHMANYAM, RAMA KRISHNA RAO and BRAHMA CHARY 2008: 17

Trajan (98–117)

4. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 114–117; wt. 7.2 g; dia.: unknown

(Hoard, Choraippattu, Kallakurichi Dt., Tamil Nadu, found in 1992)

Obv.: bust of Trajan, laureate, draped, right;

IMPCAESNERTRAIANOOPTIMOAVGGERDAC

Rv.: Trajan seated left on low platform, right with two attendants; three kings standing right before; REGNA AD SIGNATA

RIC II 366

Tirukoilur Taluk Office

Ref.: BERGHAUS 2000: 499–501, ill. 8

Hadrian (117–138)

5. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 134–138; wt. 7.56 g; dia.: 20 mm (Pl. 3, Fig. 7)

Obv.: bust of Hadrian, laureate, draped, left; HADRIANVS AV[GC]OSIIIPP

Rv.: Nilus, naked to waist, reclining left, holding cornucopiae in right hand and reed in left, resting left arm on sphinx; hippopotamus front, below in water, crocodile; NILVS

RIC II 308j

CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 219, lot 447, 30.09.2009

Antoninus Pius (138–161)

6. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 148–149; wt. 7.4 g; dia.: unknown

(Hoard, Choraippattu, Kallakurichi Dt., Tamil Nadu, found in 1992)

Obv.: bust of Antoninus Pius, bare-headed, draped or cuirassed, right; ANTONINVS AVGPVSPPTRPXII

Rv.: Aequitas, draped, standing left, holding scales out in right hand and cornucopiae in left; COS IIII

RIC III 177c

Tirukoilur Taluk Office

Ref.: BERGHAUS 2000: 499–501, ill. 9

7. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 151–152; wt. 7.30 g; dia.: 19 mm

(Hoard, Penuganchiprolu, Krishna Dt., Andhra Pradesh, found in 2002)

Obv.: head of Marcus Aurelius, bare, right; AVRELIVSCAESARANTONINIAVGPIIFIL

Rv.: Clementia, draped, standing front, head left, holding patera in extended right hand and raising fold of skirt up in left; TRPOTVI COSII, in exergue CLEM

RIC III 456A

Remarks: countermark on the obverse

Department of Archaeology and Museums Government of Andhra Pradesh, Acc. No. 15 108

Ref.: SUBRAHMANYAM, RAMA KRISHNA RAO and BRAHMA CHARY 2008: 21

8. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 149; wt. 7.85 g; dia.: 23 mm

Obv.: bust of Antoninus Pius, laureate, draped, cuirassed, right; [ANTONIN]VSAVG PIVSPP[TRPCOSIII]

Rv.: bust of Marcus Aurelius, bare-headed, draped, cuirassed, left; [AVRELIVSCAESAR AVGPIIFCOS]

RIC III 417E or 418B

Private collection, later Todywalla Auctions, Auction 70, lot 810, 29.12.2012; Auction 78, lot 471, 30.08.2013

Ref.: GODBOLE 2008

9. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 141; wt. 7.60 g; dia.: unknown

(Hoard, Nagarjunakonda, Guntur Dt., Andhra Pradesh, found in 1956)

Obv.: bust of Faustina I, veiled, draped, right with hair elaborately waved and coiled on top; DIVA FAVSTINA

Rv.: Fortuna, veiled, draped, standing left, holding patera in extended right hand and vertical rudder, set on globe, in left; AETER NITAS

RIC III 349 Ab

ASI Site Museum in Nagarjunakonda

Marcus Aurelius (161–180)

10. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 165–166; wt. 7.71 g; dia.: 19 mm

(Hoard, Penuganchiprolu, Krishna Dt., Andhra Pradesh, found in 2002)

Obv.: head of Marcus Aurelius, laureate, right; MANTONINVSAVG ARMENIACVS

Rv.: Felicitas, draped, standing front, head left, right foot set on globe, holding caduceus in right hand and cornucopiae in left hand; [PMTRPXX IM]PIIICOSIII

