

# THE COINS OF THE CEDED AND CONQUERED PROVINCES OF THE BENGAL PRESIDENCY – SAUGOR ( LATER SAGAR) AND RELATED MINTS

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## Introduction

As stated in preceding papers<sup>1</sup>, the British added further territories to their Bengal Presidency following the third Mahratta war in 1818, and these included the mint at Saugor. The present paper will discuss the entries in the records of the East India Company, held in the British Library (IOR), relating to Saugor and various other mints, and will attempt to combine this information with the associated coins.

## The First British Issues from the Saugor Mint

When the British acquired Saugor in 1818, they found a working mint, with a full work-force, that had been in operation for many years, having been established in 1782/83 (Sambat 1839), although some authorities give 1779, based on Prinsep. As Maheshwari and Wiggins<sup>5</sup> have pointed out, Prinsep seems to have made a mistake about this and actually gave the date as 1782 as well as 1779.

The IOR records contain an entry showing the mint output for several years prior to the British takeover<sup>2</sup>.

Sambat Year (AD)	Value of coins produced (Rs)
1863 (1806/07)	378,888
1864 (1807/08)	400,738
1865 (1808/09)	94,379
1866 (1809/10)	274,384
1867 (1810/11)	148,787
1868 (1811/12)	98,716
1869 (1812/13)	314,405
1870 (1813/14)	167,023
1871 (1814/15)	49,502
1872 (1815/16)	27,662
1873 (1816/17)	39,600

As can be seen from the table above, mintage in the last few years of Maratha rule was very low but the same entry reveals that, in the eight months before the British took over, the output increased to 163,167, presumably as a result of the war and the need for cash to pay the troops. The same entry then shows the mint output for the first few years of British rule.

From 10 <sup>th</sup> to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 1818	62,501
April 1818	93,751
May	61,618
June	82,566
July	92,896
August	71,142
September	51,575
October	43,778
November	82,285
December	73,745
January 1819	22,078
February	21,292
March	29,261
April	17,199
May	21,350

The coin produced at Saugor was called the Saugor Balashahie and was said to contain '80 ruttees of silver and 10 ruttees of alloy'<sup>3</sup>.

The source of the silver was also given:

*'Of about 800,000 rupees coined since the commencement of the British administration, it is calculated that 350,000 rupees have been coined from dollars brought from Calcutta via Benares and melted down here, 50,000 rupees from crude bullion brought from the same direction, 200,000 from Serenuggur rupees melted down, 100,000 from Nagpur rupees and 100,000 from various other rupees in circulation in the district. Benares also formerly supplied the greatest quantity of bullion consumed at this mint.'*

Rupees from many other mints in the area were also in circulation (for modern names see<sup>3a</sup>)

*('Nagpoor, Serenuggur, Jalound, Seronge, Rathguruh, Bhilsah and Gurrah Kotah rupees')*

and the other local mints were given as:

*'Rathguruh, Bhilsah, Bhopal, Seronge, Jhansi, Tirhee, Serenuggur, Punnah, Chutterpore, Eisagurh, and Gurrah Kotah, and the rupees of the under mentioned places mix sufficiently into the general circulation to entitle them to equal consideration in their effect on the currency. Nagpore, Chandah, Sohagepore, Sudhourah, Jalound and Oojain'.*

All of these rupees were of lower quality than the Saugor rupee and this caused some concern to the authorities, who quickly decided that they should introduce the Farrukhabad or Banares rupee into the newly acquired territories. This, they decided, would require the establishment of a new mint but where should this be sited? At least three options were considered, Saugor, Jubblepore and Husingabad (see below for further discussion).

Amongst the earliest entries in the records, referring to the Saugor mint, is a discussion of the salaries paid to the mint employees. At the time that the mint was taken over by the British the salaries were based on the number of coins produced by the mint. Since the mint output had increased, the salaries had also increased and Mr Maddock suggested that the employees should be paid a fixed salary in future. After some discussion this was agreed<sup>4</sup>.

