



Copper Plates Discovered from Vijayanagara Kingdom

For Prelims: [Vijayanagara Kingdom](#), [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#), [King Krishnadevaraya](#), [Hampi](#), [World Heritage site by UNESCO](#), [Hazara Rama temple](#), [Ugra Narasimha idol](#).

For Mains: Cultural and literary developments during Vijayanagara Empire, Literary Contributions of Krishnadevaraya.

Source: TH

Why in News?

Recently, a **collection of copper plate inscriptions** featuring two leaves from the **16th Century CE** was discovered at the **Sri Singeeswarar temple in Mappedu village**, Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu.

- The **two leaves of the copper plates** strung together **using a ring** featuring the **seal of the [Vijayanagara Kingdom](#)**.
- The inscription, donating a village to Brahmins by the Raja of Chandragiri, is written in **Sanskrit and the Nandinagari script**. It was engraved in 1513 during the reign of [King Krishnadevaraya](#).

Who was King Krishnadevaraya?

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- **Reign of Krishnadevaraya:**
 - The **Kingdom of Vijayanagar** was ruled by **Krishnadevaraya from 1509 to 1529 AD.**
 - After Krishna Deva Raya, **Achyuta Raya** took over in **1530**, followed by **Sada Siva Raya in 1542.**
 - He was known by **various titles**, including **“Kannadaraya”** and **“Kannada Rajya Ramaramana.”**
 - He is regarded as one of the **greatest statesmen in Indian history** and is considered one of the most significant rulers of mediaeval South India.
- **Literary Contributions:**
 - He was an **eminent scholar** and **authored works** such as Madalasa Charita, Satyavedu Parinaya, Rasamanjari, **Jambavati Kalyana**, and **Amuktamalyada.**
 - Fluent in multiple languages, he supported poets writing in **Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada.**
- **Patronage of Learning and Literature:**
 - His court included the **Ashtadiggajas, eight prominent scholars**, among them **Allasani Peddana, known as the Andhra-kavitapitamaha**, famous for his work **Manucharitamu.**
 - Kannada poet **Thimmanna completed the Kannada Mahabharata**, originally started by Kumara Vyasa, at Krishnadevaraya's request.
 - **Other notable poets** patronised during his reign.
 - Kannada poet Mallanarya, author of **Veerasaivamrita and Bhavachintaratna.**
 - **Chatu Vittalanatha**, who wrote **Bhagvatha.**
 - **Timmanna Kavi**, is known for his eulogy **Krishnaraya Bharata.**
 - **Peddanna**, a Telugu poet, was **honoured for his proficiency in Telugu and Sanskrit.**
- **Cultural Development:**
 - Krishnadevaraya played a significant role in nurturing the **Carnatic musical tradition.**
 - He also **encouraged classical dance forms**, including **Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi.**
- **Infrastructural Development:**
 - He is **credited with building some fine temples** and adding impressive **gopurams to many important south Indian temples.**
 - He also founded a suburban township near Vijayanagar called **Nagalapuram after his mother.**

What are the Key Facts of the Vijayanagar Empire?

- **Foundation and Duration of the Empire:**
 - The **Vijayanagara Empire** was established in the **Deccan region** from 1336 onwards, **founded by Harihara** (also known as Hakka) and his brother **Bukka Raya.**
 - They made **Hampi the capital city (declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1986).**
 - Vijayanagar Empire was **ruled by four important dynasties** (Sangama, Saluva, Tuluva, Aravidu).
 - The empire **lasted from 1336 until around 1660**, although it faced a gradual decline in its final century following a devastating defeat by an alliance of deccan sultanates, leading to the capital being captured, looted, and destroyed.
- **Portuguese Relations:**
 - Around **1510, the Portuguese captured Goa**, which had been under the Sultan of Bijapur, with the support of Vijayanagara.
 - The **Portuguese supplied** the Vijayanagara Empire **with guns and Arabian horses**, while the **empire exported cotton, rice, sugar, spices, indigo, and wooden goods.**
- **Cultural and Architectural Flourishing:**
 - The empire is generally regarded as **reaching its zenith during the reign of Krishna Deva Raya**, who conquered territories east of the Deccan that were formerly part of Orissa.
 - Many of the empire's notable monuments, including the **Hazara Rama temple, Krishna temple, and Ugra Narasimha idol**, date back to his time.
 - Vijayanagara rulers promoted the construction of grand temples, such as the **Virupaksha**

Temple and Vittala Temple, known for their intricate carvings and stunning architecture.

▪ **Dominance in Southern India:**

- Over two centuries, the Vijayanagara Empire **dominated southern India** and was the strongest power in the Indian subcontinent during this period.
- The empire **served as a defense against invasions from the Turkic Sultanates** of the Indo-Gangetic Plain.

▪ **Tussle with the Deccan Sultanates and Mughals:**

- The foundation of the Vijayanagara Empire was partly in response to the **weakening of the Delhi Sultanate under Muhammad bin Tughlaq**, whose policies led to unrest in the Deccan.
 - His **attempt to shift his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad** and his harsh taxation policies caused revolts, contributing to the rise of independent regional states, including Vijayanagara.
- The empire **frequently clashed with the Bahmani Sultanate**, which had emerged after the collapse of Tughlaq's control in the Deccan.
- Territorial conflicts with the Deccan Sultanates, particularly over the **Raichur Doab**, were driven by competition for strategic and economic resources rather than purely religious differences.

▪ **Area of Rule under Vijayanagar:**

- At its peak, the Empire covered a **vast area across southern India**, including parts of present-day Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Telangana.
- It **extended from the Krishna River in the north to the southernmost tip of the Indian Peninsula**, and from the Arabian Sea on the west to the Bay of Bengal on the east.

▪ **Decline and Fall:**

- In **1565, the Battle of Talikota (Battle of Rakkasagi-Tangadagi)** resulted in a decisive defeat for the Vijayanagara army by the allied Deccan sultanates.



Nayakas

- The **Nayakas were military commanders** who were granted land (amaram) by the king in return for maintaining troops and financial contributions.
- They held substantial autonomy in their territories, managing local administration and defense while remaining loyal to the central authority.
- The Nayakas were responsible for local governance, including **land distribution and tax collection, creating a feudal-like system.**
- Over time, some Nayakas gained significant power, leading to conflicts with the central authority,

especially during the decline of the empire.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the socio-economic and cultural contributions of the Vijayanagara Empire to southern India. How did these contributions influence subsequent Indian history?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. Where is the famous Virupaksha temple located? (2009)

- (a) Bhadrachalam
- (b) Chidambaram
- (c) Hampi
- (d) Srikalahasti

Ans: (c)

Mains:

Q. Krishnadeva Raya, the king of Vijayanagar, was not only an accomplished scholar himself but was also a great patron of learning and literature. Discuss. (2016)

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