RIC III 153

Department of Archaeology and Museums Government of Andhra Pradesh Acc. No. 15 104

Ref.: SUBRAHMANYAM, RAMA KRISHNA RAO and BRAHMA CHARY 2008: 33

11. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 166–167, wt. 7.06 g; dia.: unknown (Pl. 3, Fig. 8)

Obv.: bust of Lucius Verus, laureate, cuirassed, right; LVERVSAVG ARMPARTHMAX

Rv.: Victory, winged, draped, advancing left, holding wreath in extended right hand and palm, sloped over left shoulder, in left hand; TRPVIIIMPPIIICOS III

RIC 573

Remarks: double pierced, countermarks on the obverse and reverse

Baldwin's Auctions, Summer Argentum Auction, lot 27, 25.05.2002

12. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 164–180; wt. 7.3 g; dia.: unknown

(Hoard, Choraippattu, Kallakurichi Dt., Tamil Nadu, found in 1992)

Obv.: bust of Lucilla, bare-headed, hair waved and fastened in a bun on back of head, draped, right; LVCILLAEAVG ANTONINIAVGF

Rv.: Concordia, draped, seated left on low seat, holding patera in extended right hand and resting left elbow on statuette of Spes; under seat, cornucopiae; CONCORDIA
RIC III 756

Tirukoilur Taluk Office

Ref.: BERGHAUS 2000: 499–501, ill. 10

Commodus (180–192)

13. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 181; wt. 7.42 g; dia.: 22 mm (Pl. 3, Fig. 9)

Obv.: bust of Commodus, laureate, draped, right; MCO[MM]OD[VS]ANTONINVS AVG

Rv.: Securitas, draped, seated right, resting head on right hand and holding sceptre in left hand; [SECVRITA]SPVBLICATRPVIIMPIIIII[COSIIIPP]

RIC III 23c

Remarks: double pierced

CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 366, lot 35, 13.01.2016

14. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 190; wt. 7.62 g; dia.: unknown (Pl. 3, Fig. 10)

Obv.: bust of Commodus, laureate, draped, cuirassed, right; MCOMMANTPF
ELAVGBRITPP

Rv.: winged caduceus between crossed cornucopiae;
TEMPFELICPMTRPXVIMPVIIC[O]SVI

RIC III 214

Remarks: double pierced

Baldwin's Auctions Ltd, Autumn 2009 Argentum Auction, lot 43, 07.11.2009

Septimius Severus (193–211)

15. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 200–201; wt. 7.22 g; dia.: unknown

(Hoard, Akki Alur, Haveri Dt., Karnataka, found in 1977)

Obv.: bust of Septimius Severus, laureate, with aegis on right shoulder, right; [SEV]
ERVSAVG PARTMAX

Rv.: Septimius Severus, in military attire, on horse prancing left, holding spear in right hand; SPQROPT IMOPR[INC]

RIC IV 169A

Remarks: double pierced

Mysore, Directorate of Archaeology

Ref.: NAGARAJA RAO 1980: 111–112, 1987; GUPTA 1984: 37–43; TURNER 1989: 48; BERGHAUS 2000: 500–501, ill. 6, 2001; DAY 2012

16. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 200–201; wt. 6.44 g; dia.: unknown

(Hoard, Gumada, Vizianagaram Dt., Andhra Pradesh, found in 1928)

Obv.: bust of Septimius Severus, laureate, draped, right; SEVERVSAV[G] PARTMAX

Rv.: Virtus, helmeted, draped, standing left, holding Victory in extended right hand and resting left hand on shield set on ground; spear resting against left arm; VIRT AV[G]G RIC IV 171b

Remarks: double pierced

Madras Government Museum, MM 167

Ref.: TURNER 1989: 54, 115, pl. I.167; BERGHAUS 2000: 499, 501, ill. 5

17. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 201; wt. 7.80 g; dia.: unknown (Pl. 3, Fig. 11)

