CHAPTER I
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INTRODUCTION

THE 'Early Uninscribed Cast Copper Coins' (EUCCC) represent one of the earliest coinages of India, without inscriptions or legend. It carries only symbols. These symbols were probably used as code which had certain meaning which is not known to us. Probably, these symbols testified to the weight, purity of metal and sanction of the issuing authority to its value and general acceptance by the people. However, there is also a possibility that later on some symbols with religious significance were added. The second part of its name 'Cast Copper' indicates the nature of manufacture, and the metal of the coin. The coins discussed under this heading, therefore, are all produced out of moulds. The study of the moulds of this coinage has not been possible so far, as no such coin moulds are reported from anywhere. But the study of the coins points to the use of moulds for manufacturing process. Thus, presently under investigation are those early coins which bear only symbols, without any inscriptions and are produced out of moulds. Here it is necessary to
add that the 'imitation Kusāṇa copper coins' or 'Puri Coins' are also with similar characteristic. But these coins are 'later' in chronological order, produced after the advent of Kusāṇa power, and therefore not included under the study of BJCCC.

No doubt some of the coins studied under present investigation do not reveal their chronological places in the history of ancient Indian coinage. Since such coins bear a close resemblance in their symbols, fabric and manufacturing technique to the EUCCC, they have been included under present study.

The study of EUCCC has so far remained bracketed together with Punch Marked Coinage (PMC) of ancient India. The EUCCC could not arouse the same amount of interest among scholars as shown by them in the study of PMC though the former has been found at different sites along with PMC in excavations. In 1832 Mr H.H Wilson, while discussing the EUCCC, remarked: "The native call them (the EUCCC) the coins of Mandhata, a prince of Ayodhya, in the Treta or second age. They are probably the coins of some Hindu Prince of Oude, in a comparatively recent period".¹ Here

¹ H.H. Wilson, "Description of Select Coins"; Asiatic Researches, Calcutta, 1832, Vol. XVII (Fig. 68-69) p. 588
Mr Wilson probably assign medieval period for the circulation of EUCCC. But James Prinsep in his "Essays on Indian Antiquity" published in 1858, does not give any precise dating for the circulation of this coinage and suggests "more of the general history of the whole series may yet be developed by future discovery".² This task was ably carried out by Sir A. Cunningham. In the reports of his tour of different parts of India, he mentions this coinage in detail. In his earlier report (Vol. I) Cunningham simply calls this coinage as 'copper coin' and dates it in the period 'not later than the invasion of Alexander the Great'.³ However, in Vol. XI of his reports he calls these coinages both PMC and EUCCC as the 'Hindu coins'.⁴ The symbols on EUCCC are described as 'Buddhist symbols'⁵ by Cunningham. Thus, these coins came to be known as Hindu coinage with Buddhist symbols. But this name was applicable to PMC as well and therefore Cunningham referred to EUCCC in his book as cast coins with Buddhist symbols. The period of circulation of EUCCC was put together with that of PMC by Cunningham. He wrote in his book: "The cast coins of

2. P. 87
3. ASR Vol. I 1862 - 63, P.97
4. Ibid. Vol. XI 1875 - 78, P.54
5. ASR Vol. XII. P.41
Ancient India are very numerous, they are all of copper, and from the scarcity of copper Punch Marked coins, I am led to believe that they must have been current together with the silver coins. About the period of circulation of PMC, Cunningham says "how old these Punch Marked coin may be it is difficult to say. They were certainly current in the time of Buddha, that is in the sixth century B.C. But I see no difficulty in thinking that they might mount as high as 1000 B.C. They certainly belong to the very infancy of coinage. The only money that could have preceded them would have been blank pieces of silver..." Thus, we find that Cunningham, though very much near the established truth of this coinage representing the period of 'infancy' in the history of coinage, dated it much earlier than the archaeological excavations would support. This trend of dating the coinage continued for long time, though, the date of PMC was considerably brought down with the addition of further information through excavations Cunningham cataloged all the EUCC collected from different localities such as Kausambi, Ayodhya, Taxila, etc, on the basis of find spots. Thus the EUCC were divided practically into

7. Ibid, p.43
two distinct groups: 'universal' and 'local'. This also fixed its area of distribution in 'northern India' as most of the collections of Cunningham was confined to this region alone. Thus, after the publication of Cunningham's book in 1891, the EUCCC became the 'North Indian Coinage' and were divided into two categories local or tribal inscribed cast coins and universal or miscellaneous north Indian coins.

