

**Study of Vijayanagara Coins**  
by **Mahesh Ramaswam<sup>[a]</sup> & Asha. S<sup>[b]</sup>**

**Abstract**

*As a tribute to an empire which arrested our culture from an outlandish onslaught of an alien culture, the kingdom of Vijayanagar, kept its objectives in words and spirit. Coinage is a part of their assays of such preservation for which the kingdom was established. They inherited a system which was in its infancy and evolved it to acme. Their success can be gauged by the fact that their contemporaries and predecessors who adopted their coinage intoto, gave no heed to contrive, but kept in mind only its aesthetic and economic value. The Paradigm of Vijayanagara coinage outlasted their rule to be in circulation for centuries together. The evolution of the system was so scientific that it creates a bellowing even from a superficial reader on numismatics. As a silent indorser, the coins are helping historians to colligate various scattered facts.*

**Key Words:** Numismatics, Assaying, Fanams, Varaha, Gadanya, Pratapa, Pagoda, Cruzodo, Tara, Duggani, Kasu, Krishnadevaraya, Hampi.

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**Part I**

**1. Introduction**

Numismatics is the scientific study of coins and its history in all its varied forms. The English word 'coin' is derived from Latin 'cuneus', meaning wedge or punch. The literal meaning of the word coin would be something that has been struck. The Latin word for a coin is 'numisma' and hence a collector of coin is termed as 'numismatist'. Coins are formidable class among antiques. Of all antiques coins are the smallest, yet a class and most authoritative in record and the widest in range. Coin is embodiment of money, which retains its intrinsic value whether in circulation or out of it. There is nothing like money that attracts man.

Evolution or brief history of coin: At the beginning of settled life money did not exist. Barter system, whose history can be traced back to 6000 B.C, was the first organized medium that we come across under such deficiency. The system is mentioned by the Greek philosopher Aristotle<sup>1</sup> in his book Politics, shows its antiquity and importance. But the system had inherent drawbacks. A lack of a common value to measure the value of goods was lacking leading to failure in fixing the worth of goods. Moreover a standard criterion to determine the value of goods and services was bereft, resulting in disputes and clashes. Thus money was invented as a measure of contrive. The introduction of coinage marks an important innovation in the history of money and a transition in the development of civilization itself. Sometime in the first millennium BC, coinage was invented, probably in Asia Minor, and it rapidly spread throughout the Mediterranean area.<sup>i</sup> Tradition attributes the invention to Lydia (Part of Western Turkey) but it quickly became a Greek affair. Wherever Greeks settled

coinage followed.<sup>2</sup> The first coin to be printed out of a mint was recorded back in ancient Greece. With money stooped Numismatics. The earliest history of coinage in South Asia commenced with the introduction of Punch-marked coins, the indigenous coins of the region. This type of currency was introduced in about 5th and 4th century BC<sup>3</sup>.

Numismatic evidence is most often used to modify, confirm, or otherwise illustrate what already is known in part. By studying coins we can acquire information regarding the political, social, economical and cultural condition of the State. Sometimes coins are released on special occasions like victory, acquisitions or celebrations. Normally a coin contains date which helps us to construct genealogy. Sometimes it may also contain picture of King, Queen, religious symbol, deity or a monument. Based on the contents it can be studied. It is the common opinion of Historians that of all antiquity, coins are the smallest in class yet the most authoritative in record and widest in range. For a Numismatist it is the most interesting object of study. The study of Coins is an interdisciplinary subject of interest for many disciplines like history, archaeology, metrology, numismatics, epigraphy, linguistics, classics, metallurgy, history of art, political science and of course economics. An adage amongst numismatists sums up the importance of coins. It says an unidentified coin is a piece of metal while an identified coin is a piece of history.

The aim of this study is to show that coins are as important as sources in studying history. They come in handy as any other sources in solving flimsy controversies. Also the study is undertaken to acquaint historians who pay less attention towards numismatics. For this the coins minted during the period of Vijayanagar Empire is considered. The paper is divided into following parts. Part I deals with a general introduction and evolution or brief history of coins worldwide. Part II deals with political history of the dynasty, sources as well as general characteristics of their coins. Part III deals with evolution and commemorative coins of the dynasty. Part IV deals with the impact, contention resolved as well as conclusion.