Obv.: head of Septimius Severus, laureate, right; SEVERVSPIVSVS AVGPMTRPVIII

Rv.: busts of Caracalla, laureate, draped, cuirassed, and of Geta, bare-headed, draped, sometimes cuirassed, facing one another; AET[ERNIT IMP]ERI

RIC IV 174

Remarks: double pierced, countermark on the plug (reverse side)

Baldwin's Auctions Ltd, Autumn 2009 Argentum Auction, lot 46, 07.11.2009

18. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 207; wt. 8.34 g; dia.: unknown (Pl. 3, Fig. 12)

Obv.: head of Septimius Severus, laureate, right; S[EVE]RVS PIVSAVG

Rv.: bust of Minerva, helmeted, draped, right; PMTRPXV COS[IIIPP]

RIC IV 206

Remarks: double pierced

Baldwin's Auctions Ltd, Auction 40, lot 52, 03.05.2005

19. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 202–210; wt. 7.81g; dia.: 20 mm (Pl. 3, Fig. 13)

Obv.: head of Septimius Severus, laureate, right; [SEVE]RVS PIVSAVG

Rv.: Caracalla and Geta, both laureate and togate, standing right and left, holding up Victory between them; CORNCOR[D]IAAV[G]VST[ORVM]

RIC IV 255

Remarks: double pierced

CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 219, lot 451, 30.09.2009

20. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 202–210; wt. 6.64 g; dia.: 22 mm (Pl. 3, Fig. 14)

Obv.: head of Septimius Severus, laureate, right; [SEVER]VS PIVSAVG

Rv.: Caracalla and Geta, both laureate and togate, standing right and left, holding up Victory between them; CORNCOR[DI]AA[V]GVST[ORVM]

RIC IV 255

Remarks: double pierced, hole behind the neck of the emperor (missing plug)

CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 219, lot 450, 30.09.2009

21. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 202–210; wt. 8.35 g; dia.: unknown (Pl. 3, Fig. 15)

Obv.: head of Septimius Severus, laureate, right; SEV[E]RVS PIVSAVG

Rv.: bust of Sol, radiate, draped, right; PACA[TOR] ORBIS

RIC IV 282

Remarks: double pierced, countermark on the plug (reverse side)

Baldwin's Auctions, Summer Argentum Auction, lot 34, 25.05.2002

22. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 193–196; wt. 7.4 g; dia.: unknown

(Hoard, Choraippattu, Kallakurichi Dt., Tamil Nadu, found in 1992)

Obv.: bust of Julia Domna, hair waved and coiled at back, draped, right; IVL[IA] DO MNAAVG

Rv.: Venus, with drapery falling below hips, standing with back turned, head right, holding apple in extended right hand and palm sloped to the left in left hand, resting left elbow on column; VENERI VICTR

RIC IV 536

Tirukoilur Taluk Office

Ref.: BERGHAUS 2000: 499–501, ill. 11

23. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 196–211; wt. 7.80 g; dia.: 20 mm (Pl. 3, Fig. 16)

Obv.: bust of Julia Domna, hair waved and coiled at back, draped, right; IVLIAAVGVSTA

Rv.: busts of Caracalla, laureate, draped, and of Geta, bare-headed, draped, sometimes cuirassed, facing one another; AETERNIT IMPERI

RIC IV 540

Remarks: double pierced, countermark on the plug (obverse side)

Private collection, Mumbai

Ref.: GODBOLE 2007

Septimius Severus: Imitations

24. AV, imitation of aureus, wt. 7.52 g; dia.: 23 mm (Pl. 3, Fig. 17)

Obv.: head of Septimius Severus, laureate, right; SEVERVSPIVSAVG PMTRPVIII

Rv.: jugate busts of Septimius Severus, radiate, draped, cuirassed, and of Julia Domna, diademed, draped, on crescent; CONC[OR]DIAEAETERNAE

