

Ancient Roman coins belong to the largest category of imports from the Mediterranean world found on the Indian soil. Its occurrence at the archaeological sites has been so far interpreted mainly in the light of the Indian Ocean trade. However, those coins played also different roles in the communities inhabiting India. Its finds come from various contexts, not only settlements and hoards but also graves and places connected with Buddhism. These phenomena indicate that after being brought to the territory of the Indian Subcontinent, they were incorporated not only into the local material culture, but also to the symbolic space. Therefore, their function in India was much complex than just the vehicle of the economic exchange. It is confirmed, among others, by the signs being the proof that they were subjected to certain kinds of practices, such as being looped, pierced and sometimes inserted into necklaces or other pieces of jewellery. Another interesting group are locally made imitations of Roman coins.

The main purpose of my project is to obtain a better understanding how the societies inhabiting Deccan and South India between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD used the gold coins minted in the Imperium Romanum. Gold coins have been chosen as a main subject of this study since in many ancient societies they were a material sign of power and social prestige, having a special meaning not necessarily connected with its economic value. Therefore, this research aims to explain how the people understood and interacted with these foreign objects that came such an extremely long way but retained clear visual affinity with the political entities that minted them.

Analysis of function of Roman gold coins in India requires an integrated and multidisciplinary approach therefore, the project will be conducted with the use of numismatic and archaeological methodology, supplemented with the study of the written sources. The function of Roman gold coins in India will be analysed in the light of the finds of other categories of artifacts, as well as data originating from other lands connected with the same network of the economic and social relations. From the theoretical point of view this project adopts the assumption that the objects, like humans have their own biographies, that could be reconstructed.

The issues addressed by the project will significantly broaden the spectrum of research undertaken by Polish numismatists and archaeologists, furthering the development of studies towards the geographical areas rarely scientifically explored by Polish researchers. The conclusions arising from it may also contribute significantly to the comparative studies on the occurrence of similar phenomena in different cultures, and different regions of the ancient world, including the territory of Barbarian Europe. From the international perspective the study will be an important step towards a better understanding of Indian past, differentiation of function of coins within the ancient communities as well multiplicity of meaning and functions of the objects.