Lot of Gold silver and copper coins belonging to the period has been retrieved. In conformity with the South Indian tradition, their currency was predominated by gold. Some of them are preserved in various museums situated in Hampi, Kolkata and Hyderabad. Lot of such coins is with private collectors. By the sheer number of Gold coins available it can be safely concluded that the period was Golden age<sup>ii</sup>. With the arrival of emperors of Vijayanagar dynasty circulation of money which was almost static during early medieval period became active<sup>iii</sup>. Many British scholars like Elliot, Smith and Robert Sewell have worked on Vijayanagar coins. Similarly Indian scholars like Mahalingam, Parabrahma Shastry too have worked on it. Because of the works of such erudite scholars no major controversies exists regarding Vijayanagar coins.

## **Part II**

Brief history of the kingdom: To Study the numismatics of any period one should have a thorough knowledge of the Political, Social, Economical conditions of the period. Coins illuminate only when it is framed in the social and cultural context of the dynasty<sup>iv</sup>. The Vijayanagar kingdom (1336-1672 A.D.) was established by brothers 'Hakka' and 'Bukka' (Harihara and Bukkaraya respectively) with the help of sage Vidyaranya<sup>v</sup>. It was established to protect the arena from onslaught of Islam. It is quite but natural that coins of the period contains Hindu deities. 'Devaraya II' (1424-46 A.D.) expanded the kingdom to Sri Lanka outside India and to Orissa within India. This position was further consolidated by 'Krishnadeva Raya' (1505-23 A.D.) who is considered not only a

worthy successor of 'Devaraya II' but also as a grandiose successor. Foreign travelers like 'Abdul Razzak' who visited the Kingdom maintain that 'Gold, Silver and Diamonds' were sold in the markets like consumables.vi This throws light on the economic conditions of the country. 'Krishnadeva Raya' issued special Gold Coin called 'Venkateshwara or Tirupati' coin to commemorate his acquisitions of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa.vii He was followed by 'Achutaraya', 'Ramaraya' etc. The kingdom received its first jolt when it was defeated by 'Bahamani kings' during 'Battle of Talikota' in 1565 A.D. 'Hampi' the capital was destroyed but the kingdom existed until 1672 A.D. at 'Penukonda'. It is really a red letters day in the annals of Indian History when Vijayanagar Empire came into existenceviii. It had sway over the whole South India for more than 350 years. Even Babur in his autobiography has mentioned that Vijayanagar Empire was the most powerful kingdom in South India. It was this kingdom which spread the name of India worldwide and drew host of travelers.

The Vijayanagara Empire represented the era of civilization when the fortune and idea, characteristics of the Indian soul had worked out its capabilities. The spring and summer of Indian culture had been succeeded by the phase of civilization characterised by the rise of a new industrial system, imperialism and a city state with a metropolitan culture. The empire has left an everlasting mark of its existence in the fields of religion, literature, art and polity.

Sources of study of Vijayanagar coins: As mentioned earlier lot of coins belonging to the period are found in good condition are with private collectors and in museums. Government of India has published lot of catalogues on the coins found in museums. Private collectors have written many scholarly articles which also add to the knowledge of the period. Along with this around 8000 inscriptions are also preserved, which acts as ancillary to numismatics. A lot of primary literary sources starting from accounts of foreign travelers to local histories are also available. Above all contributions from numismatics has helped the study.

Role of inscriptions in studying Vijayanagar coins: Around 8000 inscriptions belonging to the period are found in South Indiaix. Many of them contain information that is useful in study of numismatics of the period. Various technical aspects regarding coins of the period like weight, relative value and metals used are obtained only from inscriptions. The detail of the occasion for which a particular coin is issued is known through inscriptions. Information regarding the Mint and writings on the coins can be gathered through an inscription. The most important information found on these coins is the place where it was minted. Example may be cited of 'Mangalore Gadanya' or 'Tirupati honu' (money). It can be verified only through inscriptions. The Gold coins of the period are called as 'Shud varaha' (meaning pure) by an inscription. This important information is helpful in accessing the purity of gold coins of the period. This information is substantiated by traveler's account which states the purity of gold coins of the period is upto 90%. One more valuable contribution of inscriptions for the study of the coins of the period is the explanations given to the symbols found on the coins. According to another inscription, five Ghattivaraha is equal to 7 Varahas.