Prototype: RIC IV 174–175/RIC IV 522

Remarks: double pierced, countermark on the plug (obverse side)

CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 366, lot 849, 13.01.2016

25. AV, imitation of aureus, wt. 7.56 g; dia.: 20 mm (Pl. 3, Fig. 18)

Obv.: head of Septimius Severus right; ΠΟΥΝΒΟ ΙΥΥΙΙΥΔ

Rv.: Jupiter, naked except for cloak over left shoulder, standing left, holding thunderbolt in right hand and sceptre in left hand; at feet, left, eagle, blundered legend on the right; ΠΥΙΥ

Prototype: RIC IV 196

Remarks: double pierced

Private collection GG, Vienna

26. AV, imitation of aureus; wt. 7.8 g; dia.: unknown

(Shimoga stray find, Shimoga, Shimoga Dt., Karnataka)

Obv.: head of Septimius Severus, laureate, right; [...]RVS [P]IVSA[...]

Rv.: Jupiter, naked except for cloak over left shoulder, standing left, holding thunderbolt in right hand and sceptre in left hand; at feet, left, eagle; [...]

Prototype: RIC IV 196

Remarks: double pierced

Private collection

Ref.: BERGHAUS 2000: 500–501, ill. 14

27. AV, imitation of aureus; wt. 8.11 g; dia.: unknown (Pl. 4, Fig. 19)

Obv.: head of Septimius Severus, laureate, right; SEVERVS PIVSAV

Rv.: Caracalla and Geta, both laureate and togate, standing right and left, holding up Victory between them; CONCOR[...]VSTORV[...]

Prototype: RIC IV 255

Remarks: double pierced, countermark on the plug (obverse side)

CNG, LLC Mail Bid Sale 61, lot 1878, 25.09.2002

28. AV, imitation of aureus; wt. 6.24 g; dia.: unknown (Pl. 4, Fig. 20)

Obv.: head of Septimius Severus, laureate, left; VVCVAIO HIOA[...]

Rv.: male figure (Septimius Severus?) on horse prancing right, head to left, holding uncertain object in extended right hand; TCIVAV C(retrograde)INIII

Prototype:?

Remarks: double pierced

Baldwin's Auctions, Summer Argentum Auction, lot 40, 25.05.2002

Geta (209–211)

29. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 211; wt. 7.85 g; dia.: unknown (Pl. 4, Fig. 21)

Obv.: bust of Geta, laureate, bearded, with drapery or aegis (?) on left shoulder, right; PSEPTGETA PIVSAVGBRIT

Rv.: Geta, in military attire, standing left, right foot set on captive (Britannia?), holding parazonium in right hand and spear in left hand; TRP[III] COSIIPP

RIC IV 82

Remarks: double pierced

Baldwin's Auctions Ltd, Auction 40, lot 55, 03.05.2005

Caracalla (198–217)

30. AR, aureus, Rome, AD 210–213; wt. 7.25 g; dia.: unknown

(Vinukonda Hoard, Vinukonda, Guntur Dt., Andhra Pradesh, found in 1889)

Obv.: head of Caracalla, laureate, bearded, right; ANTONINVSPIVSAVGBRIT

Rv.: Securitas, draped, seated right on low seat, propping head on right hand and holding sceptre in left hand; SECVRITATIPERPETVAE

RIC IV 229A

Madras Government Museum, MM 180

Ref.: TURNER 1989: 84–85; BERGHAUS 2000: 499, 501, ill. 7

31. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 211; wt. 7.95 g; dia.: 21 mm (Pl. 4, Fig. 22)

Obv.: head of Caracalla, laureate, right; ANTONINVSPIVS AVGBRIT

Rv.: Fortuna, draped, seated left, holding rudder in right hand and cornucopia in left hand; under seat, wheel; PMTRPXIII COSIIPP in exergue [FORT RED]

