

HAMPI



KARNATAKA
ARCHAEOLOGY

HAMPI

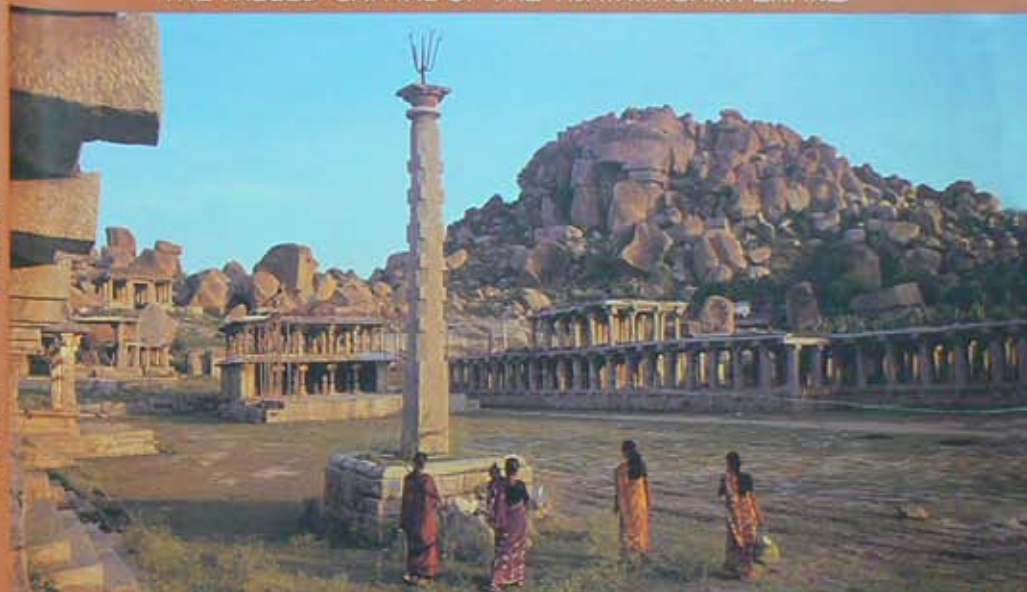
PICTORIAL

T. S. SATYAN
& SRINIVASACHAR

KARNATAKA
ARCHAEOLOGY

HAMPI

THE FABLED CAPITAL OF THE VIJAYANAGARA EMPIRE



Photographed by T. S. SATYAN

Essay by S. SRINIVASACHAR

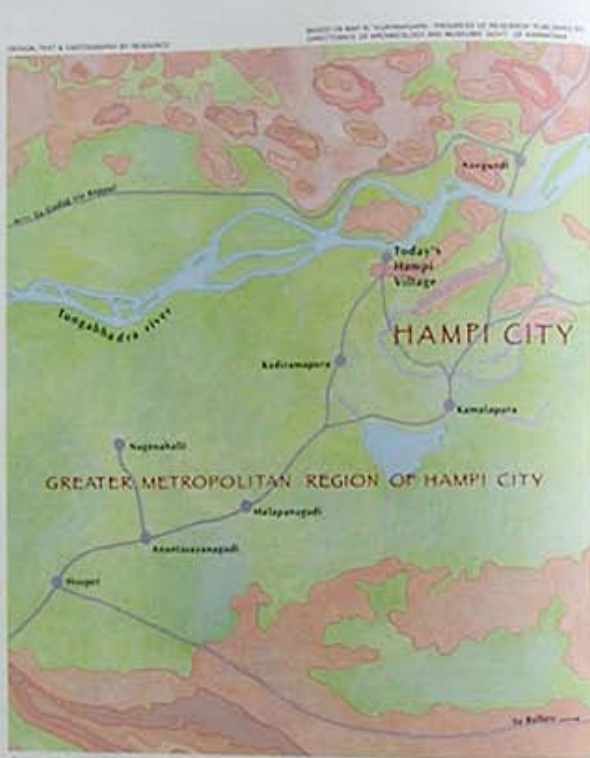
KARNATAKA
ARCHAEOLOGY



Map of India, at this scale, was printed in 1961. The various parts of this nation are the way in a display of India, which are separated from the southern part the Government of India. Copyright, 1961.



