

Malabar Coins

The introduction of coins is a landmark in the history of civilization and is a great achievement of human race. The development of trade and commerce is not impossible without money. MALABAR, a district of British India, in the Madras Presidency. Geographically the name is sometimes extended to the entire western coast of the peninsula. Properly it should apply to the strip below the Ghats, which is inhabited by people speaking the Malayalam language, a branch of the Dravidian stock, who form a peculiar race, with castes, customs and traditions of their own. It would thus be coextensive with the old kingdom of Chera, including the modern states of Travancore and Cochin, and part of Kanara. In 1901 the total number of persons speaking Malayalam in all India was 6,029,304. The dynasties of Kerala were divided as four territories under the principalities Kannur, Calicut, Cochin and Travancore. The dominance of Cheras can be seen in the Cochin and Malabar region. In the present study the Coinage of the rulers in the region of Cochin and Malabar are taken. The Zamorins or Samoothiris, the most powerful Kingdom of the Malabar coast during the arrival of Portuguese in India, was the hereditary monarch of the kingdom of Kozhikode (Calicut) on the South Malabar region. Coins in circulation in the pre-Portuguese kingdom of Calicut included gold coins called Pagoda/Pratapa, silver Tangas of Gujarat, Coins of Bijapur, Coins of Vijayanagara and the Larines of Persia, Xerafins of Cairo, the Venetian and the Genoan ducats. Other coins in circulation in the kingdom of Calicut included Riyal ("Irayal"), Dirhma ("Drama"), Rupee ("Uruppika"), Rasi ("Rachi"), and Venadu Chakram. Rasi later gave way to the Kaliyuga Rayan Panam. There were two varieties in Kaliyuga Rayan Panam. One of these was afterwards imitated by the Zamorin called Virarayan Putiya Panam, to distinguish it from the coin of Kannur, which then became Pazhaya Panam. The virarayan panams have weight 6.5g for double fanam and 3.2 g weight for single fanam. The Obverse has indistinct form of the sankha shell resembling the Nandipada symbol on the gold coins of Travancore, the device on almost every coin varies. Reverse, it exhibits a transverse bar, sometimes with the end turned up like the letter J, or simply elongated something like a crocodile or saurian; at other times with one or two dependent lines. Above this is always a number of dots arranged in two or three lines over each other. There are some sites where hoard and coins of Viraraya panam