RIC 190B

Remarks: double pierced, countermark on the obverse, countermark on the plug (obverse side)

CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 219, lot 454, 30.09.2009

32. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 211; wt. 7.91 g; dia.: 22 mm (Pl. 4, Fig. 23)

Obv.: head of Septimius Severus, bare-headed, right; DIVOSEVEROPIO

Rv.: eagle, standing left, on thunderbolt; CO[NS]ECRATIO

RIC IV 191A

Remarks: double pierced, countermarked on the obverse

CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 180, lot: 265, 23.01.2008

33. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 213; wt. 8.23 g; dia.: unknown (Pl. 4, Fig. 24)

Obv.: bust of Caracalla, laureate, draped, cuirassed, right; ANT[ON]INV[S] PIVSFELAVG

Rv.: Victory, winged, draped, advancing right, holding wreath in extended right hand and palm sloped over left shoulder in left hand; VICTORIA G[ERMANI]CA

RIC IV 237

Remarks: double pierced

Baldwin's Auctions Ltd, Auction 40, lot 53, 03.05.2005

34. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 215; wt. unknown; dia.: unknown

Obv.: bust of Caracalla, laureate, cuirassed, right; ANTONINVSPIVSAVGGERM

Rv.: Caracalla, in military attire, standing left, sacrificing out of patera in right hand over altar, in front of a temple with four columns, in which stands Asclepius, holding serpent-wreathed staff; beside Caracalla, togate figure, standing left, and child holding wand; PMTRPXVIII COSIIPP

RIC IV 270B

Remarks: double pierced

Private collection

Ref.: BERGHAUS 2000: 500–501, ill. 13

35. AV, aureus, Rome, AD 215; wt. 7.75 g; dia.: unknown (Pl. 4, Fig. 25)

Obv.: bust of Caracalla, laureate, cuirassed, right; [ANT]ONINVSPIVSAVGGERM

Rv.: Caracalla, in military attire, standing left, sacrificing out of patera in right hand over altar, in front of a temple with four columns, in which stands Asclepius, holding serpent-wreathed staff; beside Caracalla, togate figure, standing left, and child holding wand; [PMTR]PXVIIIICOSIIIIP

RIC IV 270B

Remarks: double pierced

Baldwin's Auctions Ltd, Autumn 2009 Argentum Auction, lot 49, 07.11.2009

36. AV, aureus, Rome?; wt. 7.92 g; dia.: unknown

Obv.: head to right; [...]PIVSAVG

Rv.: very worn

Remarks: double pierced, countermark on the plug (obverse side)

Todywalla Auctions, Auction 82, lot 1005, 08.12.2013

Caracalla: Imitations

37. AV, imitation of aureus; wt. 7.70 g; dia.: unknown (Pl. 4, Fig. 26)

Obv.: head of Caracalla, laureate, bearded, right; HA[...]NINVS[...]VSAVGBRIT(upside down)

Rv.: Roma, helmeted, draped, seated left, holding Victory in extended right hand and spear in left hand; beside her, shield; RE[...]TOR VIIIIS

Prototype: RIC IV 228 (denarius)

Remarks: double pierced

Baldwin's Auctions Ltd, Autumn 2009 Argentum Auction, lot 48, 07.11.2009

Other Imitations

38. AV, imitation of aureus; wt. 8.26 g; dia.: unknown

Obv.: head to right; IICIIIIITIVI IFIAIIIIIO

Rv.: two standing figures; IIMIII IIIII

Remarks: double pierced, countermark on the plug (obverse side)