The mint establishment was reported to be

*'One Darogah, one assayer, two weighers, one engraver, two melters, two stampers, and twenty five smiths'. In addition '1 Jemadar and 7 Sebaudars at a monthly salary of 25 rupees per mensem are kept up for the protection of the mint'*

At the same time, Mr Maddock noted that:

*I take the opportunity of noticing a complaint which has been more than once preferred to me by the Darogah. He says that the coinage, greatly increased as it is, would be half again as expensive, but that a mint [that] is working at Gurrah Kotah has imitated the dye of the Saugor rupee and that half as much specie as is monthly coined at Saugor is issued with the same impression at Gurrah Kotah, but being somewhat inferior to the Saugor standard serves to depreciate in character the Saugor currency and from its close resemblance to the rupee of the mint, is productive of much confusion in all mercantile transactions. He requests that the abuse may be rectified.*

There is, therefore, no doubt that the Saugor mint was kept in operation following the British takeover, and that it, thus, falls into the category of a transitional mint, although, by 1819, the output had begun to tail off again. It is also clear that the Saugor rupees were extensively copied, albeit crudely, in a mint at Gurrah Kotah (see below for further discussion).

The coins produced during this time must have been those showing the regnal year 55 of which there are two types recorded by Maheshwari & Wiggins and a quarter rupee is known<sup>5</sup>. Crude examples of these were presumably the output of the Gurrah Kotah mint.



An entry in the records of 1825 contains the following statement<sup>6</sup>:

*...an application has been made to me by one or two of the head shroffs to permit the old mint to remain open till the coinage of the new mint has come into full play. To this application I was led to give a discouraging reply.*

This reveals that the old mint at Saugor remained operational nearly until the new mint was opened in 1825 and this is further confirmed by a quote from Presgrave (eventually Mint Master of the new Saugor mint) who stated in 1833<sup>7</sup>:

*...It does not at first sight appear why the prices of bullion and foreign coins, whose intrinsic values are perfectly known, should thus vary in the Market as compared with the coinage of the Honorable Company but this fluctuation, it is known, does exist and may be exemplified in the Balashy rupee, formerly the Mahratta coinage of this city and continued under the Honorable Company's Government until the opening of the present Saugor mint.*

*The Balashy rupee has been for many years the current coin of this part of the Saugor and Nerbudda territories. The natives therefore have been long accustomed and still continue with few exceptions to make it the medium of all their transactions. It is inferior to the Farruckabad rupee. The difference in intrinsic value may be taken at 10 per cent. It generally however passes for more than its assay value. Sometimes the difference is not more than 4½ or 5 per cent. At others, as during the collection of land revenues, it falls, or rather, the Farruckabad rupee becoming more in demand rises consequently in premium to a difference of 12½ or 13 per cent.*

In addition to the silver coins, there are copper coins known dated RY 55<sup>8</sup>. No entry has been found in the records referring to the issue of copper coins, but it seems likely that these were issued during the British period together with the silver coins.



Copper Pice. Photo from Maheshwari & Wiggins

### Rupee dated 1819

Prinsep was the first to record the fact that the word 'Saugor' was placed on rupees to help prevent forgery but this coin was first fully published by Prashant Kulkarni<sup>9</sup> and the present information should be read in combination with his paper.

Maddock reported in June 1819<sup>10</sup>:

*The Darogah of the mint had frequently complained to me that the Saugor rupee was imitated by that coined at Gurrah Kotah and that this was done so much from system that if any slight alteration was made in the device of the Saugor rupee it was certain to be copied in a few days at the Gurrah Kotah mint. The rupee which was coined there, he stated, was inferior in value to the Saugor one, and therefore as it was almost impossible to distinguish between them, the credit of the*

*Saugor mint, and the value of its coinage, were injuriously affected by this imitation.*

*On my questioning him regarding the inferiority of the rupees coined by him in the present year, to those of older date, he urged in excuse that he could not be answerable for all rupees that were circulated as Saugor ones, for that the Gurrah Kotah rupees passed universally for Saugor rupees, and that it was often difficult even to persons skilled in the examination of money to distinguish them. He ended by desiring that some additional inscription might be made in the dye in characters that would not be understood by the Gurrah Kotah people, and that unless something of this kind were done, he could not be responsible for the Saugor coinage.*

*As I remained in doubt whether this exercise was well grounded or whether the coinage was really deteriorated, I immediately procured 50 rupees coined that morning from the mint, and sent them to Mr Newnham to request he would procure them to be assayed. He forwarded them to the Accountant General conceiving that the point would be best ascertained in Calcutta.*

