

Coins of Eran

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Eran is situated (Latitude 24 °, 5'North and longitude 78°10'East) 75 k.m. North-west of Sagar town in M.P. Eran comes under Tehsil Bina of District Sagar. T.S. Burt was the first to discover there a number of antiquities¹, some being of great historical significance in 1838 A.D. Eran is situated on the bank of river Bina (Ancient Venva)², a tributary of river Betwa (Ancient Vetravati). By encircling from their sides it, provides natural protection to Eran.. In the fourth unprotected direction, there is a fortified wall and a ditch of Chalcolithic Period³. Eran is approachable by the road from Mandibamora, which passes through Gohar and Dhansara villages. Mandibamora is about 12 km. far from Bina-Bhopal railway (West central railway) track. The archaeological excavation were Conducted at Eran during 1960-65 and subsequently during 1987-88 & 1998 A.D. by the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture & Archaeology. Sagar University, Sagar (M.P.). The antiquities of Neolithic and Chalcolithic cultures have been found⁴. The Mouryas, The Sungas, The Satvahanas, The Shakas, The Nagas, The Guptas, The Hunas, The Kalchuries, The Chandellas and The Parmaras⁵ had their hold over Eran region respectively. The Gupta monarch Samudra Gupta visited Eran which was his 'Swabhog Nagar'⁶. A group of Temples is situated on the south bank of Bina river, just half a km. to the west of the Village. In this group Vishnu Temple⁷, Varaha Temple⁸, Nrisingh Temple, Garuda Pillar⁹ and other ruined Temples are of architectural importance. The various inscriptions have found at Eran, these are inscription of Budhagupta,¹⁰ inscription of Saka ruler Sridhar

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Verma¹¹, inscription of Huna ruler Tormana¹², inscription of Samudragupta and Gopraj Sati Pillar inscription¹³. The several Sati Pillars have found at Eran. One of the Earliest Sati Pillars of India has been found at Eran. This was discovered by General Alexander Cunningham in 1874-1875 A.D. This inscriptions shows that in Gupta Era 191 (510 A.D.)¹⁴ Gopraj, a warrior of Gupta ruler Bhanugupta, came to Eran and lost his life in a great war. His wife became Sati in her husband's Pyre. Eran is a an important site of archaeological importance. Eran can be called to be oldest historical town in the Madhya Pradesh. It was known as Airikina in ancient time. In Inscription and coins its name occurs as Airikina.¹⁵

General A. Cunningham during his survey of this part of the country in 1874-75 visited Eran.¹⁶ Here he discovered a number of ancient copper coins, some being of great historical value. These included a good number of punch-marked coins. Some coins from Eran bear the figure of goddess Lakshmi, other show animals (horse & elephant), tree within- railing and various other symbols, such as swastika, triratna, Indradhwaja, dharmachakra, lotus, Ujjain symbol, river with fishes semi-circle design, crescent, cakra, bull, sadar cakra, hill, taurine and the vajra symbol, river with fish and the cross and ball symbol. Among the inscribed coins the most remarkable one is that of a ruler named Dharmapala.¹⁷ The legend "rano dhammapalasa (of king Dharmapala) is written on the coin reverse in large brahmi letter of the Mouryan period. This coin is presently displayed in British Museum, London. A number of important Coins and Inscribed Ceilings have been found at Eran. One copper Coin bearing the name of king "Dharmapala" is counted among the earliest inscribed coins in India.¹⁸ On the paleographic grounds this coin has been assigned to the late third century B.C.. One Circular lead Piece bearing the Name of the another ruler "Indragupta", assignable to the same period has been discovered at Eran.¹⁹ Local uniscribed copper coins of a number of varieties have been discovered at Eran. Attest to the great Importance

of this town as a political seat and also as a Coin-minting Center,²⁰ Early Punch-marked and tribal coins were obtained from period II in excavation at Eran.

Several inscribed copper coins bearing the name 'Erakannya' or 'Erakana' in the Brahmi script have also been found at Eran.²¹ Cunningham proposed that the symbol of the river represent the river Bina on which the village stands. He also surmised that the semi-circle on the coins was representative of the old Eran town, which was probably so shaped. The Brahmi script of these coins assigns them to second first century B.C.. The rest of the copper coins From Eran do not bear any inscription some of the square copper coin from Eran represent the old "Karsapana' and some typical symbols of Eran. The numbers of punch-marked copper coins from Eran are pretty large. The excavations conducted at Eran by the University of Sagar have yielded besides numerous other antiquities, a good number of coins. An interesting thin round gold piece (diam9,weight 20 grams) from the late chalcolithic level, assignable to about 1000 B.C. may be mentioned here. The piece, although well cut in a circular form, does not bear any symbol. It also does not indicate any clear signs to infer that it was used as an ornament. It appears that the piece was prepared just to serve as an object of money. The gold piece probably served as the medium of exchange for the chalcolithic people.²² The other finds of the period include silver and copper punch-marked coins. The excavation at Eran have yielded a hoard of 3,268 coins in which most of the coins are made by copper and some of them were silver coated.²³ These belong to 2nd cent. B.C. It seems that there was a mint at Eran for a large scale production of copper coin of particular types.