British Museum, Inv. No. 1988,0808.12

Ref. BERGHAUS 1992: 71, pls. 27, 28; IDEM 2000: 500–501, ill. 15

- 39.** AV, imitation of aureus; wt. 7.2 g; dia.: unknown
Obv.: head left, blundered legend
Rv.: standing figure?
 Remarks: double pierced
 Todywalla Auctions, Auction 105, lot 50, 18.11.2016
- 40.** AV; imitation of aureus, wt. 8.13 g; dia.: 21 mm (Pl. 4, Fig. 27)
Obv.: draped bust right; [...]AVI OAVSΘEIIIIC
Rv.: fire altar with ribbons (this is a Sasanian reverse type)
 Prototype: ?/SNS I Ardashir I, phase 3, altar type 3b?
 Remarks: double pierced
 CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 366, lot 51, 13.01.2016
- 41.** AV, imitation of aureus; wt. 6.23 g; dia.: 20 mm (Pl. 4, Fig. 28)
Obv.: head, bearded, to right (Septimius Severus?); bVYVVOY[...] OYVYYVVO
Rv.: male figure (Jupiter?) standing facing, head to right, holding vertical sceptre in right hand and eagle in extended left hand; OYVYVVOV VVI
 Remarks: double pierced
 CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 366, lot 43, 13.01.2016
- 42.** AV, imitation of aureus; wt. unknown; dia.: 20 mm (Pl. 4, Fig. 29)
Obv.: head to the left; USITVAVO SIOV
Rv.: standing figure to left, holding uncertain object in right hand; SMSMIIVOY III [...]VO
 Remarks: double pierced, one hole refilled
 Private collection, Mumbai
- 43.** AV, imitation of aureus; wt. 7.29 g; dia.: unknown
Obv.: head to the right; IIOVVO [...]VAAIΛΛ
Rv.: female figure seated right on ground line, left leg crossed under right, holding uncertain object (bowl?) in left hand; VΠOIIIΠO I[...]
 Remarks: double pierced
 Todywalla Auctions, Auction 13, lot 209, 11.02.2006
- 44.** AV, imitation of aureus; wt. 7.59 g; dia: 24 mm (Pl. 4, Fig. 30)
Obv.: pearl-diademed, draped bust right, blundered legend [...]OXI[...]NVOPAV
Rv.: female figure seated right on ground line, left leg crossed under right, holding uncertain object (bowl?) in left hand, blundered legend [...]V JVOV VO[...]
 Remarks: double pierced
 CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 366, lot 878, 13.01.2016

