



MOCKLER, EDWARD

MOCKLER, EDWARD (1842-1927), British army officer and diplomat who contributed to the study of [Baluchi](#) and [Baluchistan](#) ([Figure 1](#)).

Life. Edward Mockler was born on 18 September 1842 at Belgaum (present-day Belagavi in Karnataka) in India. His father, Edward Mockler Sr. (1810-1887), was a Surgeon Major in the [East India Company](#) Army. His mother, Ann Sarah Pritchard, died in 1845, and Edward Mockler Sr. 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 in 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 (*The Times*, 26 October 1867, p. 6; 18 December 1867, p. 4; 1 July 1868, p. 5).

From 1873, Mockler was employed on the Makrān coast of Baluchistan, which at the time was a division of the Kalāt State, itself under the jurisdiction of the Baluchistan Agency (*Imperial Gazetteer of India* XVII, pp. 44-45). 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 (*Encyclopedia Britannica* III, p. 193), but also Political Agent in Muscat, the capital of Oman, which at the time was “informally” part of British India (Onley, pp. 30-31).

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, p. 37) in 1892, a post he held until his retirement (unless otherwise mentioned all dates are from the *India List*, p. 568).

In Baghdad's small community of some 50 Europeans (Schwanitz, p. 2), Mockler must have been a prominent member. The German diplomat and orientalist Max von Oppenheim (1860-1946) provides the following description: “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” (von Oppenheim, p. 259). 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 sepoy, and a vessel that belongs to the Indian navy and has a crew of some 60 men” (von Oppenheim, p. 259). The prestige awarded to this post, comments von Oppenheim, helped British political and trading interests in the region in preeminent fashion.

In 1884 Mockler married Sarah, daughter of Colonel Edward Ross (Consul General in Persia, a post responsible for British interests in the entire Gulf region; Onley, p. 30). They had six children, three of whom were born at [Bušehr](#) in Persia between 1885 and 1888. Mockler retired in 1898 with the rank of Major General, and died 4 March 1927 in Guernsey in the Channel Islands.

Academic interests. During his posting to Baluchistan, Edward Mockler took an interest in the archaeology and history of the region and published three articles, discussing potentially old remains of settlements in the region, and noting the find of an [Arsacid](#) coin (1876), suggesting relations between places mentioned in Greek sources and contemporary settlements (1879), and on



various theories about the ethnic origin of the Baluch.

At the same time, he also researched and wrote a grammar of Baluchi (1877), dedicated to Merewether, who in the meantime had become Commissioner in Sindh. This grammar, treating the Southern Baluchi (Coastal) dialect of Makrān, is in all aspects a pioneering work. Mockler mentions two manuals of Eastern Baluchi being accessible to him; he used these for dialectal comparisons (cf. p. 1), but they cannot have provided a model for his own grammar (Gladstone presents a rather rudimentary grammatical sketch of a mere five pages).

Obviously building on his own first hand 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, among others, the combination (excluded in some other dialects of Baluchi) of the “indefinite article” *-ē* with case endings, the former note-worthily preceding the latter (pp. 10-11); imperatives with *bil (ki)*... (lit. “let X do...”; pp. 53-54); competing passive constructions (pp. 88-89); subjects of verbs such as “laugh,” “cry” being in the oblique in the past domain (pp. 20-21), 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, and therefore some prior knowledge of Baluchi helps to make full use of the multitude of interesting and linguistically pertinent details. For instance, the pronominal clitics (called “pronominal postpositions”) in agent function in an ergative construction are treated as the normal pattern, 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 (pp. 35-36).

Mockler’s approach is also more comprehensive than that of others for he also notes patterns that are impossible (there is a 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); and he notes 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 ascertain whether they are employed in the same way as those of the 3rd person (pp. 37-38).



Combining knowledge of the classical languages with a considerable amount of intuition and undoubtedly much hard work, Mockler's grammar is in line with von Oppenheim's description of the British Consuls General in Baghdad as 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" (von Oppenheim, p. 259).

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