Rangalim-Hosur 373 km, Hosur-Belur 140 km, Hosur-Bellary 61 km, Hosur-Hubbli 140 km, Hosur-Hampi 12 km



Greater Hampi, comprising the city and the suburbs, covered an area of 350 sq km. Foreign travellers have left accounts of beautiful suburbs encircled by gardens and orchards. Today's Nagarahalli was one such suburb. Nagarahalli, built by Emperor Krishnadeva Raya (1509-1529) in his mother Nagaladevi's memory.



HAMPI

"The city of Vijayanagara (Vijayanagara) is such that you can not see nor ear hear of any place resembling it upon the whole earth. It is so built that if you were fortified walls, one within the other...the fortness is in the form of a circle, situated on the summit of a hill...from the third to the seventh fortness, shops and houses are closely crowded together...they are four fortness, situated opposite to one other."

- Abdul Ruzza, Persian visitor to Vijayanagara, 1447

The city proper, the imperial capital of the great Vijayanagara Empire, covered an area of 23 sq km. 100,000 people lived in Hampi, same as the population of metropolitan Rome, and the city was comparable to medieval Delhi in its layout.

Hampi City's town-planning and fortresses took advantage of the houlder steeply hilly terrain; it also conformed to the requirements of the mystical equation between royalty and divinity.

Ruler, Chalukya, and Vijayanagara became the four main pillars of the highly refined Deccan art, architecture and culture during the reign of the Bahamani and the Bijapur Sultanates.

Kanchi Ditch — an area of perennial dispute between the two empires. The border fluctuated continually depending on changing power equations.

Coa, alongwith Dalhol and Chaul, was part of Vijayanagara. It then became a Bahamani territory, a Bijapur territory, and eventually a Portuguese colony.

The Zamorin kings of Malabar ruled independently but tacitly accepted the Vijayanagara Ekilat.

A Mercantile Nation

With around 300 large and small ports, Vijayanagara had a flourishing overseas trade. Cloth, rice, precious stones, iron ore, timber and spices were exported to Portugal, South Africa, Malacca, Persia and Arabia in the west, and to Burma, Malaya and China in the east. The chief exports were cotton, pepper, quick silver, iron, refined salt, gold and silver.

Wars were waged frequently and incessantly, linked off by the war state of Vijayanagara to establish control over the ports, the land routes and the rich and fertile land.



VIJAYANAGARA EMPIRE

The Vijayanagara Empire covered the entire peninsula region to the south of the Tungabhadra. The mighty empire's influence extended to Sri Lanka in the south and Orissa and Telengana in the north-east.

The Vijayanagara rulers employed sophisticated systems of governance; the Empire was divided into provinces and further sub-divisions.

A long coast line, varied topography, fertile land, major river systems and mining tracts, and various kings who practised statecraft to harness the rich resources, made Vijayanagara a rich and powerful empire.

Art and Architecture

Fine examples of Vijayanagara architecture are the temples at Hampi, Sringeri, Lepakshi and Yelland. Vijayanagara kings gave generous endowments for extending and embellishing temples at Chidambaram, Madurai, Kanchipuram and other places.

Karnatak classical music evolved its form, and some of the great Kannada and Telugu works of literature were written during the Vijayanagara period.

The Vijayanagara navy, with commander Lakshana Dandanayaka (1420-1446) at the helm, defeated the Nizhala ruler and extracted tribute from him.

The Rise and Fall of the Vijayanagara Empire



13th Century South India, pre-Vijayanagara. The Hoysalas of Durgam Cheruvu (Uppal), and the Yadavas of Devagiri, alongwith the Pandya of Madurai and the Kakatiyas of Warangal, are the major powers in the south.



1367 to 1376. The Delhi Sultanate, first under the Khaljis and then under the Tughlaks, conquers the Hoysala Kingdom and most of southern Deccan. The entire south is in the verge of coming under the Delhi Sultanate.



1386. From the dying embers of the Hoysala Kingdom and then under the Tughlaks, conquer the Hoysala Kingdom and most of southern Deccan. The entire south is in the verge of coming under the Delhi Sultanate.



1396. Internal conflicts break the Sultanate of Madurai and the Hoysala Kingdom. The Vijayanagara Empire is born. For over two centuries, the two empires dominate the peninsula and change the course of Indian history.