Among the coins from Eran, Cunningham found a fairly good number of punch-marked, die-struck and cast coins. The numbers of copper punch-marked coins were found to be much larger than the silver punch-marked coins. Most remarkable among the die-struck coins

were the square **Karsapanas** of a standard weight of 144 grains and their several denominations.²⁴ coins of these occur on the tribal coins of weight of most of the coins varies from 17.45 grams to 24.43 grams. Punch-marked coins belong to about 300 B.C., if not a little earlier. The latest phase of the copper punch-marked coins at Eran comes to a close by the end of the 3rd century A.D., as revealed from the excavation.²⁵

Coins of the Kshatrapas, Satavahanas and Nagas, Gupta king Ramagupta, Huna ruler Tormana and of the Indo-Sassanian rulers have been found.²⁶ The Naga coins found at Eran, Vidhisha, Pawaya (Padmawati), and Mathura show various common features. The names of rulers occurring on these coins are to be carefully studied and compared in order to arrive at a correct attribution and chronology of the Nagas.²⁷ The mints at Eran and Vidisha produced a large number of copper coins. Copper was available in large quantities in the Balaghat area for the mints at Eran, Vidisha attesting to the great importance of this town as a political seat and also as a mint-town.

It may be mentioned here that the economic condition of the Malwa and Bundelkhand areas must have been quiet, sound during the period of Sunga-Satavahana supremacy.²⁸ Gold coins were unknown in the area during this period and the silver currency in the form of punch-marked coin was also not much in use.

After the Sunga-Satavahana period, there was a political change in the region Western Malwa occupied by the Saka-Kshatrapas and remained under their rule right from the middle of the second century A.D. to till the end. They introduced there silver currency in western Malwa. They also minted coins in the mint at Eran which was occupied by them, although for a short time.²⁹

Excavation & Exploration has been found hundred inscribed clay sealing (size 2.2 m.m) on this sealing, i read the following Brahmi inscription written in the well-known Kshatrapa style.³⁰ Rajno

Isvaramitraputrasya rajno, simhasrisenasya (i.e of king simhasrisena, son of king Isvaramitra) All though the titles 'kshatrapa' or "Mahakshatrapa" are replaced here by the titles 'Rajno' the style of the legend and the occurrence of the hill and river symbols, so common on the Kshatrapa currency, leave no doubt that these two were kshatrapa chiefs. On the basis of paleography the sealing can not be placed after 350 A.D. The two rulers Isvaramitra and his son Simhasrisena seem to have ruled over the Eran region of eastern Malwa some time at the end of the 3rd or in the beginning of the 4th century A.D.³⁰

Mention may be made of a very large number of copper coins of Ramagupta from Eran and Vidisha.³¹ The excavation conducted at Eran by the University of Sagar have brought to light four type of copper coins of Ramgupta. These types are 1.Lion, 2.Garuda,3.Garudadhvaja and 4.Border legend type. All the coins of Ramgupta were of copper, varying in the weight from 20 to 30 grains. The coins are circular in shape and their fabric is very similar to that of Naga coins. Which have been discovered in large numbers at Eran, Vidisha region. The name of Ramgupta is clearly written on some of the coins found in excavations at Eran.³² The symbols –Lion,Garuda and Garudadhvaja are also quite distinct . The Brahmi legend on the coins is in early Gupta character.³³ Besides the coins of Ramagupta Eran has also yielded copper coin of Chandragupta Vikramadiya.³⁴ These are of two types, chakra and Purnaghata. The excavations at vidisha have also brought to light copper coins of Ramgupta. In size and fabric they resemble the Eran coin of that ruler. Ramgupta can be called the originator of the copper currency in the imperial gupta dynasty. His numerous copper coins with certain characteristic features of this dynasty should be taken in to consideration in the study of the coinage of the imperial guptas.The coins of Ramgupta were minted in eastern Malwa specially in the mints at Eran and Vidisha.

These copper coins of Ramgupta are alike the Naga coins and

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Photographs of Recently discovered 460 Punch-Marked Coins



Gold piece chalcolithic Period from Eran

coins of some of the local rulers of the Pre-gupta period.³⁵ It may, however be pointed out that the coins bearing the legend Ramgupta were not the issues by local officer of the imperial Guptas, nor of any feudatory king of the same name. This king Ramgupta was the elder brother of Chandragupta II Vikramaaditya. Coins of Gwalior and Bhopal state have also been found in Excavation.

Recently author of these lines have acquired 460 punch marked coins in a small earthen pot.³⁷ These coins are made of silver, copper, tin and bronze alloy metal and are approximately 2300 years old (i.e. 3rd Century B.C.). These coins contain of Elephant, Sun, Sadara, Cakra, Taurine, Tortoise, Point in circle, Tree on platform, Swastika, Ox, Hill, Fish, Twin snake, Vajra and Ujjain symbol. On these coins obverse side mainly consisting of five sign and reverse side one or two signs. Most common symbol on reverse is Swastika, Sun, Sadara, Cakra, Fish symbols are displayed on obverse side. Three of the coins having holes were probably used as necklace or ornaments. These symbols prove originality of the coins. The coins are prepared in rectangle and square shape. Few of them are prepared in punch marked method and few were made by stamping methods. The coins have been divided in to four groups on the basis of weight. Coins of group one weighted 1.30 grams, of second group weighted 2.50 grams, of third group weighted 3.80 grams and of last group weighted 9.60 grams. These coins are displayed in museum of Dr. Harisingh Gour University, Sager (M.P.).

Information of vital nature pertaining to ancient Indian society, culture, art, religion, economy, political affairs and arrangements are acquired by study of these coins. During The Period ancient coins producing mint were established in important cities, which were situated on main trade routes. Eran was situated on way between Bharruch (Bhragu Kachha), Ujjain to Kaushambi, Mathura, Taxshila trade route.

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