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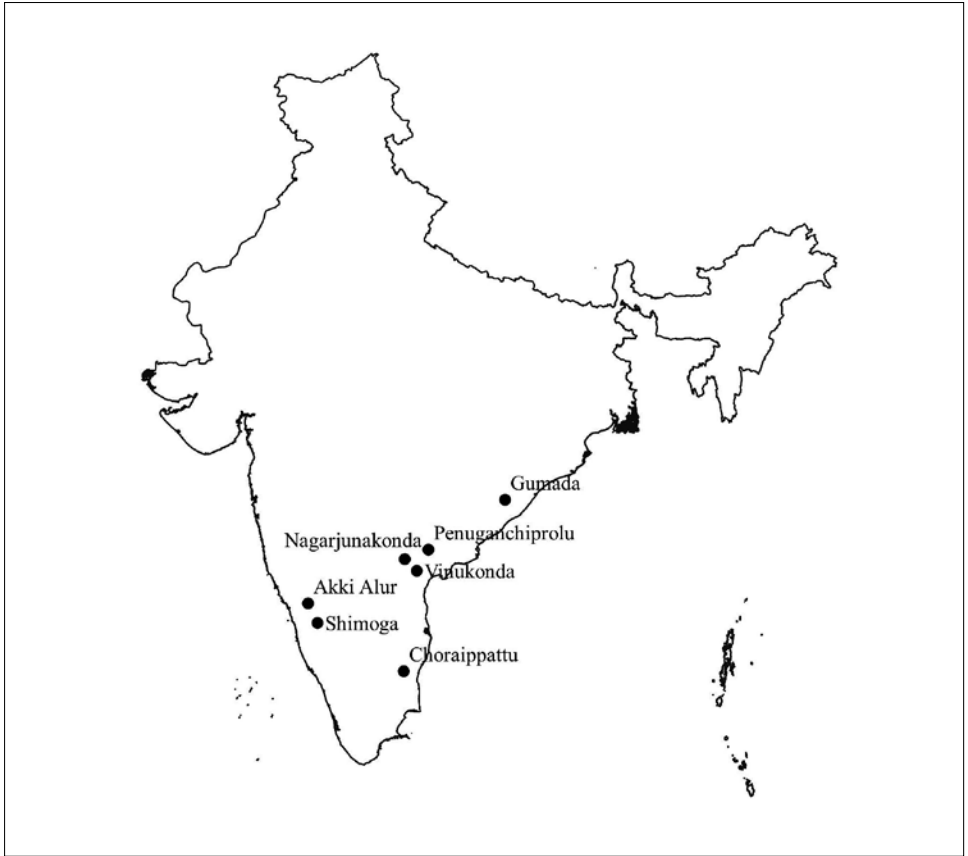
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MAP 1	Finds of plugged specimens
PLATE 1	Chart 1. Chronological structure of finds of plugged Roman coins from India and their imitations Chart 2. Weight of plugged Roman coins and their imitations from India Chart 3. Weight of plugged and countermarked issues
PLATE 2	Fig. 1. Coin of Sandan (Western Turk period) with one gold plug on the neck of the ruler. CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 452, lot 617, © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 2. Imitation of a Thasos tetradrachm. CNG, LLC Electronic Auction 354, lot 270, © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 3. Pseudo-Imperial tremissis. Portable Antiquities Scheme KENT-585A3A, © Kent County Council, Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License Fig. 4. Imitation of Alexander tetradrachm, Quetta hoard. ANS 2002.19.8 © American Numismatic Society, Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License Fig. 5. Regulated coin of Joao V. Heritage Auctions, Inc., Auction 3010, lot 21355, © Heritage Auctions, Inc.
PLATE 3	Fig. 6. Catalogue no. 1. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 7. Catalogue no. 5. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 8. Catalogue no. 11. © A H Baldwin and Sons Ltd Fig. 9. Catalogue no. 13. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 10. Catalogue no. 14. © A H Baldwin and Sons Ltd Fig. 11. Catalogue no. 17. © A H Baldwin and Sons Ltd Fig. 12. Catalogue no. 18. © A H Baldwin and Sons Ltd Fig. 13. Catalogue no. 19. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 14. Catalogue no. 20. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 15. Catalogue no. 21. © A H Baldwin and Sons Ltd Fig. 16. Catalogue no. 23. Private Collection, Mumbai. Courtesy of Shailendra Bhandare Fig. 17. Catalogue no. 24. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 18. Catalogue no. 25. Private collection GG, Vienna. Photo: author
PLATE 4	Fig. 19. Catalogue no. 27. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 20. Catalogue no. 28. © A H Baldwin and Sons Ltd Fig. 21. Catalogue no. 29. © A H Baldwin and Sons Ltd Fig. 22. Catalogue no. 31. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 23. Catalogue no. 32. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 24. Catalogue no. 33. © A H Baldwin and Sons Ltd Fig. 25. Catalogue no. 35. © A H Baldwin and Sons Ltd Fig. 26. Catalogue no. 37. © A H Baldwin and Sons Ltd Fig. 27. Catalogue no. 40. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 28. Catalogue no. 41. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com Fig. 29. Catalogue no. 42. Private Collection, Mumbai. Courtesy of Shailendra Bhandare Fig. 30. Catalogue no. 44. © Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, www.cngcoins.com