*I thought it impossible to allow the operations of the mint to go on, while the Darogah disavowed his own responsibility and that it was necessary either to shut up the mint or comply with his request respecting an additional inscription. I was told that it would be likely to alarm and distress the shroffs if the mint was closed. I therefore gave up that idea and directed to be inserted on the rupee in very small characters on one side the word "Saugor" in English and the year of our Lord on the reverse. I at the same time requested Captain Stewart to procure directions to be sent to Gurrah Kotah to prevent any further attempts at imitation. Although there are several objections to be made to an innovation in the appearance of the coin, they were perhaps less than what might have been urged against shutting up the mint, and what I have done on the occasion will, I trust, be approved by His Lordship. I am of opinion however that a mint such as Saugor, the superintendence of which is in the hands of a native officer, can be expected to show a proper degree of regularity under this Government. Formerly the whole business of coining was introduced between the shroffs and the Darogah, and the Government scarcely interfered in their transactions. The Darogah and all his establishment were paid a percentage on the coinage and could not be called the servants of Government. Now they receive regular salaries, and though their responsibility is not diminished, they feel much less interest in their own operations than formerly.*

*Were it not that the Gurrah Kotah rupees would continue to pass for Saugor ones, and that a deteriorated coin would thus be forced into circulation, I should consider it advantageous to stop the present coining at Saugor, whether a mint on an amended principle may be established here or not. Indeed if the examination of the rupees that have been sent down to Calcutta proves them to be inferior to the former standard of the mint, I shall be obliged to have recourse to that measure and probably to dismiss from office the greater part of the persons employed in the establishment.*

Thus, it is clear that we can assign the very rare coins with the word Saugor and the date 1819, to this event.



## Sohagpur Mint

When the British acquired the new territories in 1818, as well as Saugor, mints were operating at Sohagpur and Jubblepur. The mint at Jubblepur was closed immediately and no coins appear to have been issued whilst the mint was under their control. However, the mint at Sohagpur continued to function for a time and a small number of coins were issued during this time<sup>11</sup>:

*I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 26<sup>th</sup> December and to subjoin such replies as I am able to furnish to the queries contained in it.*

*1<sup>st</sup>. There is at present no mint in the districts under my superintendence. There were formerly two, Viz. one at Jubbulpoor and the other at Sohagpoor in the Duchunteer or Southern Valley of the Nerbudda. The mint at Jubbulpoor was suppressed immediately after the transfer of the district to the British Government; that at Sohagpoor was suppressed by me some months ago.*

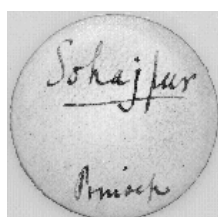
*2. The coin which was struck at the Sohagpur mint is denominated the Sohagpoor rupee. Its gross weight and fineness is said to vary, but I could not understand the explanations which I received on this point. The coin is an exceedingly debased one, and the establishment of the mint appears to have been on a most objectionable footing in every respect.*

*4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>. I subjoin also a statement of the monthly coinage at the Sohagpur mint during six months of the present Mahratta year of account commencing with the first Shaboon, corresponding with the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1818. I have not obtained any account of the coinage of preceding years, but I suppose that this is not of much importance as the mint has been suppressed. The coinage has probably been considerably less in that portion of the present year during which the mint was in operation, than in the corresponding months of some years previous, owing to the disturbed state of the country before the commencement of the campaign in the hills.*

Month	Coinage
Shaboon	15,857
Rumzan	12,438
Shawal	4,728
Zeekaad	4,551
Zilhig	8,877
Moohurrun	9,129

*10<sup>th</sup>. The Sohagpur rupee is current in the Duchunteer and in the Western Pergunnahs of that district. It is the principal currency and the revenue is at present paid in it.*

Prinsep identified coins emanating from Sohagpur and these are currently in the British Museum (shown below with a photo of Prinsep's ticket – kindly provided by Shailendra Bhandare with the permission of Joe Cribb)



## Ajmir Mint

There had been a Mughal mint at Ajmir since the time of Akbar and this continued to operate under the Marathas<sup>12</sup>.

Several entries in the records refer to the possibility of opening a mint at Ajmer, initially in 1818<sup>13</sup>, and in 1819 the Calcutta Mint Committee went so far as to recommend that a mint should temporarily be established at Ajmir<sup>14</sup>. Although the Bengal Government agreed with this suggestion, they postponed making a final decision<sup>15</sup>, and this never appears to have taken place.