Common Characteristics of Vijayanagar coins: The coins of Vijayanagar ushered new era in 'Numismatics of South India'x. All the coins are famous for their 'Richness' 'Art' and 'Validity'. Most of the coins bear an image of God on one side and writings on the other. Most of the coins of the period have been modeled based on their predecessor's coins like that of Hoysala. Despite this fact, their coins are unique. Vijayanagar had a sophisticated currency system. Coins were minted from many mints in the empire. The central mint was located in Hampi. Many numbers of mints was established within the kingdom to cater production of huge demand of coins at various provincial capitals and other important places like Barakur, Mangalore, Gandikota, Penukonda, Tirupati, Gutti, Adoni, Tadapatri, Madurai and Mysore.

The importance to coinage given is proved by the fact that the second king of the dynasty ‘Harihara’ established a separate government department to look after the activities of the mint. An inscription issued by ‘Harihara’ validated this point. It states that land tax should only be paid through Gold coins. The importance by its rulers given to coinage system is proved by the fact that the mint was improvised at the beginning to produce small denomination of gold and copper coins so as to enable farmers to pay their taxes in money. This made the kings to issue various denominations of ‘Varahaxi’ the Gold coin. The tradition continued with the addition by individual kings. This led to the revolution in the field of Numismatics<sup>xii</sup>. Duties assigned to this department ranged from maintaining purity as well as weight of each coin minted. For this the office had the power to appoint Goldsmiths who were incharge of this work. They were supplied with scales which were small and could be kept in pockets but precise which could even weigh a hair.

Amongst all the coins the empire was famous for issuing gold coins of various types. The table below throws more light on it.

**Table 1:**

Sl.No	Common Name	Other Name	Relative Value	Weight in Grains
1	Big Varaha	Tirupati or Venkatesha	2 Varaha	120
2	Small Varaha	Ganadya	1 Varaha	32
3	Pratapa	Pon or Pagoda	1/2 Varaha	26
4	Kati	Pon or Pagoda	1/4 Varaha	13
5	Pana	Pon or Pagoda	1/8 Varaha	5
6	Haga	Pon or Pagoda	1/32 Varaha	1.5
7	Bele	Pon or Pagoda	Not known	0.7

**Silver Coins:** Till today only two silver coins are found. It is called as ‘Tara’ and ‘Tar’<sup>xiii</sup>. Tar is 1/6th of ‘Pana’ while ‘Tara’ is 1/16th of ‘Pana’. Its weight is 5.2 Grains. We are yet to find small denomination of this<sup>xiv</sup>.

**Copper coins:** Luckily we have acquired lot of copper coins. Much information about it is not found in travelers account. The table below illustrates the characteristics of copper coins of the period.

**Table 2:**

Sl.No	Name	Weight(in Grains)	Remark
1	Duggani	250	Heaviest
2	Kanni	125	Medium
3	Kasu	30	Average
4	Are Kasu	15	Lightest

There are many common factors in the Silver coins issued by the dynasty. Picture of God and Goddess are found one side while writing is found on the other.<sup>xv</sup>This picture can be of animals like ‘Elephants’, ‘Lion’, ‘Eagle’, or of religious emblems like ‘Trishul’, ‘Crown’, or ‘Wheel’. The secular religious policy of the rulers can also be studied by using coins. Harihara-I issued coins with the picture of ‘Brahman’ the creator, so as not to revoke the sentiments of people. After his successful

campaign of Andhra Pradesh, Krishnadeveraya issued coins containing chief deity 'Lord Venkateshwara'. No portrait of any kings is found on their coins nevertheless their names and titles are etched.