Four Dynasties

17 rulers belonging to four successive dynasties — Sangama, Saluva, Tuluva and Aravida — sustained Vijayanagara's power and vigour for 230 years. Dev Raya II (1424-1446) of the Sangama dynasty and Krishnadeva Raya (1509-1529) of the Tuluva dynasty were the greatest of them. After the fall of Hampi in 1565, seven more rulers, powerless and struggling, presided over a much reduced and tethered empire till its end in 1646.

25 December 1367. Three last rulers of the confederate army unite Bijapur for a decisive battle against Vijayanagara. They reach Kanchi, 40 km north of the Krishna and camp here for a week.

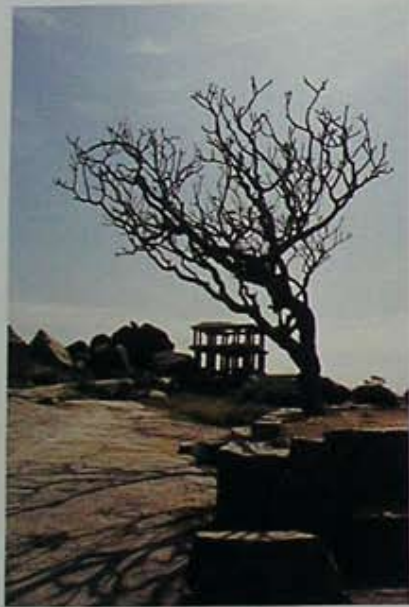
22 January 1368. At Battalangi (Sringeri), on the banks of the Krishna, the six last strong Vijayanagara army suffers serious setbacks, and is annihilated.



1365. A confederation of the five Sultanates, led by the Sultanate of Madurai, defeats the Vijayanagara army and sacks Hampi. This marks the beginning of the end of the great empire.



17th Century. A fractured Vijayanagar's Kingdom survives. The Sultanate of Madurai and the Sultanate of Bijapur give a jolt. The rest of the south is fragmented and ruled by local chieftains and the Sultanate of Madurai. Eventually, the Sultanate of Madurai under Sultanate and the Sultanate of Bijapur gain control of the entire Deccan.



Hampi, the Fabled Capital of the Vijayanagara Empire

by S. Srinivasachar

HAMPI is a city of ruins, a sprawling memorial to an era of tragedies and triumph, to an age of unprecedented political turmoil and a surging will for survival amidst threats to freedom and honour. Over six and a half centuries ago this rugged, boulder-strewn and most improbable of all places stirred in the womb of history to be born as the capital of a kingdom sworn to defend and to preserve the age-old *dharma* from the gravest ever peril it had faced. Its rocks and hills reveal and conceal episodes of valour and sacrifice which excite as well as sadden.

Today Hampi is an eerie landscape in which you see rocks piled upon rocks in fantastic alignments as though some strange beings from outer space sported here in reckless abandon. Amidst these rocks, history sprouted and blossomed through many interludes of war and peace. To these very rocks the city returned in one fatal moment of premeditated assault and revenge. The city's far-famed life was sundered abruptly in 1565 after a span of 230 years.

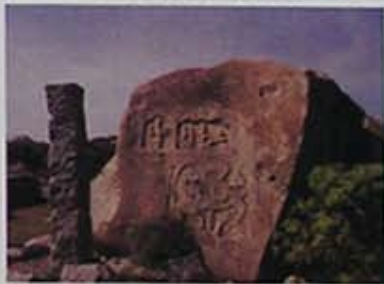
Amidst these rocks and ruins many reminders of Hampi's past exist. Among them are its innumerable temples built of stone — small, very small, big and some, highly ornate. They built them like giants and finished them like jewellers. Massive towers still soar atop shrines which were prominent landmarks in the old capital. In most of them the gods have ceased to dwell. There the lamps burn no more and bells do not ring. Once they beckoned ardent worshippers. In their silence and solitude they now attract tourists.