## The New Mint at Saugor

In 1819, the Calcutta Mint Committee reviewed the information that had been collected and proposed an overall strategy for the coinage of the territories outside of Bengal<sup>16</sup>:

*1<sup>st</sup> the abolition of the Benaras rupee*

*2<sup>nd</sup> The limitation of the currency of the Upper Provinces to a rupee of the value of the present Farruckabad rupee*

*3<sup>rd</sup> The carrying into effect the alteration of the standard of that rupee as already sanctioned.*

*4<sup>th</sup> The discontinuance of the mint at Farruckabad*

*5<sup>th</sup> The coinage of the new Farruckabad rupee at the Benaras mint and consequent improvement and extension of that establishment. Should these arrangements meet with the approbation of Government, we conceive it would be found advantageous to give them as early effect as possible, as the difference of standard at present existing and the distant situation to which bullion is necessarily sent to be coined into Farruckabad rupees, entail much inconvenience and expense on the remittance of treasure to the Upper Provinces on public account. Their enforcement is not indispensably connected with the following propositions, which do not perhaps admit of so early a decision.*

*6<sup>th</sup> The substitution of the new Farruckabad rupee for the currencies of the newly acquired territory*

*7<sup>th</sup> and the temporary establishment of a mint in Ajmer and one at Saugor to convert the present currencies into that improved coin.*

The Bengal Government approved most of these recommendations and in 1820 confirmed the plan to build a new mint at Saugor<sup>17</sup>. At the same time they stipulated that this new mint should be capable of producing between 20,000 and 25,000 rupees per day and that Captain Presgrave of the 26<sup>th</sup> Native Infantry should become the Assay Master on an allowance of 600 rupees per month (in addition to his military pay). Henceforth, Presgrave was the key driving force in establishing and operating the new Saugor mint. His first job was to build the necessary machinery and he was sent to the Calcutta mint to undertake this task. However, the Calcutta Mint Master (Saunders) was not able to help very much because he had limited room in the Calcutta mint and all of his mechanics were fully occupied in repairing the machinery of that mint. Saunders therefore suggested that Presgrave should look for a company in Calcutta who could manufacture the machinery at an estimated cost of less than Rs 10,561. Presgrave duly approached Messrs Kyds and Co. and Messrs Calman and Co. for estimates for building the required machinery<sup>18</sup>. They both submitted estimates (Kyds for Rs 12,000, later reduced to Rs 9930, and Calman for Rs 8570) and Messrs Calman and Co were selected<sup>19</sup>.

Having got the machinery under way, Presgrave next turned his attention to the mint building itself. He considered the existing mint building at Saugor to be totally unfit for the purpose and presented his own plans for a new building. Although the plan itself is not contained in the records, Presgrave wrote a very full description that gives a good idea of what the mint would have been like<sup>20</sup>:

*References to the plan of the Saugor mint*

*The chimnies a. a. a. of the melting room furnaces are to be independent of the walls of the rooms, though placed close to them. They are to be 5 feet square at the bottom and to be*

carried up tapering to a height of 32 feet. The spaces for the flues to be one foot square within and of the same area from the bottom to the top. An arched opening one foot square to be left in three sides of each chimney at the distance of four feet from the ground, that thereafter three furnaces may be attached to each chimney.

The chimnies b. b. and bases for the annealing furnaces, to be built as in the plan up to the level of the floor of the rolling mill rooms, and the two hollow spaces to be filled in with rubble. On these will afterwards be built the furnaces. The chimnies are from this floor to be carried up tapering to the height of 25 feet, the flues to be one foot square within and of the same area throughout. An arched hole of 1 foot square to be left in the side (towards the room) of each chimney at the height of 30 inches from the floor. The space c. between the base of the furnaces to be arched over, leaving an open communication between the capstan rooms below, though perfectly level with the floors of the laminating rooms above. The beams to be laid exactly as in the plan of the floor. No other distance will answer for the admission of the vertical wheels or the machinery they are to receive. The floor to be boarded with stout planks. The doorways d. d. d. towards the mint yard and outer veranda, to have iron bars fixed in them, that the men who work at the capstan may have a free circulation of air though, at the same time, they can have no thoroughfare into the mint, the entrance to the capstan rooms being by the outer doors e. e. e. The door f. to be the only communication from the laminating rooms (above) to the mint by the means of stairs of either wood or masonry.