Regarding language used in the coins it is mostly 'Kannada' and 'Devanagari'. Earlier issues had old Kannada letters. Gradually the use of Nandinagari began. Later kings used Devanagari exclusively. Some coins have the combination of Kannada and Devanagari. The Vijayanagara state was tri-lingual, with a greater leaning towards Kannada than Telugu and Tamil. After their defeat in 'Battle of Talikota' in 1565 A.D. the capital was shifted to Penukonda in Andhra Pradesh and 'Telugu' came to be used. The writings over all the coins are legible (irrespective of language used) and mistakes are less which makes these coins unique. Artistically, technically, and majestically coins of Vijayanagar are the best during medieval age.

### Part III

**Evolution of Weight Standard for Coins:** It is very interesting to understand the evolution of weight standard in those days when the spread of scientific knowledge was limited. The weight standard of the gold coins was based upon the Kalanju or Molucca bean (*Caesalpinia bonduc*) an indigenous seeds. The manjadi seed (*Odenathera pavonina*) served as the radical unit of measurement. Ten manjadis were regarded as equivalent to one Kalanju seed. Metallic pieces cut to the weight of these seeds were used in making coins. Assaying and weighing were necessary before a coin could be accepted in payment. Assaying was a regular occupation of goldsmiths. For purposes of testing and verification, touchstones, and in some cases a gold bar of the royal standard of purity were kept, and the coins were received after a process of testing. Goldsmiths also acted as money changers and bankers. The balances used were sensitive.

**Evolution of Vijayanagar Coinage:** The huge wealth of the empire as well as the burgeoning trade and commerce prompted the emperors of Vijayanagara to bring out large quantities of coins particularly Gold. Pure silver and copper were the other metals used in their coinage. They followed the weight standard that used by the earlier dynasties of the South. The highest denomination was that of Pagodas, followed by gold Fanams (or Panams) as its fractional units. Silver Tara's with its fractional units and the copper coins were used for day to day transactions.

The initial gold coins issued by Harihara I and Bukka (founders of the empire) were prepared using debased gold. The first coin to be issued Harihara I was Uma Maheshwara Varaha. Gold Fanams with its fractions were minted by them for medium end transactions. Silver Tara's met the usual transaction need of their economy. The obverse of Pagoda during the period is often misunderstood as Hanuman because of engraved running warrior along with dagger symbol. They were astonished by the wide popularity of the coins of their predecessors, the Hoysala Fanams, which made them to mint similar styled Fanams. Most of their coins contain the symbol of dagger embedded in the crescent. In some rare issues Lord Hanuman is also observed. Thus the initial coins throw no light on particular perspective of their religious policy.

From the reign of Harihara II, who for the first time issued half Varaha called Pratapa (after his title) or Mada or Honnu as well as quarter Varaha called Kati, an evolution is observed in Pagodas and half Pagodas were one can notice Hindu Gods and Goddesses engraved on the obverses. Mention may be made here of the trinities namely 'Brahma Saraswathi' the creator, 'Vishnu Lakshmi' the sustainer, and 'Siva Parvathi' the destroyer. Majority of the silver Tara's are embossed with Kannada numeral like 1.25, 2.5 and the legend Ha or Bu. These numerals refer to the then monetary standard of 'ratti' weight. (The average of weight of Gulagunja seed which equates to 0.11 gms.) The Taras with 2.5 numerals weighed between 0.2 to 0.25gms. Typically they had a diameter of 7 to 9mm, half

Taras weighed about 0.14 gm and the quarter Tara's weighed about 0.07gm. The Hoysala type Fanams too were in circulation, but they are very rare. They carried Hanuman and a Warrior inside the crescent mark.