Finds of plugged specimens

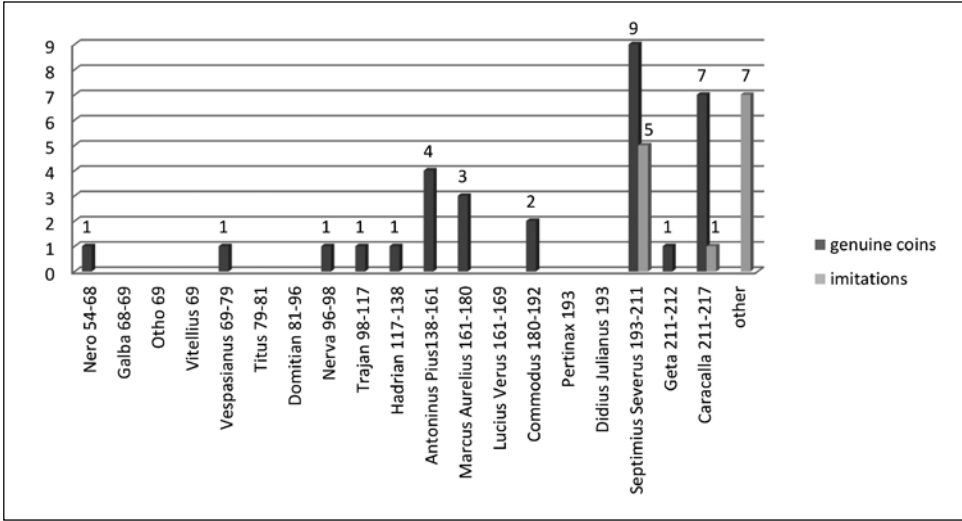


Chart 1

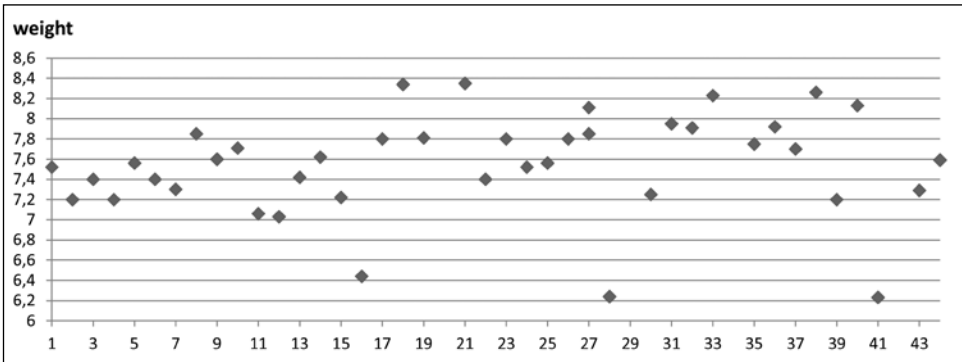


Chart 2

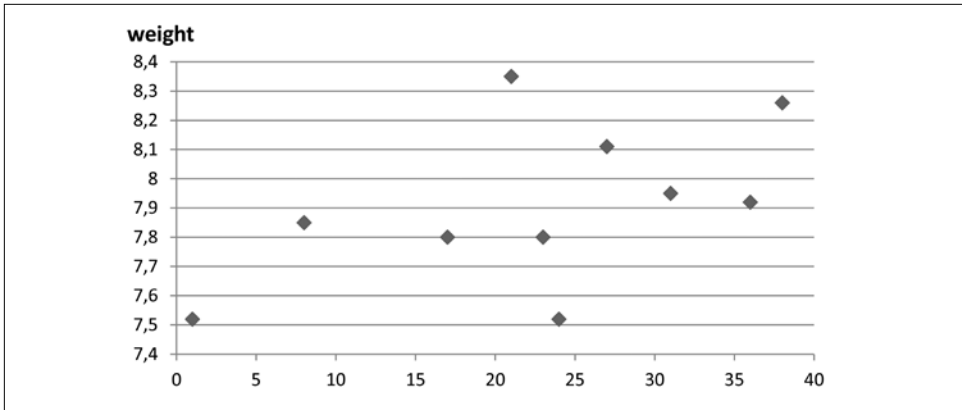


Chart 3



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18