Hampi belongs irrevocably to history. Though severely mauled and mutilated, it has continued to fascinate people even in its desolation. Besides the ruins, we are here, too, to eyewitness accounts of chroniclers of various times from distant lands like Ibn-Batuta, Bazzani, Nicolo Conti, Abdur Razak, Domingo Paes, Fernao Nuniz and others, who have left graphic word pictures of things seen and heard about the city, its strength and splendour, the courtly grandeur of kings and nobles; of palace intrigues and cold-blooded murders; of the incredible opulence of crowded bazaars overflowing with provisions and manufactures from near and far corners of India, Europe and China; of the impregnable walls, their closely guarded gateways and eagle-eyed watchtowers; of the waving gardens of coconut, areca and banana, of the emerald fields of paddy and sugarcane, all skillfully fed from canals, tanks or wells; and of a hundred other things about the people that the literature of the times reveals through songs and poems.

Hampi has, in a sense, survived death and desolation. The anachronism will strike you in all its contrast between what it is reported to have been in its halcyon days and what it has been since it was rendered desolate. But common both to its palmy days of grandeur and the macabre picture of desolation, the spectacular setting of rocks, hills and valleys has remained the

same. Long before Hampi became the metropolis of a kingdom, nature had sculpted its contours to make it fit for a citadel. Geology, myths and history have woven so colourful a tapestry around Hampi that far from being forgotten, it reinvigorates itself in our minds with surprising clarity.

The rocks of Hampi are not all raked or silent. Endearing myths, folk-legends, deeds of valour and impeccable skills of craftsmen have draped them in attractive garbs. Scribes and sculptors have etched their message on their hard surface to remind us of the faith and munificence, the valour and sacrifices of people who would have otherwise remained consumed in the silence of time. Here and there they have recorded also about royal expeditions, temple constructions, rest-houses and other public works, of learned men who were honoured with gifts of land, of taxes levied and taxes exempted. These brief intimations of life, fervour and piety are conveyed in unadorned lan-



An inscribed rock from Hampi (top of a page)



Bathing in Queen's Bath,
Hampi in Indo-Saracenic style

cannot miss noticing a squarish building built in the Indo-Saracenic style. It is called the **Queen's Bath**, an unpretentious structure when viewed from the outside. Inside is a small tank meant for bathing and swimming used presumably by ladies of the harem. Around the tank runs an arched corridor with projecting balconies overlooking the pool. The stucco work inside, done in Islamic style, is particularly noteworthy.

In recent years, a good part of the urban sector consisting of the royal enclosure and the Noblemen's Quarters have been exposed by archaeologists. The road

system within the capital converged on the palace complex, guarded by gateways and watchtowers. In spite of almost constant hostilities with neighbouring Muslim kingdoms to the north, Vijayanagara was prosperous. The agricultural prosperity of the countryside, the courtly splendour of its kings, the extensive trade that was being carried on through its numerous ports and its colourful fairs and festivals elicited the admiration of foreign travellers. Scholarly interest in Hampi was kindled as long ago as the thirties of the 19th century largely because of the unusual setting of its ruins in a spectacular landscape, and continues to interest researchers in India and abroad. The UNESCO has recognised Hampi's ruins as a part of the World's Heritage — a recognition which recalls the words of Abdur Razak in 1443: "I saw that it was a city of enormous magnitude and population. The city of Vijayanagara has no equal in the world."



The Royal Seal of Vijayanagara

THE FALL OF HAMPPI

January 1565

"Never perhaps in the history of the world has such havoc been wrought, and wrought suddenly, on so splendid a city, teeming with a wealthy and industrious population in the full plenitude of prosperity one day, and on the next seized, pillaged, and reduced to ruins, amid scenes of savage massacre and horrors begging description."

— R. Sewell, quoting a 16th century traveller in his *A Forgotten Empire* (1900), on the looting and destruction of Hampi by robbers and the victorious Bijapur army



A small dilapidated temple, called the Madhava temple with the octagonal watchtower in the background.



High enclosure walls of the royal centre. Note the cross-section of the tapering wall in which blocks of stone are dexterously laid without any cementing material.



MAPS



Royal Centre
Queen's Bath
Devaraj's Bath

On the way to Hampi from Kamalapur is this squarish building with a water tank in the centre. It is called the Queen's Bath, an unpretentious structure when viewed from outside. Inside, projecting balconies in Indo-Sasanian style overlook the tank, probably used by the ladies of the harem for bathing and swimming.