The coinage of Devaraya I and Devaraya II are similar in designs and legends. Hence probably they can't be easily distinguished. The seated Siva and Parvathi, and the Vishnu Lakshmi motif show much more elaboration. They minted copper coins extensively, which represented the smaller denominations. Three such copper coins are equal to one silver Tara, and each Tara is equal to one sixth of the gold Fanam. The gold Fanams of the period bears the elephant. They are very rare. Silver Taras are abundant, but they differ in designs. Only Deveraya issued silver coins which are equivalent to 1/6 of gold Fanam. The elephant symbol on the obverse, and the legend 'Sri Devaraya' in Nagari script along with a dagger symbol ornamented his silver Taras and the copper coins. Copper coins seem to be vast compared to the number of issue of any of the previous rulers, which carried various animals on the obverse. Typically the humped bull, elephant, lion are found on the obverse. Amongst them coins with 'Deer' on the obverse are rare and found only in Hampi.

Out of the dynasties to rule over the kingdom of Vijayanagar, Saluva dynasty is the only dynasty to which no coins are attributed. They used the currencies issued by the previous rulers. It was followed by the golden period for numismatics under the Tuluva dynasty, particularly by Krishnadevaraya where the coinage was enriched with the skill of engravers. He issued pagodas and half pagodas with 'seated Balakrishna' in different styles, which became the prototype for even later generation of rulers such as the Nayakas. He introduced copper of higher denominations such as five, three, two, all carrying the kneeling Garuda device. The reverse carried the classical Nagari legend 'Sri Pratapa Krishna Raya'. The coins issued by Achyuta Raya are probably the brilliant among the Vijayanagara coins. He issued Pagodas and half Pagodas carrying a mythical double headed eagle 'Ganda Berunda' in walking as well as sitting poses. This emblem was later adopted by Government of Mysore. Copper carried either elephant or Ganda Berunda bird on the obverses and the legend 'Sri Achyuta Raya' on the reverse.

The gold coins issued by Sadasiva Raya depicts 'Vishnu Lakshmi seated' on the obverse and legend 'Sri Sadasiva Rayaru' in Nagari in the reverse. He also issued Copper jittals of higher denominations followed 'The kneeling Garuda' prototype of Sri Krishna Devaraya. The legend too followed a similar style 'Sri Pratapa Sadasiva Raya' replacing the word Krishna with Sadasiva. His copper coins carried the symbol 'Standing Garuda in praying mudra'. All the coins struck by Rama Raya (and even Venkata) were copper. It depicted the 'humped bull' on the obverse and the legend 'Rama Raya' on the reverse. Probably new Pagodas were at once struck with his name. We do not know of any coin of Rama Raya bearing such an early date but we are aware of coins struck with his name on the eve of the battle of Rakkasa-Tangdi. The famous Gandikota Pagoda gives the name of Rama Raya and the date 1565, and has on the obverse a figure of Vishnu standing under a canopy.<sup>5</sup>

Aravidu the last dynasty which was made to shift the capital after their defeat in Rakkasa Tangadi war on 25th January 1565xviii struck gold and copper coins inspite of the tragedy on the kingdom unlike some of the previous rulers who struck only copper coins. They bore the name of Lord Venkateshwara. Tirumalaraya came out with pagodas and half pagoda with 'Rama Lakshmana and Sita' on the obverse and 'Sri Tirumalarayulu' a Telugu expression on the reverse though written in the Nagari legend. Both changes signify the region to which the kingdom was shifted after tragedy struck. Tirumalaraya's 'Three Swamy Varaha' which depicts Lord Venkateshwara with his two consorts was the most imitated coin of Vijayanagar. Sri Ramadevaraya was the next notable king to issue gold coin and was followed by Sri Venkatapriya III who brought out a coin where Lord Venkateshwara is standing beneath the arch, with the reverse containing legend 'Sri Pratapa Rama



Raya' or ' Sri Venkateshwaraya Namaha'. This epitome was the standard for their successors notably Sri Rangaraya II and other kings. Even European traders and Nawab of Arcot followed similar style.

**Commemorative Coins:** Besides regular coins issued for economic purpose, the issue of commemorative coins by the dynasty has placed them supra viz other dynasties. Commemorative issues have their own place in numismatics as such issues are very rare. Hence commemorative issues of this dynasty are important. The issues of commemoration motleys from army modernization to religion and it even cover triumph in wars and ends up in personal gratification.