Cunningham's study of archaeological material and the geographical distribution of EUCCC provided a model for further study and cataloguing of the coins.

The practice of cataloguing the coins under such various types as Kaushambi, Ayodhya, Taxila, etc, was followed by different authors subsequently also. In excavations and explorations these varieties of EUCCC were discussed as local coinage of a particular place. On this basis many new varieties of 'local coinage' were added.

J. Marshall in his report of the excavations at Bhita discussed EUCCC under the heading 'Anonymous Cast Coins' of rectangular and round shapes and assigned some of these cast coins to Kosam (Kausambi). Similarly, the EUCCC found at Taxila in excavations conducted by J. Marshall

were described as local copper coinage of Taxila' or discussed in the list of 'rare and unique coins from Taxila'.

Thus, John Marshall called this coinage as 'anonymous' and assigned some of these to the 'category' of local coinage as established by Cunningham. But the period of distribution of this coinage was considerably brought down from circa 1000 B.C. as suggested by Cunningham. The PMC while at Taxila were accepted to belong to circa 600 B.C. (Bhir-mound hoard) the EUCC were placed in different periods from circa 400 B.C. to 100 A.D. on the basis of the date of the layers in which these coinage were found at Taxila. Dr D.R Bhandarkar discussed EUCC as 'cast coins' of circular and rectangular shape and compared these with the coins illustrated in Cunningham's book (CAI). But Bhandarker, in his Charkh Michael lectures, 1921, failed to throw any meaningful light on the occurrence of EUCC along with PMC at various places in excavations and explorations. However, he argued mainly on the basis of literary sources for a much earlier date for PMC than circa 600 B.C. in any case not later than 1000 B.C. as suggested by Cunningham. Bhandarker's discussion draws attention to the study of PMC but not to its association with EUCC. By this time PMC was accepted as the earliest coinage of India and it

attracted more attention than EUCCC. In the 'Cambridge history of India' first published in 1922, the PMC is mentioned and also the coins of Alexander and his successors are utilized as the source in Chapter XV and XXII respectively. But C.J. Brown in his book 'The Coins of India' first published in 1922, after the publication of 'Cambridge history of India', mentions the EUCCC though not in detail. He places EUCCC in 5th Century B.C. and calls it 'for the most part anonymous'.

In fact EUCCC figured in detail only in the catalogues of the different museum collections. As said earlier, the survey conducted by A. Cunningham provided a framework for further study. V.A. Smith in his introduction to the catalogue of the coins in Indian Museum, Calcutta, Vol.I, says "The first definite step in such localization of the ancient coinage was taken by the publication in 1891 of 'Coins of Ancient India' by Sir Alexander Cunningham...." Although he published comparatively few details about the provenance, or find spots of individual coins, his general statements on the subject are of the highest value. His announcement for

11. Cambridge History of India, p.308
12. C.J. Brown, 'The Coins of India', (Delhi, 1973) p.18
instance, that all the coins figured in plate IX of the work above referred to were obtained at Ayodhyā, furnishes a secure basis for the classification of many pieces which would otherwise embarrass the numismatist. In the same way the assignment of the 'other classes of coins treated in this section to Avanti, Kosam, and Taxila respectively, rests primarily upon Sir Alexander Cunningham's unequalled personal knowledge of the distribution of Indian Coins'.

