

Foreword

I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suite theories, instead of theories to suit facts.

Arthur Conan Doyle

This monograph* is the second volume in a series entitled *Ancient Ruhuna: Sri Lankan – German Archaeological Project in the Southern Province*. At first sight, it seems to be an unsuitable place to publish in this context a general survey of the ancient coins discovered on the island. However, the ancient dominion of Rohaṇa (Ruhunu, Ruhuna) in the southern part of Śrī Laṅkā played a central role in the monetary history of ancient *Laṅkā*, the *Taprobane*, *Palaesimundus*, and *Σιελεδίβα* of the Greek, Roman, and Byzantine authors. This had already become evident about twenty years ago, when first mapping the finds of Late Roman coins and their imitations. Nevertheless, it was the results of the recent archaeological excavations in the ancient capital of Rohaṇa, Tissamahārāma – which provided an overwhelming amount of numismatic data – that enabled us to recognise the then economic conditions more clearly. These primary data are supplemented by previously published, as well as unpublished, coin material collected from the eighteenth century until today, to broaden the basis for future studies.

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