The walls of the (lower or) capstan rooms to be built up 9 feet, when the beams (which are one foot thick) are to be placed on the walls. The walls of the laminating rooms (above) to be 12 feet high. No wall or partition to be built between the laminating rooms, the whole to be open from one end to the other, which will give a space of 62 feet by 30 for the accommodation of the rolling mills, annealing furnaces, cutting presses and shear blocks.

All the spaces towards the veranda and marked across with a single line, to be arched over as doorways but they are afterwards to be closed up with masonry. The advantage of this will be that they may be opened at any future period, should circumstances require it, without injury to the buildings. It may be found advantageous to fill them up with open work for the purposes of ventilation.

All the doorways to the interior of the mint and those not marked across with a single line should have strong doorways and doors.

The outer veranda to consist of nicely squared posts with a strong plate of timber on their tops to support the burgahs on which the tiles are to be laid.

The burgahs to be placed so close that a large square flat tile (generally 1 foot square) may reach from the centre of one to that of the other. Two layers of tiles set in good line to form the roof of these verandas, which are to be enclosed between the posts with strong wooden lattice or rail work, and to be afterwards divided off with kutchha brick partitions into offices or store rooms as necessity may suggest.

None of the floors to be made of pukka work excepting those of the two wings in the front of the building, Viz Mint Master's and Assay Master's offices.

Presgrave estimated that the cost of this would be about Rs 25,000, and with some modifications, notably to strengthen the building, this plan was accepted. The building was proposed to be sighted at

*'a spot near where the old and new sheer Mow roads cross each other, about a mile to the south of Mr Maddock's house'*<sup>21</sup>

Things started to become a little more difficult after this. First of all, the Banares mint found that it desperately needed new laminating machines and asked if they could appropriate the machinery that had just been built for the Saugor mint. This was

authorised and further machinery had to be built for Saugor. This seems to have been undertaken by another company called Jessop & Co. because they informed the Calcutta Mint Committee in 1821 that the machinery had been ready for some time and requested that it should be moved to the mint<sup>22</sup>.

The second delay was caused by the length of time it took to build the mint building itself.

In view of these delays Presgrave, in 1821, was assigned to the vacant position of Assay Master at the Farrukhabad mint<sup>23</sup> and he asked if he could take a number of articles prepared for use at Saugor, with him, by boat, to his new job<sup>24</sup>. These items were listed as:

2 large assay furnaces  
50 Europe fire bricks  
Assay beam and scales  
Glazed box for scales  
Two cases for assays  
Two iron trays for assays  
Anvil, tongs, pokers etc  
One new cutting machine  
One milling table  
Cupel moulds

At last, in 1824 the Collector of Farrukhabad, who was in charge of the mint at that time, was ordered to shut the mint at Farrukhabad and to let Presgrave chose whatever machinery he needed to take with him to Saugor<sup>25</sup>.

The new mint at Saugor opened in 1825 with the following establishment<sup>26</sup>:

Role	Cost
Two English Writers	80
General Superintendent	100
Jumma Khurch Nuwers	20
Wassil Bakee Nuwers	20
Import and Export Bullion Accountant	20
Cash Keeper	50
Mutsuddee	10
Superintendent of Presses	20
Mutsuddee	10
Superintendent of Refiners	20
Mutsuddee	10
Superintendent of Laminating Room and Rollers	20
Mutsuddee	10
Superintendent of Dross Spillings etc	20
Mutsuddee	10
Superintendent of Milling	20
Mutsuddee	10
Superintendent of Coins	20
Mutsuddee	10
Superintendent of Artificers and Mistrus	20
Mutsuddee	10
Superintendent of materials such as iron, wood, charcoal	20
Mutsuddee	10
Superintendent of Annealing furnaces	20
Mutsuddee	10
Besides the above a due proportion of carpenters, blacksmiths, bhustees and lascars estimated at	130
Foreman	
Assistant foreman	50
	750

The coins produced were Farrukhabad rupees that can be distinguished from those produced at the other mints (Banares, Farrukhabad and Calcutta) by the absence of privy marks (see Pridmore).