Thus Smith did not add much to the study of EUCCC and catalogued it under the heading 'unassigned miscellaneous coins of Northern India' and 'anonymous' coins of circular and rectangular shape. However, he suggested that 'the simple process of making coins by casting in a mould seems to be little inferior in antiquity in India to that of stamping bars and ingots'. The 'catalogue of the coins of Ancient India' of British Museum, London; collection, first published in 1936 described it as 'uninscribed cast coins' and catalogued the coins under nineteen varieties from A to S on the basis of shape and arrangement of symbols. In this

14. Ibid. pp. 198-203
15. Ibid. p. 198
catalogue EUCOC figured as an independent coinage discussed in part III of the catalogue. Allan says that "Part III consists of the equally numerous (like silver PMC), though not so varied, early cast copper coins which cannot be attributed to a definite area or period."  

However, Allan tried to fix its area of distribution. *It will be noticed that neither whitehead nor Elliot occur among the sources of the Museum specimens. This suggests that they do not come from north, west or the south of India. The impression one gets from the frequent but not specific references to the early cast coins in the A.S.R. (Cunningham's Report) is that they belong mainly to central and the united provinces*.  

Similarly, about its period of circulation Allan says *their frequent association with silver punch marked coins on sites which yield only these classes of coins suggests that they are of about the same time; they are frequently found with Indo-scythic copper which they must have preceded. They closely resemble in general style, and probably the immediate predecessors of many classes of inscribed coins which cannot be earlier than the second-first century B.C. The evidence then suggests the third-second century B.C. as their date.*

\[\text{References:}\]
16 J Allan, Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India (Delhi 1965) p. XIII  
17 Ibid p. LXXVI  
18 Ibid, p. LXXVII
bution remained fixed in Northern India, but its date of circulation was brought down to circa 300-200 B.C.

J. Allan's catalogue of the coins of Ancient India remained based on the model provided by Alexander Cunningham and EUCCC were divided into two distinct groups which may be called 'local' and 'universal'. But the conclusion about the period of its circulation was based on more scientific grounds than that of Cunningham and his classification of EUCCC into different varieties provided a framework for further classifications. The EUCCC and PMC found in stratified layers acted at times as a datable material for the layers, on the basis of the date assigned to it in Allan's catalogue. But EUCCC was considered less reliable than PMC, as it was not made so far a subject of searching investigations by scholars.

The manufacturing technique of EUCCC was also largely settled on the basis of the study done by Birbal Sahani: "The technique of casting coins in Ancient India", published in 1945. The evidence of moulds discussed by Birbal Sahani in his book is not directly related with casting technique of EUCCC. As no EUCCC mould is available, it is only reasonable, to reconstruct the casting process on the basis of the available moulds of later periods.
In recent years after 1946, archeological excavations conducted on many sites supplied sufficient data for the study of EUCCC. The excavations conducted at Ahichhahatra during 1940-44 brought to light EUCCC in stratified layers and now there are more than fortyfive sites where EUCCC occur in stratified layers. These sites cover almost the entire Indian sub-continent. But the published reports of the excavated sites provide phisical descriptions of this coinage along with the details of other antiquities found at the sites. Such descriptions etc, acted as source material for further study and articles written in different journals utilized such materials for the study of EUCCC. However, in different articles dealing with EUCCC, physical study of coins and symbols dominated till very recent times. The emphasis on the study of the symbols is revealed here by the remark of S Singh Roy "The symbols play a very important role in the assignment and interpretation of Ancient Indian coins, including Punch Marked as well as cast and die-struck coins". In this article Mr Roy discusses the coins with particular stress on the meaning of the symbols and their possible significance. Some of the coins discussed in this article as 'single-die coins' were questioned by Ajit Ghose

