

CONTRIBUTIONS OF KARL HERMANN BERENDT  
TO CENTRAL AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY

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Introduction

From the mid 1850's to his death in 1878, Karl Hermann Berendt persevered in his field studies of Central American Indian languages, literature, ethnology, folklore, and archaeology while carrying out cartographic and meteorologic surveys and collecting specimens of natural history for museums. He succeeded in discovering, copying and obtaining more early native manuscripts from Central America than any other single individual. Often retracing his steps, his untiring explorations covered the vast and unhealthy expanses of Coastal Veracruz and Tabasco, the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the Maya Lowlands and Highlands of Guatemala, Belize and the off-shore Caribbean islands, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. Since only a small fragment of his findings have ever appeared in print, the name of Karl Hermann Berendt is today almost unknown among most anthropologists.

The purpose of this study is to reconstruct his life and labors and then evaluate the extent and the enduring quality of his contributions to the anthropology of Central America. In order to appreciate the circumstances under which Berendt became fully involved in his explorations, it is worthwhile to comment on the prevailing scientific opportunities of his time.

In the late 19th Century, predominantly amateur undertakings in explorations gave way to programs financially supported by scientific institutions. This situation offered opportunities to those scholastically minded individuals who otherwise did not possess the means to participate in long years of field research. In return for this patronage, the institutions were eager to receive new scientific information and specimens for their museum collections. These scientific

programs were still very eclectic, usually combining geographic, natural history and ethnographic investigations. It is hardly surprising therefore that the opportunity attracted no specialists, but rather those of a more conventional academic background--medicine, philosophy, law--who nevertheless nurtured a great interest in their explorations of new lands and peoples. More often than not, during the field experiences these explorers realized their true vocation, and at the expense of their original profession, became outstanding specialists in their new field of enquiry. One such individual was Karl Hermann Berendt.

### Biographical Notes<sup>1</sup>

Berendt was born in Danzig, Prussia in 1817. His grandfather and father were physicians, but also were great naturalists. The latter attribute was exemplified by the fact that together they succeeded in accumulating the world's largest collection of amber containing organic remains, which today, under the name of the Berendt Collection, is the property of the Berlin Museum. The young Karl Hermann followed the family traditions. He studied at Konigsberg, Heidelberg, Freiburg and Breslau Universities and obtained his diploma in medicine in 1842. In the following year, he was appointed as private docent at the University of Breslau. During the first years of his medical practice, he also visited the Universities of Halle and Prague, gaining experience while serving as a volunteer assistant in hospitals and mental asylums.

During the 1848-49 Revolution, Berendt became involved in the constitutionalist political movement and became a deputy member of the Vor-Parliament in Frankfurt am Main. About this time he married, and hoped to settle down to private practice. However, he was hindered in his expectations by his political past. His university connections were severed and even his private practice was so strongly jeopardized that he resolved to emigrate to America.

In 1851, he arrived in New York with his wife and two young children. Their stay was very short and soon the family proceeded to Nicaragua. He practised medicine in Masaya, where he became interested in native cultures. Due to civil unrest, however, they left Nicaragua in 1853 and settled in Orizaba, Mexico. There again, he practised medicine but also began to make excursions to the Gulf Coast. As these excursions became more and more lengthy, he moved with his family to the port town of Veracruz in 1855. The climatic changes, social disturbances and health hazards proved difficult for his family. Subsequently, his wife and family returned to

Germany. Berendt, although already infected with yellow fever, stayed behind to work on his project of mapping the coast of Veracruz and studying Mexican prehistory. He often exchanged ideas with his countryman, Hermann Strebel, who was similarly inclined in his interest in the Indian cultures. Through Strebel, Berendt came into contact with the Smithsonian Institute and committed himself to collecting specimens for the natural history museum.

Berendt's most decisive experience was his first trip to Yucatan in 1858, when he retraced the footsteps of John Lloyd Stephens and Frederick Catherwood in his visits to the Mayan ruins. In Merida, he was fortunate enough to copy important native manuscripts in the Mayan language. At about this time, Berendt fully abandoned his medical practice in favor of his anthropological investigations.