Originally Presgrave had been appointed to the position of Assay Master at the Saugor mint, and the Agent to the Governor General was to be the Mint Master. However, when Presgrave

eventually arrived he found himself both Mint Master and Assay Master mainly because no one else knew anything about the operation of the mint<sup>27</sup>.

In 1826 the production of copper pice at the Saugor mint was approved.

The first copper coins may have been the rather crude 'Ek Pai Sikka' coins first described by Kulkarni<sup>28</sup>, although these may have been struck in the old Saugor mint.



The coins have on the obverse a Persian inscription *Sanah julus 45 Shah Alam Badshah* with a trisul in the *seen* of *julus*. On the reverse is the legend *Ek Pai Sa (or Sata) Masa* (= This coin weighs seven Mashas).

Later copper pice were struck with much greater skill (see below). An entry in the records dated 1833 gives the output of copper from the various Bengal Presidency mints, including Saugor<sup>29</sup>

*Number of Pice Produced in Rupee Value*

	Calcutta	Banares	Saugor
1813 to 1825,6	587,785		
1815 to 1820		593,657	
1820 to 1823		253,320	
1823 to 1826		89,000	
1826/27		74,161	
1827/28		214,267	6898
1828/29	105,192	78,336	
1829/30	170,200	85,399	82,700
1830/31	402,116		40,828
1831/32	567,416		73,207
1832/33	268,976		79,755

### Closure of the Saugor Mint

In 1828 the Bengal Government issued a resolution that the Saugor mint should be abolished<sup>30</sup>.

*Resolved the mint of Saugor be abolished and that the establishment attached to it be discharged.*

*Ordered that the Agent to the Governor General in the Saugor and Nerbudda territories be directed to remit to the Benaras mint any bullion or uncurrent coin which may be in balance in the Saugor mint, and to send to Benaras such part of the machinery as, on communication with the Mint Master at that place, it may appear to be useful to transfer.*

*Mr Maddock will at the same time be instructed to report in what manner it may appear to him expedient to dispose of the buildings and such part of the machinery and stores belonging to the Saugor mint as cannot be advantageously transferred to Benares.*

*Ordered also that the above resolution be communicated to the accountant General that he may submit to Government any observations or suggestions relative to the business of the treasuries in the Saugor and Nerbudda territories which it may appear necessary or useful to submit with reference to the abolition of the mint.*

But this closure was postponed soon afterwards<sup>31</sup>.

An interesting problem arose a little later in 1828 when Presgrave was promoted to the rank of Major. It appears that the regulations did not allow anyone above the rank of captain to be

employed in the mint, but since nobody else could be found to replace Presgrave and since the mint was on the point of being closed, the Governor General passed a special resolution to allow him to continue in the job<sup>32</sup>. The authorities then became worried about what would happen if he was promoted further<sup>33</sup>

*...With respect to the prospect of Major Presgrave's promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, the Vice President in Council deems it unnecessary to anticipate what may be determined on that occasion.*

In 1830 the Mint Committee again agreed that the mint could be closed and at the same time the output of the mint, both on behalf of Government and on behalf of individuals, was published<sup>34</sup>.

*Statement of Coinage (and Charges) from 1825/26 to 1829/30 of the Saugor Mint*

Year	Honble Company's Coinage	Indl's Coinage
1825/26	114,089	11,450
1826/27	438,419	41,477
1827/28	72,403	750,959
1828/29	13,966	535,538
1829/30	102,097	575,679
	740,974	1,921,103

This was followed in 1831 by an instruction to the Agent to the Governor General in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories to close the mint<sup>35</sup> but again this was overturned and it was agreed that the mint should stay open until 1<sup>st</sup> May 1833<sup>36</sup>. In fact the mint stayed open until later in 1835, by which time the new steam powered mint at Calcutta had come into full operation. The machinery was disposed of in early 1836 and the dies were defaced and sent to Calcutta<sup>36b</sup>.