19 S. Singh Roy, "The coins of Rajghir", Numismatic Supplement, 1936, No.46, p.9
in his article 'Rare Oblong coins from Rajgir' and he tried to prove these 'as cast coins of rare workmanship'. The articles written over the years discussed mainly the arrangement of symbols, their significance, weight and shape, but at the same time raised the question of its area of distribution, period of circulation etc. Writing on the period of EUCC Professor Altekar said that it was current in the Mauryan period, on the basis of its occurrence at Kumrajhar and Bulandibagh in excavations. Michael Mitchiner, in his articles, tried to establish different denominations of EUCCG on the basis of their weight and literary evidences: "The eighty coins described in this paper bear a similar thin, even patina of black cuprous oxide and are free of coloured copper salts and red cuprous oxide deposits. These coins were all current in the Middle Ganges Valley during the early second century B.C. and include many rare issues". He also tried to reconstruct the casting process and preparing of moulds on the basis of the study of coins.

20 J.N.S.I., 1939, Vol.I pp.5-8
**Their flans are thin but bear the symbol in high relief so that the end result is a coin whose thickness varies considerably in different parts. The symbols themselves are carelessly depicted and have a lumpy appearance.**

Another feature of these coins is the lack of sharpness in their designs. Viewed in cross-section the symbols do not stand out vertically from the coin flan but tend to rise in a slope.

Such coins are suggested as produced out of the moulds prepared from the impression of early coins on clay moulds. The problems related with weight and nature of circulation in terms of 'universal' and 'local' were given attention in an article by A.N. Lahiri.

**EUCCC, sandwiched between the two well known coinages of Ancient India, PMC and die-struck, remained little known to the student of numismatics and still less to the general student of ancient Indian history. In the books written on the history of coinage, EUCCC is not mentioned in a significant manner, as the various aspects related with it remained uncertain. However, Dr S.C. Ray, in his book** "Stratigraphic evidence of coins in Indian excavations and some allied issues" *tried to establish its area of distribution.*

23 M. Mitchiner "A late post Mauryan Coin hoard" *JNSI* 1974, Vol. XXXVI, pp. 21-22

tion and period of circulation on the basis of finds in excavations at different sites along with other coinages of ancient India. Thus, for the first time a more scientific approach to the understanding of the main problems, the period and area of distribution was brought about. As this book included other coinages of Ancient India also it could not throw sufficient light on problems related with this coinage exclusively. Probably realising such need in the subject Mr. Ray wrote an article in 1967 which touched upon the problems relating to this coinage. Mr. Ray remarked about the area of distribution of this coinage: "The find spot of the uninscribed cast copper coins ... indicates that this type of monetary issues was not a local coin of midland India, but had a much wider area of distribution. In fact it was coin par excellence of the whole of India except of the extreme south."25 "A critical analysis of the data obtained from the stratigraphic diggings shows" remarked Mr. Ray "that these coins were mostly prevalent in a period, roughly speaking, ranging from 600 B.C to 200 B.C. and in almost uniform type of cultural assemblage."26

26. Ibid. p.11
These works form the guide line, so far as, the present investigation is concerned in finding out a solution to the problems related with coinage of Ancient India. Rajendra Singh and Satya Prakash in their book 'Coinage of Ancient India' conducted Microstructure study of EUCCC and tried an analysis of the manufacturing technique involved. The chemical analysis of the coins conducted by H.C. Bhardwaj also added to the understanding of this coinage.

The problems related with EUCCC can be divided mainly into four parts (1) Area of distribution; (2) Period of circulation; (3) Manufacturing technique; and (4) a proper classification of EUCCC into different categories. Added to this is a need to understand properly the role of EUCCC in the currency system of the period. The present investigation is an effort to find out the answer to the problems and to assess the role of EUCCC in the currency system of Ancient India. These problems largely form the basis for the scheme of chapterisation. However, certain other aspects connected with EUCCC, which could not be included within the scope of present study, may be summarized
in the following points: (1) Weight system followed by this coinage and thereby attempting the denominations of EUCCC; (2) The extent to which the area of distribution of this coinage corresponds with political boundaries in the period of circulation of this coinage. Possibility to ascribe this coinage to a particular dynasty on the basis of the 'universal' and 'local' nature of occurrence; (3) Utilization of the literary sources for various aspects related with this coinage; (4) A comparative study of the occurrence of EUCCC, PMC and Tribal coins with the possible significant relationship among them. In the present study a possible comparison between EUCCC and PMC on the basis of their occurrence at different sites excluding the evidence of hoards has been tried. This shows that probably EUCCC and PMC both are equally old, while on almost all sites EUCCC was more prominently in circulation than PMC. But it may be conceded that this aspect deserves much more serious consideration, than just a passing remark of this type.