Devaraya II introduced camel corps in army as a measure of modernization to strengthen it. As these animals were not aboriginal to South India, its sight was astonishing. To commemorate this event he issued copper coins wherein the figure of camel was shown on the obverse. Krishnadevaraya offered a gift to Lord Venkateswara on 15th October 1515xix. To commemorate this event a special gold coin weighing 119.7 grains was issued. Called as Dodda Varaha or Double Varaha it bears on the obverse a well delineated figure of Lord Venkateshwaraya inside the gift offered. The gift is not only portrayed beautifully but also given great importance in the coin's design.

On other occasionxx when Krishnadevaraya captured the important fort of Udayagiri, got hold of a beautiful image of seated Balakrishna. He installed the same in a newly built temple at Hampi. Special gold coins were issued to commemorate this. The obverse of this coin has an image of seated Balakrishna with a lump of butter on the right hand. History has recorded that Timmarasu was responsible for the accession of Krishnadevaraya to the Vijayanagara throne. He was elevated to Prime Ministership and enjoyed a redundant status. Krishnadevaraya performed Kannakabishekamxxi to Timmarasu. To commemorate this great event special copper coins were issued in which the Kannada legend 'Krishnadeva' on the obverse and 'Timmarasaguru' on the reverse was inscribed. This is the unique coin in every sense as the name of the Emperor and his Prime Minister appears rarely.

#### **Part IV**

**Impact of Vijayanagar coins:** Though the beginning of their coinage was influenced by other South Indian dynastiesxxii it is difficult to daresay the influence their coinage had on their predecessors both local and European. The influence of Vijayanagar coins has engrossed the whole south Indiavaxxiii. Its uniqueness, grandular and aestheticism of Vijayanagar coins naturally had its own influence. Varahas aesthetic appeal besides its purity and accuracy were the prime reason for it to become popular and adored medium of exchange. This is substantiated by Portuguese explorer Duarate Barbosa when he said that '--- throughout all India they use this money (Varaha ) which passes in all those kingdoms'.

During their rule most of their feudatories like Marathas, Wodeyars of Mysore, Nayakas of Keladi, and Madura issued all coins of Vijayanagar in their domain. Even after the decline and disappearance, its coinage had widespread impact on the coinages of the various successor powers such as the Nayakas of Keladi, Madurai, Thanjavur, and Gingee, the Wodeyars of Mysore. But the most fascinating aspect is the continuation of usage of 'Shiva Parvati' coin even by a Muslim ruler like Hyder Ali. Popularity of that coin is one of the reasons attributed to itxxiv. The Nandi coins were used in the domain of Nayakas of Keladi. The Wodeyars of Mysore sometimes referred to as Child of influence of Vijayanagar Empire brought out (practiced) a system of Numismatics which historians term as a link between Vijayanagar and Modern Numismatics. Most of the coins issued by them are equal in weight when compared to that of Vijayanagar coins. Similarly its relative value, type and even name associated with it are that of Vijayanagar coins. This example was even followed by the rulers of Madurai. After the destruction of Vijayanagar, in A.D. 1565, this series was extensively imitated by innumerable native chieftains, as well as by the European factories. xxv

On 22nd August 1639, King Venkata Devaraya III granted the privilege of minting money to English East India Company, with a stipulation that the English should not fail to preserve on their coinage the representation of that Deity Lord Venkateswara, which was the favourite object of his worship. The company commenced the minting of gold Pagoda coins showing on the obverse, the figure of Lord Venkateswara. The last great Hindu kingdom ended with the death of Sri Ranga Raya III on 16th December 1672. But the impact of its coinage did not end here. It continued in the English merchant coins of Vijayanagara typology that circulated as legal tender until 1818. The Pagoda coinage was issued in three series - Three Swamy Pagodas, Star Pagodas and Gopuram Pagodas.