### Impact of Nagpur rupee

The activities and problems of the Nagpur mint have been investigated in some detail by Kulkarni<sup>37</sup>, and entries in the records of the EIC held in the British Library also refer to the problems that the authorities were having with the poor quality of the rupees produced at Nagpur. This was all the more annoying for them because the Nagpur mint was under the control of the British Resident (and this begs the question of whether or not Nagpur should be considered a transitional mint, like Delhi). Kulkarni published papers revealing that one proposed solution to the problem was to strike Nagpur rupees at the Saugor mint, although the authors of the papers were unsure whether or not this had actually been carried into effect. Entries in the records of the British Library reveal that, in 1826, the mint at Saugor was instructed to coin 14 anna pieces, which would equate to the Nagpur rupees, but by 1832 this order had not been put into effect<sup>38</sup>. The Calcutta authorities did not agree with the view that this should now happen (in 1832) and informed Saugor that the original order should continue to be suspended<sup>39</sup>. So it would appear that Nagpur rupees (or their equivalents) were never minted at Saugor and that the authorities relied on their ability to produce sufficient Farrukhabad rupees to drive the Nagpur rupees out of circulation. Eventually the problem was solved by closing the Nagpur mint, but not until 1854, and even then the Nagpur rupees proved so popular that they commanded a premium over other types of rupees, leading to a substantial problem of forgery<sup>40</sup>

### Coins Produced at the new mint

Pridmore has catalogued the coins produced at the new Saugor mint.

### Silver

The only silver coin that was recorded by Pridmore was the rupee denomination. However, in 1831, Presgrave requested that further dies should be sent from Calcutta for 'rupees, four annas and eight

anna pieces', a requested that he repeated later in the year<sup>41</sup>. This appears to show that half and quarter rupees were struck at Saugor, although none have been identified.



### Copper

The earliest copper coins issued from the new mint appear to be the rather crude type described above although these may have been issued from the old mint. Later issues gradually improved in quality until the last issues, which are of such high quality that Pridmore considers that the dies must have been produced at Calcutta. However, this seems unlikely because the Calcutta authorities did not appear to know very much about Saugor pice when they wrote to Presgrave asking him to identify any Saugor pice amongst 6 that they sent<sup>42</sup>. He replied in May 1835<sup>43</sup>:

*I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> April and for the information of the Mint Committee to inform you that of the five specimens of pice only one (No. 4) is of the coinage of the Saugor Mint. The remaining are, three of the Benares Mint and one a forgery upon the Benares coinage.*

	Grains	
No.1	95.25	37 sun
No.2	94.7	37 sun
No.3	95.5	37 sun
No.5	96.4	37 sun
No.6	98.6	Sun 45, A Saugor Pice

*The above pice I have returned with this letter I have enclosed three specimens of the copper coinage of Saugor Viz*

- No.6 *First Coinage. From 1826 to April 1833 bearing sun 45 and the Tirsoolee on both sides of the coin*
- No.7 *Coinage of 7 months in 1833 bearing 45 sun. On these the tirsoolee is only on one side of the pice*
- No.8 *The last coinage. 200 maunds of copper sanctioned by Government after the coinage had been discontinued*

*The pice bear no private mark but are known and easily recognized by their general appearance. All Saugor pice bear the sun 45. The same is borne by the Farrukhabad rupees, whilst all the pice coined at Benares and, I believe, in Calcutta too, bear sun 37.*

*It may not be out of place here to state that a most extensive and barefacedly open manufacture of almost all kinds of copper pice has been carried on for the last 20 years or more at Nagoud, a town in the Rewah country, also in various other villages in that neighbourhood and in Boondilkhund.*

*In consequence of the appearance of base pice intended for circulation as Saugor Mint pice, I was not unsuccessful in discovering four shops (at Nagoud) and several coiners, some of whose dies were seized.*

*The profession of the proprietors of these shops is to coin 'Bissennaut' pice', that is Rewah pice which they did by authority of the Raja. However, under this blind they have carried on for years a far more lucrative manufacture, that of forging all kinds of pice. This manufacture is not limited to the town and neighbourhood of Nagoud, although the term Nagoudia is applied to all spurious coins whether gold, silver*

*or copper in this part of India. The name arises from the fame of the particular place for the manufacture of base coin.*

*So long as the petty Rajahs of the surrounding states are permitted to have mints and strike their own coin, encouragement will be afforded to the fabrication of base money.*

