

CORPUS OF INDIAN COINS

Vol IV

THE COINAGE OF
THE GUPTA EMPIRE

AND ITS IMITATIONS.

(With 29 Plates)

6531

By

Dr. A. S. Altekar, M.A., LL.B., D. Litt.

Director, K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna;

Chairman, Numismatic Society of India.

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yatara, at X, *pūn*.

Rev: Plumage of the peacock is fully visible. Torso of the goddess is graceful, but her legs are clumsy. No symbol. Legend, at X, *Sinhari*, at III, *hanta Mahendragaja*; rather blurred. (Pl. XIII. 1)

(2) Gold; .75"; 115.2 grains, but much worn; *B.H.*, Pl. XXX. 3.

Obv: Attendant is poorly drawn and the parasol in his hand is off the flan. The lion is almost fully accommodated on the flan and his jaw, opened out to bite the elephant's leg, can be distinctly seen. Legend is incomplete and indistinct; *Kshata* at XII. Crack in the coin at II.

Rev: Peacock's plumage is not quite distinct, as also the legend on the l.; on r., *hata Mahandragaja*.

(Pl. XIII. 2)

RHINOCEROS-SLAYER TYPE

The Rhinoceros-slayer type is a new addition made to the sport series by Kumāragupta. It became known for the first time from the Bayana hoard in 1947 when four of its specimens were identified by the present writer. A fifth specimen was purchased by the Lucknow Museum in 1948; it was published in *J.N.S.I.*, XI. pp. 9-10, Pl. III. 7.

This type is both unique and artistic. On the obverse the king is riding a horse and attacking a rhinoceros by the sword. The legend is metrical and makes a pun upon the word *khadga*, which means both a sword and a rhinoceros; it reads, *Bhartā khadgatratā Kumāragupto jayatyanisam*, (Pl. XXII. 36); 'Ever victorious is the lord Kumāragupta, who is *khadgatratā*, protector by the sword (*khadgena tratā*) from the rhinoceros (*khadgāt tratā*). The metre is Upagīti. The reverse is unique; the goddess has a female parasol-bearer behind and is being offered a lotus by the snout by an elephant-headed crocodile upon which she is standing.

Coins of this type are all issued to the weight standard of 127 grains.

We now give a general description of this type.

Obv: King bare-headed, with flowing frizzled locks (*alaka*) on head, riding on caparisoned horse to r., wearing buttoned coat and trousers, leaning forward and attacking a rhinoceros with the sword in r. hand. Horse raises up its head, slightly frightened. Rhinoceros stands at bay, turning back its head to attack, mouth being open. The beast is engraved realistically and beautifully, the horn on the head, l. eye, two ears, circular spots on the body, the tail and the four feet being all clear. Full circular legend is (*Bhartā?*) *khaḍgatrātā Kumāragupto jayatyaniśam* (Pl. XXII. 36).

Rev: Within dotted border goddess Gaṅgā, not nimbate, standing to l. on an elephant-headed crocodile, holding lotus with long stalk in its trunk. R. hand of the goddess extended, forefinger pointing out at some object, not visible on the flan. L. hand is hanging down by the side empty. Hair on the head of the goddess is tied in a knot behind and she wears earrings, necklace and bangles. Behind the goddess a female attendant holding in her r. hand a *chhatra* (umbrella), without fillet, its staff being denoted by a dotted line; her l. hand is on the waist. Symbol on the r. Legend on the l., *Śrī-mahendra-khaḍga*. 'Rhinoceros (killed by) king Mahendra.'

(Pl. XXIV. 63)

COINS ILLUSTRATED : 4

(1) Gold; .75"; 127.1 grains; *B.H.*, Pl. XXX. 5.

Obv: King's head slightly off the flan. Buttons of the coat clear. All four legs of the rhinoceros are visible. Legend at I, *ta Kumāragupta jayatya*.

Rev: Lotus stalk partly visible; symbol on r.; legend on l., *Śra-Mahandrakhadga*.

(Pl. XIII. 3)

(2) Gold; .75"; 127.1 grains; *B.H.*, Pl. XXX. 6.

Obv: The buttons of the coat are very clear. Legs of the rhinoceros are just visible. Legend, beginning at X, *Khagatrata Kumāragupta ja*, slightly blurred.

Rev: As above, but the feet of the goddess are turned, as she was about to face to r., though actually she is facing l. The pointing fore-finger of the r. hand is not clear on this specimen. The elephant-headed crocodile holding the lotus in its snout is fully visible. The lotus can be clearly seen above the r. hand of the goddess. Female attendant is rather tall and blurred, but her breasts are prominently visible. Legend on the l., *Śra-Mahandrakhaga*, blurred, but the letters *khaga* are fairly distinct. Symbol on the r.

