

**Abteilung für Asiatische und Islamische Kunstgeschichte WS 2016/17**

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**The Good, the Bad and the Ugly:  
Appreciating Styles in Gupta Gold Coins**

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**Beginn: 18.15 Uhr**

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The discovery and appreciation of styles in Gupta sculpture and coins followed quite contrasting trajectories. 20<sup>th</sup>-century scholarship shaped our vision of workshops excelling in distinctive local sculptural idioms, which together defined 'Gupta period' art. The engraver's art as evident in the manufacture of dies to strike Gupta gold coins remained largely undiscovered.

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Vincent Smith, a leading expert had argued that carving the designs started out ok, but soon devolved into a mediocre craft, while ending in even barbaric workmanship. His assessment had much to do with expectations about which particular style would befit the 'golden Gupta' age, and disappointment about unexpected and unwelcome deviations thereof. My paper I will examine both coins that did live up to scholarly expectations of 'Gupta' numismatic greatness, and others that seemingly failed to do so.



Kumaragupta I, gold coin of Archer Type, collection Deepak Dhaadha