

## I: EMINENT EPIGRAPHISTS: GEORGE BUHLER

Bühler was born to Rev. Johann G. Bühler in Borstel, Hanover, attended grammar school in Hanover, where he mastered Greek and Latin, then university as a student of theology and philosophy at Göttingen, where he studied classical philology, Sanskrit, Zend, Persian, Armenian, and Arabic. In 1858 he received his doctorate in eastern languages and archaeology; his thesis explored the suffix *-tês* in Greek grammar. That same year he went to Paris to study Sanskrit manuscripts, and in 1859 onwards to London, where he remained until October 1862. This time was used mainly for the study of the Vedic manuscripts at the India Office and the Bodleian Library at Oxford University. While in England, Bühler was first a private teacher and later (from May 1861) assistant to the Queen's librarian in Windsor Castle.

In Fall 1862 Bühler was appointed assistant at the Göttingen library; he moved there in October. While settling in, he received an invitation via Prof. Max Müller to join the Benares Sanskrit College in India. Before this could be settled, he also received (again via Prof. Müller) an offer of Professor of Oriental Languages at the Elphinstone College, Bombay (now Mumbai). Bühler responded immediately and arrived on February 10, 1863, in Bombay. Noted Sanskrit and legal scholar Kashinath Trimbak Telang was then a student at the college. In the next year Bühler became a Fellow of Bombay University and member of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. He was to remain in India until 1880. During this time he collected a remarkable number of texts for the Indian government and the libraries of Berlin, Cambridge University, and Oxford University.

In the year 1878 he published his translations of the *Paiyalachchhi*, the oldest Prakrit dictionary, with glossary and translation. He also took responsibility for the translation of the *Apastamba, Dharmasutra* etc. in Professor Max Müller's monumental compilation and translation, the *Sacred Books of the East*, vols. 2, 14, and 25.

On 8 April 1898 Bühler drowned in Lake Constance, under somewhat mysterious circumstances. Contemporary accounts mostly attributed it to an accident, but it has been speculated that it was a suicide motivated by Bühler's connections to a scandal involving his former student Alois Anton Führer.

\*\*\*\*\*

## II: JAMES BURGESS

Burgess was born on 14 August 1832 in Kirkmahoe, Dumfriesshire. He was educated at Dumfries and then the University of Glasgow and the University of Edinburgh. He did educational work in Calcutta, 1856 and Bombay, 1861, and was Secretary of the Bombay Geographical Society 1868-73. He was Head of the Archaeological Survey, Western India, 1873, and of South India, 1881. From 1886-89 he was Director General, Archaeological Survey of India. In 1881 the University of Edinburgh awarded him an honorary Doctor of Letters (LLD). He retired to Edinburgh around 1892.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1894. He won its Keith Medal for 1897-99, and served as their Vice President 1908 to 1914. He died on 3 October 1916, at 22 Seton Place in Edinburgh.

\*\*\*\*\*

### III: V. VENKAYYA

Venkayya was born on 1 July 1864 in the town of Valaiyattur near Arni in the then North Arcot district. His father Appa Sitarama Ayyar, a Tamil scholar, was a direct descendant of *Advaita* savant Appayya Dikshitar. Venkayya graduated in Physics from the University of Madras.

Venkayya's mastery of South Indian languages and scripts was recognised by E. Hultzsch who inducted him to the epigraphical department of the Madras government. Venkayya served as Chief Epigraphist to the Government of Madras till 1908, and then succeeded Hultzsch on his retirement, as the Chief Epigraphist to the Government of India.

Venkayya made a pioneering effort in studying inscriptions in Brihadeeswarar Temple in Tanjore and temples in the Pallava and Pandya countries. He also made significant contributions to *Epigraphia Indica*. Venkayya was also one of the champions of the Parthian-origin theory of the Pallavas. He also tried to decipher the inscriptions on Mankulam Hill.

- *Hultzsch, E.; Venkayya, V.; Sastri, H. Krishna (1891). South Indian inscriptions: Tamil inscriptions in the Rajarajesvara temple at Tanjavur and other miscellaneous records of the Chola, Pallava, Pandya, and Vijayanagara dynasties, Volume 2.*
- *Venkayya, V. (1902). Historical method.*
- *Venkayya, V. (1903). Tamil Antiquary.*
- *Venkayya, V. (1907). The Pallavas. G. A. Natesan.*
- *Venkayya, V. Velurpalaiyam plates of Nandivarman III.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### IV: ROBERT SEWELL

**Robert Sewell** (1845–1925) worked in the civil service of the Madras Presidency during the period of colonial rule in India. He was Keeper of the Madras Record Office and was tasked with responsibility for documenting ancient inscriptions and remains in the region, As with other British administrators of his type at that period, his purpose was not scholarly but rather to bolster administrative control by constructing a history that placed British rule as a virtue and a necessity rather than something to be denigrated. Portrayal of historic factionalism among local figureheads and dominion by alien despots would, it was thought, enhance the perception that only the British could rescue the country from its past.

Sewell's specialism was the Vijayanagara Empire, about which he authored *A Forgotten Empire Vijayanagar: A Contribution to the History of India* (1900). Burton Stein described this book as Sewell's only popular work ... [In which] an outline of the genealogical and chronological evidence on the dynasties of Vijayanagara was briefly presented followed by two long and historically configuring translations of the accounts of two sixteenth-century Portuguese visitors to the city.

Sewell undertook archaeological work, including at the Buddhist stupa at Amaravati, which had already been largely destroyed prior to his arrival. The site had previously been surveyed by Colin Mackenzie and Walter Elliot. His record-keeping at that site in 1877 has been criticised for making an already-bad situation worse, adding to the problems that meant it was impossible to correlate the finds made.

Sewell was guided by various native speakers of the Kannada, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu languages spoken there. Some of these aides went on to publish research of their own, such as S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar

.....