The source utilized for the purpose of the present study is largely archaeological finds. The excavation reports on different excavated sites have been mainly
utilized for the purpose along with those sites where EUCCC have been found in explorations, surface diggings and private collections. The present work has been divided into four main chapters excluding introduction (Chapter I) and conclusion (Chapter VI). The second chapter is distribution area of EUCCC based on the study of excavated and explored sites including those how located in Pakistan and Bangladesh. This chapter is further divided into three sections. In the first section the sites along with their locations and types of the coin found have been simply listed. In the second section an attempt is made to study the cultural context in which the EUCCC appears at a particular site with the help of the associate antiquities found in excavations. Thus only excavated sites are discussed in this section. This section reveals certain uniform pattern in the material culture of the sites in a particular locality and on the basis of this observation the entire area has been divided into four zones. These zones form the subject matter of the third section of this chapter revealing the patterns of distribution of this coinage.
In Chapter III, the period of distribution of EUCCC is discussed on the basis of the dates available in archaeological reports. However, mere occurrence of EUCCC at a site in a particular period does not reveal the precise date of its appearance, at the site. There are very few sites where the EUCCC has been clearly assigned to the lower, middle or later levels so as to fix the precise point of its occurrence. Such indications in terms of levels have been utilized by dividing the period into two or three phases as the case may be for identifying the point of appearance of the EUCCC. The study related with period and nuclear area of the origin of EUCCC may be established on the basis of the earliest occurrence of EUCCC in a particular locality. But the two sites of Hastinapur and Kausambi present a different picture, from the sites in Bihar and easter Uttar Pradesh. Thus, the area and period of origin remain out of the scope of present investigation which may probably form an important aspect in my further study.

The next Chapter (Chapter IV) of present study is on varieties of EUCCC. This is mainly based on the study of the photographs of coins given in different
excavation reports, catalogues and journals. To this has been added the physical study of collections of EUCCC in National Museum, Delhi and Patna Museum, Patna. This Chapter is in the form of a catalogue and the main thrust of the study is on the physical aspects of the coins. However, here also archaeological dating and find spots have been used as the basis for dividing the coins into different categories.

The problems related with manufacturing technique of this coinage is included in Chapter V. However, the work of Birbal Sahani on the subject deals with most of the actual moulds found and there does not seem to be much scope for adding anything new to the understanding of the problem. No coin-mould of this coinage has been found in excavations and consequently reconstructing the complexities of casting technique remains based upon the moulds of later periods. The study of different specimens of EUCCC reveals certain characteristics which reflect the type of moulds used for their production. On the basis of such characteristics of different coins, four stages of the process of development in casting technique, seems to have occurred. Thus this chapter not only includes the
various types of moulds found, but also, on the basis of the study of coins, proposes four probable stages in the know-how of casting technique. These stages are based more or less on hypothetical grounds and need more detailed practical study of such prepared moulds to reconstruct the entire picture of casting technique. This I may be able to include in my further study of the subject.

As stated above, certain aspects connected with the topic remain to be investigated. But the present investigation conducted with the help of archaeological sources reveals that the EUCCC played an important role throughout the area of distribution as an independent coinage. The study further unfolds that its circulation probably played much more important role than the written history of ancient Indian coinage would lead us to believe.