*The system, amongst the petty Rajahs, is to have an enclosed piece of ground containing houses for the accomodation of coiners. Within this enclosure, any, and as many, people who will pay two rupees a month for every anvil they employ, may live and work at making pice for any merchant who may bring copper and pay them for their labour, an understanding existing between the Rajah (who does not trouble himself about what is coined) and the coiners, that if any of the latter are traced out as forgers and application is made for them by the British authorities, the Rajah will not protect but deliver them up. At the same time he will himself offer them no molestation or hinderance, they, with their risk before them, taking their own precautionary measures to avoid detection by strangers. In this way they coin for merchants the Rajah's pice openly and in the day, whilst the fabrication of pice requiring circumspection is carried on away from public observation and during the night.*

*I beg to enclose specimens of some of the forgeries that have been practiced upon the Benares and Saugor mint*



From the information contained above, Pridmore identified three varieties of pice, which can be distinguished by the symbol in the seen of julus on the obverse:



### Acknowledgements

I would particularly like to thank Jan Lingen and Shailendra Bhandare for their help in the preparation of this paper

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- <sup>2</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 21. 10<sup>th</sup> June 1819.  
From JH Maddock (Assistant to the Agent to the Governor General at Saugor) to the Calcutta Mint Committee, dated 10<sup>th</sup> June 1819.
- <sup>3</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 21. 10<sup>th</sup> June 1819.  
From JH Maddock (Assistant to the Agent to the Governor General at Saugor) to the Calcutta Mint Committee, dated 10<sup>th</sup> June 1819.
- <sup>3a</sup> Serenuggar = Srinagar in Bundelkhand; Nagpoor = Nagpur; Jalound = Jaloun; Seronge = Sironj; Rathgarh = Rathgarh (Daulatgarh on coins); Bhilsah = Bilsa (now Vidisha); Gurrah Kotah = Garhakotha; Tirhee = Tehri; Punnah = Panna; Chutterpore = Chhatarpur; Eisagarh = Isagarh; Jubblepure = Jabalpur; Husingabad = Hoshangabad
- <sup>4</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 22, 4<sup>th</sup> December 1818.
- <sup>5</sup> Maheshwari & Wiggins, (1989), Maratha Mints and Coinage, Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies
- <sup>6</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/76, No 223. 19<sup>th</sup> January 1826.  
From Stirling to Wilder, 10<sup>th</sup> August 1825
- <sup>7</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/48, 29<sup>th</sup> March 1833, No 8. 5<sup>th</sup> February 1833. Presgrave (at Saugor) to Bentinck.
- <sup>8</sup> Maheshwari & Wiggins, cited above
- <sup>9</sup> Kulkarni P, (1988/89), Numismatic Digest vol 12/13 pp119-122



- <sup>10</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 23. 12<sup>th</sup> June 1819.  
Letter to Government from J H Maddock (Assistant to the Agent of the Governor General), 12<sup>th</sup> June 1819.
- <sup>11</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 20.  
From CA Malony (Commissioner on the Nerbudda) to Calcutta Mint Committee, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1819
- <sup>12</sup> See Maheshwari and Wiggins cited above
- <sup>13</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 22, 4<sup>th</sup> December 1818. To Government from Ochterlony (Resident of Rajputana) 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct 1818.
- <sup>14</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 18. 26<sup>th</sup> July 1819.  
Letter to Government from Calcutta Mint Committee dated 26<sup>th</sup> July 1819.
- <sup>15</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 33. 10<sup>th</sup> September 1819. To the Calcutta Mint Committee from Government, dated 10<sup>th</sup> September 1819.
- <sup>16</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 18. 26<sup>th</sup> July 1819.  
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- <sup>17</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 69. 25<sup>th</sup> January 1820.  
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- <sup>18</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 76. 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1820.
- <sup>19</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 81. 14<sup>th</sup> March 1820.  
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- <sup>20</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 125. 1<sup>st</sup> June 1820.  
Letter from Presgrave (Assay Master at Saugor) to Calcutta Mint Committee, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1820.
- <sup>21</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/71, No 126. 26<sup>th</sup> June 1820.  
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- <sup>25</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/74, No 220. 30<sup>th</sup> April 1824.  
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- <sup>28</sup> Kulkarni P, Spink's Numismatic Circular, March 1985, p40
- <sup>29</sup> Bengal Consultations. IOR P/162/82, August No 11. 16<sup>th</sup> August 1833.  
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- <sup>37</sup> Kulkarni P., (1990), Coinage of the Bhonsla Rajas of Nagpur, Indian Coin Society, Nagpur, Bombay
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- <sup>40</sup> See Kulkarni, (1990), cited above
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