(Pl. XIII. 4)

(3) Gold; .8"; 128.1 grains; *B.H.*, Pl. XXX. 7.

Obv: Buttons of the king's coat are not clear on this specimen. The feet and the lower part of the body of the rhinoceros are truncated. Legend, beginning at IX, (*Bha?*)*ta khagatata (Bharttā khadgatrātā)*. The lower loop of the crucial letter *kha* is quite distinct on this coin above the king's r. shoulder.

Rev: Goddess is turned slightly to r., though she is actually looking to l. Crocodile is fully visible, as also the lotus stalk in its snout, but the lotus is represented merely by four dots. The female attendant is blurred and indistinct; the dotted line of the umbrella is quite clear. Legend on the l., *Śra-Mahandrakhaga*, the last two letters being blurred.

(Pl. XIII. 5)

(4) Gold; .8^r; 126.1 grains; *B.H.*, Pl. XXX. 8.

Obv: Buttons of the coat faintly visible. Feet of the rhinoceros off the flan; the fury on its face is remarkable. Legend beginning at IX, (*Bha?*) *ta kagatata* [*Bha(?)rtā khaḍgatrātā*]. *Kha* above the r. shoulder has a broad triangular base.

Rev: Crocodile. its tail and snout holding the lotus stalk, as also the lotus are all very clear. Attendant is dwarf as usual. Symbol on the r., the same as on No. 3, but partly off. Legend on the l., *Śra Mahandrakhaga*.

(Pl. XIII. 6)

AŚVAMEDHA TYPE

Epigraphs nowhere mention any *Aśvamedha* sacrifice performed by Kumāragupta, but his coins show that he must have performed at least one. The specimens of the *Aśvamedha* type of Kumāragupta are very rare. For a long time only two were known and they were in the British Museum; one of them was procured in Mathurā and the find-spot of the other was unknown. In 1947 four specimens of this type were discovered by the present writer in the Bayana hoard and later two specimens were purchased by the Lucknow Museum and Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Banaras, one each.

The British Museum specimens showed the horse upon the obverse as caparisoned and not bare, as on the *Aśvamedha* coins of Samudragupta. But the Bayana hoard contained two coins imitating the pattern of Samudragupta. The obverse legend is not yet fully read; it appears to be in prose and seems to be '*Devojitaśatruḥ Kumāraguptodhivājā*' (Pl. XXIII. 39); 'King Kumāragupta, the supreme lord, who has conquered his enemies.' Mr. Allan had thought that the legend included the expression *Jayati divaṃ Kumāra*, and that the characters under the horse looked like (*a*)*śvamedha*.¹ The word *Kumāra*,

1. *B.M.C., G.D.*, p. cxvi; p. 68.

wearing coat and probably trousers, holding no weapons. Circular legend, beginning at I:—

Ksha(i)tipat[irajito vijayī Kumāragu]pta(o)dava jayati (divam jayati).

Rev: Goddess, nimbate, seated facing left on wicker stool, offering an object held between the thumb and the fore-finger to peacock whose neck only is just visible, and holding lotus with long stalk in the l. hand, resting on waist.

No symbol.

Ajitamahendrah.

(Pl. XIX. 14)

RHINOCEROS-SLAYER TYPE—A SIXTH COIN

We have illustrated four coins of this type and referred to a fifth one on p. 197. Recently Mr. P. J. Chinmulgund, I.C.S., District Magistrate of Poona, acquired a sixth coin of this type from a Delhi dealer and has published it in *J.N.S.I.*, XVII, part II, pp. 104-6 and Pl. IX. 5. Unfortunately the photograph published is rather poor in quality and is perhaps not to the size. The diameter of this coin is .72" and weight 123.9 grains. The type and motifs are the same as those on the coins published here on Pl. XIII. 3-6. It is stated that the concluding letters of the circular legend on the obverse, *Kumāragupto jayatyanisam* are more distinct than those on the coins in the Bayana hoard; but the photograph is too poor to enable us to appreciate the remark.

The reverse legend is *Mahendrakhadga*.

A DEFECTIVE SILVER COIN OF KUMĀRAGUPTA I (?)

The collection of the late Munirāja Vidyāvijayaji of Shivapuri in Madhyabharat contains a peculiar silver coin, a photograph of which was kindly sent to me by Dr. H. V. Trivedi. This silver coin (Pl. XIXB. 13) is of the Western Indian type, showing the Kshatrapa bust on the obverse along with a number of degraded Greek letters around it. The reverse shows



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2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



Kumāragupta I. Elephant-riding Etruscan types (1-2), Rhinoceros slayer (3-6),
 Ashvimecha (7-10), Kartikeya (11-14) and Jinhasta (15) types.