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EDWARD MOCKLER 1842-1927

(19th century British army officer and diplomat who contributed to the study of Balochi and Balochistan)

by Agnes KORN & Elaine ZAIR

Edward Mockler
(unknown painter, before 1889; private collection)

Life

Edward Mockler was born 18 September 1842 at Belgaum (present-day Belagavi in Karnataka) in India. His father, also called Edward (1810-1887), was a Surgeon-

Major in the East India Company's Army. His mother, Ann Sarah Pritchard, died in 1845, and Edward Mockler sen. married Julia Ferryman in 1851. One of their children was Augustus Ferryman Mockler-Ferryman (1856-1930), who became an officer in the British army in West Africa and published extensively on the region.

Edward Mockler himself followed his father into the Bombay Army (successor to the East India Company's Army) in 1859. From 1866 onwards, he was used in more of a political capacity, starting with a post in Aden, an important port on the Red Sea (now Yemen) as assistant to the Political resident Colonel William Merewether (1825-1880), while the latter took part in the advance party for the punitive expedition to Abyssinia (1868). During the expedition, Mockler was in charge of relations with the Chiefs of the local tribes at Zoulla (Zula, a port on the coast in Eritrea) in order to keep communication and supply lines open (*Times*, 26 Oct. 1867 p. 6; 18 Dec. 1867 p. 4; 1 July 1868 p. 5).

Since 1873, Mockler was employed on the Makran Coast of Balochistan, which at the time was a division of the Kalat State, itself under the jurisdiction of the Baluchistan Agency (*Imp.Gaz.* XVII: 44f.), and in 1879 he became Assistant to the Governor General's Agent for Baluchistan.

Throughout the 1880s, Mockler was again engaged in diplomatic missions in the Gulf region, on the one hand in Basra, which became the capital of a *vilayet* of the Ottoman Empire in 1884 (*Enc.Brit.* III: 193), but also Political Agent in Muscat, the capital of Oman, which at the time was informally part of British India (ONLEY 2005: 30f.).

Returning from a leave in England, Mockler became Political Resident / Consul General in Turkish Arabia (i.e. the Ottoman provinces of Baghdad and Basra, ONLEY 2005: 37) in 1892, a post he held until his retirement (all dates from *India List* 1905: 568).

In Baghdad's small community of some 50 Europeans (SCHWANITZ 2009: 2), Mockler must have been a prominent member. The German diplomat and orientalist Max VON OPPENHEIM (1860-1946) provides the following description (1900: 259): "During my time there, the British Consul General undoubtedly played the most important role among the representatives of the European powers; the holder of the post at that time was Colonel Edward Mockler." The post depended on the British embassy in Constantinople and on the government of British India at the same time, so Mockler "receives a substantial income from both sides. He lives in one of the stateliest houses near to the river and commands a guard of 15 Indian sepoys, and a vessel that belongs to the Indian navy and has a crew of some 60 men." The prestige awarded to this post, comments VON OPPENHEIM, helped British political and trading interests in the region in preeminent fashion.

In 1884 Edward married Sarah, daughter of Colonel Edward Ross (Consul General in Persia, a post responsible for British interests in the whole Gulf region, ONLEY 2005: 30). They had six children, three of whom were born at Bushire (Bushehr) in Persia between 1885 and 1888. Edward retired in 1898 with the rank of Major General, and died 4 March 1927 in Guernsey in the Channel Islands.

Academic interests

During his time in posting in Balochistan, Edward Mockler took an interest in the archaeology and history of the region and published two articles in *JRAS* 1876, (discussing potentially old remains of settlements in the region, and noting the find of an Arsacid coin) and 1879 (suggesting relations between places mentioned in Greek sources and contemporary settlements).

At the same time, he also researched and wrote a grammar of Balochi (*A Grammar of the Baloochee Language*, dedicated to Col. Merewether, who in the meantime had become Commissioner in Sindh).

This grammar, treating the Southern Balochi (Coastal) dialect of Makran, is in all aspects a pioneering work. Mockler mentions two manuals of Eastern Balochi being accessible to him, which he used for dialectal comparisons (cf. p. 1), but these cannot have provided a model for his grammar (GLADSTONE 1874 presents a rather rudimentary sketch of grammar on a mere five pages).

Obviously building on his own investigations, then, Mockler presents a concise grammar, which nonetheless discusses a noteworthy breadth of patterns and situations, including some that are not easily found in later and more extensive works. These include e.g. the combination – excluded in some other dialects of Balochi – of the "indefinite article" *-ē* with case endings, the former noteworthily preceding the latter (p. 10f.); imperatives with *bil (ki) ...* lit. 'let X do...' (p.53f.); competing passive constructions (p. 88f.); subjects of verbs such as "laugh", "cry" being in the oblique in the past domain (p. 20f.), and the imperfective prefix *a-* (which some later works mistook as merely being an epenthetic vowel).

His terminology is of course not the one employed nowadays, so some previous knowledge of Balochi helps to make full use of the multitude of interesting and linguistically very relevant details. For instance, the pronominal clitics (called "pronominal postpositions") in agent function in an ergative construction are treated as the normal case, i.e. even when an overt agent is present, thus assuming functions of verbal agreement; they are affixed either to the patient, the non-verbal element of a complex predicate, or else to the verb itself (p. 35f.).

Mockler's approach is more comprehensive than that of others in his also noting patterns that are not possible (the crucial difference between not mentioning something and saying that it does not exist, a type of information often absent), such as the reflexive pronoun being inflectable in the singular only (p. 40), as well as his lack of data on certain points, e.g. the pronominal clitics of the 1st and 2nd person not being frequent enough in his data to make sure they are employed in the same way as those of the 3rd person (p.37f.).

Combining knowledge of the classical languages with a considerable amount of intuition and surely much hard work, Mockler's grammar matches VON OPPENHEIM's description (1900: 259) of the British Consuls General in Baghdad, always being officers and magistrates who over the years became well acquainted with the region and its inhabitants. "Nearly all of them have rendered outstanding services to scholarship by their own works and the promotion of the research of their compatriots".

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