European trading companies doing business in India too could not resist its influence. This influence on their coinage can be gauged by the fact that the Portuguese traders introduced 'Cruzodo' as early as 1510, which was the same size, value and weight of Varaha, so that local traders would easily accept it. They also introduced gold coins 'Pagodas' which were minted at 'Porto Novo'. The Dutch East India Company issued 'Tengapatam' Gold Pagodas which had 'Lord Vishnu' on the obverse. Their Porto Novo type Pagoda had 'Lord Lakshmi' on the obverse while their 'C' type Pagoda had an Indian idol on the reverse. French East India Company issued 'crescent Pagodas' with separate images of 'Vishnu', 'Lakshmi' and 'Venkateswara'. The Nawabs of Arcot also minted similar Pagodas under the name 'Walajahi', 'Kuriki' and 'Umad- Ul-Mulki' which had three standing deities on them. All of them displayed Hindu Pantheon on them. Such was the influence exerted by the gold starters of Vijayanagarxxvi. Thus, this formed the core of South Indian currency till the implementation of uniform Indian currency by the East India Company in 1835.

The final and the best compliment came from East India Company. When they thought of minting out coins they brought out coins bearing 'Lord Venkateswara' and 'Lord Vishnu'.

Contention resolved employing numismatics: It will be within the context to elucidate a contention which was unriddled using numismatics. Some modern Saiva supporters attribute the tremendous defeat in Rakkasa-Tangadi war was the punishment inflicted by Virupaksha on the house of Vijayanagara for going over from their cult to Vishnavism. We already find this idea in an old work of the Mackenzie Collection entitled 'Jangama Kalajnyana'(prophecy of a Jangama) in which the defeat and death of Rama Raya are given in a prophetic strain by Sarvajna, a Jangama priest, and his son Virupana, staunch devotees of Sivaxxvii.

But sources prove otherwise. The immediate successors of Rama Raya, however, did not forswear the cult of Vishnu. On the other hand it seems their devotion even increased. Many grants like Penuguluru grant,xxviiiand two grants to a Vaishnava temple at Karnul in 1568 and the colophon of his supposed commentary on the Gita Govinda his favourite deity was Ramaxxix. This Broddingnagian, sensitive religious controversy is put to rest with the help of so called three Swami pagoda issued by Tirumala, which displays three figures, the central one standing, and the other two seated. The deities are said to be either Lakshmana with Rama and Sita, or Venkatesvara with his two wives.xxx In either case this coin proves Tirumala's Vaishnava devotionxxxi. His successor Venkata issued a gold coin, called Venkatapati pagoda, wherein on the obverse lord Vishnu standing under an arch, while the reverse bears the Nagari legend Sri Venkatesvaraya Namahxxxii. Another coin of the same king shows the figure of Hauuman advancing to the right, with the same legend on the reversexxxiii. Thus numismatics has proved handy in dispelling the theory of 'ifs and buts' in case of Vijayanaagar.

**Conclusion:** This type of acknowledgement given by predecessors in it is a silent high tribute paid to Vijayanagar Coins. The purport of coinage of Vijayanagar was although economy during its birth is dishing up support to historians, in conjoining various facts sans controversy. It is also a boulevard for a numismatist, who enjoys profit as well as satisfaction in accumulating these coins. In either case he is serving a purpose for history without his cognition.



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- 11) *Tirupati Devasthanam, reprint 1998, Vol I, P 66*
- 12) *This sentence written by Robert Sewell who is credited of reinventing the empire during modern days, has become an adage synonym with wealthy empire.*
- 13) Shastry, Nilakanta., *History of South India: Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p 64*
- 14) *Local chieftains and European trading companies who imitated this for centuries called it as 'Pagoda'*
- 15) Narasimha Murthy. A. V., *Opt. Cited, P 41*
- 16) Narasimha Murthy. A. V., *Opt. Cited, p 42*
- 17) *Ibid, p 42*
- 18) Shastry, Nilakanta., *Opt. Cited, p 58*
- 19) *Deshikachar, T., Coins of South India. New Era publications, Chennai*
- 20) *The word Panam or Fanam which is used to denote money is derived from the sanskrit root 'Pan' means 'to do business'.*
- 21) *Debasement is a process mixing more of a common metal with the precious one (usually gold or silver) that gave the coins its worth, while maintaining the face value of the coin. The reasoning behind this is to make more coins and create more money. However, the side effect is inflation and hoarding of older coins that contained more of the precious metals.*
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