The continuing political unrest in Veracruz posed a threat to his life and his collections (his house was demolished by bombs), and he felt compelled to move again. He hoped to settle in Laguna de Terminos in 1862, but the war followed him there also, thus he soon left for the more peaceful town of San Juan Bautista de Tabasco. To assure the safety of his manuscripts, he sent a shipment to New York, another to Germany (the latter was unfortunately lost in transit). Meanwhile, he began forwarding specimen collections to Professors Spencer F. Baird and Joseph Henry of the Smithsonian Institution.

In 1863, Berendt himself travelled to the United States planning to study manuscripts at the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island. He was particularly interested in a 16th Century Maya (Yucatec) dictionary, originally from the convent of Motul. He copied this long text and enlarged it with his own entries based on the previous studies in Merida. In New York, he met and conferred with the Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg, the discoverer of the dictionary. In Boston, he discussed his observations on Central American natural history with Luis Agassiz.

In 1865, the Smithsonian Institution entrusted Berendt with the exploration of the Petén. He was given two hunters and equipment. He arrived in Belize in December, 1865. Through the negligence of his assistants, the money and equipment were soon stolen, yet he persevered with the undertaking. In Belize, he found and copied several manuscripts in native languages. Having made the acquaintance of the Rev. Alexander Henderson, a student of the coastal languages, Berendt could again increase his linguistic knowledge with the vocabularies from Carib, Misquito and Maya dialects. He also participated in a meteorological survey, collected reptile specimens, and did cartographic work wherever he went.

While mapping the course of the Belize River and its tributaries, he eventually reached the headwaters on the wide plain bordered by the lake Chaltuná (Lake Petén). In Flores, Petén, he studied and recorded the dialect of the Itzá. Extensive ethnographic studies were made on the Petén and Lacandon Indians. Here Berendt adopted a little East Lacandon boy, Jose Sabino Uc, for whom he cared from that time on. He planned to terminate his survey of the Lowlands by October, 1866, but political conditions prevented him from keeping his original itinerary. Travelling across the uncharted wilderness without provisions, Berendt managed, with his manuscripts intact, to arrive in Tabasco in April, 1867. He soon proceeded to the United States to report to the Smithsonian Institution.

Berendt also visited the Peabody Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he was urged to return to Yucatan in search of more Mayan manuscripts, which the Museum wished to purchase. Later in the year Berendt returned to Merida and was fortunate to copy more valuable Mayan documents. He also studied the Indian populations, the natural history of Yucatan, cultivation of crops and the antiquities. In 1868, we find him again on the Tabasco Coast progressing with his cartographic survey. Later, he visited Palenque, Chiapa de Corzo, San Cristobal, Ocosingo, Comitán in pursuit of more native documents, antiquities and his linguistic studies. During this period, he completed the district map of the Usumacinta River Basin. Later, he settled in Tuxtla for a short time, making frequent excursions within the vicinity. He was so absorbed in his researches that he totally lost touch with the outside world. His friends interpreted his disappearance as his demise, and Padre Carrillo y Ancona (later Bishop of Yucatan) had written his obituary. The reality was probably not too far from his friend's assumption, for Berendt was seriously ill with repeated attacks of yellow fever, which took the lives of six of his helpers. From Tuxtla, however, he went back to San Juan Tabasco and continued his explorations on the Gulf Coast in 1869-70.

Berendt returned to Yucatan in late 1870. In Merida, he once more met the Abbé Brasseur. This visit was Berendt's time of realization of his vocation, for he now made his studies of Maya languages the focal point in his broad ranging interests. Despite ill health and nostalgia for his native land and family, he resolved to remain in Yucatan. There he completed the Perez dictionary of the Maya language.

In 1871, Berendt travelled again to the United States, stopping in New Orleans, Providence and New York. His acquaintance with Daniel Brinton began then. He sold his large manuscript collection to him; these valuable manuscripts then remained in Brinton's sole possession until his death

in 1889. Brinton bequeathed the collection to the University of Pennsylvania Museum Library, where the documents remained catalogued under the name of Berendt Linguistic Collection. Berendt spent much time in Providence studying, copying and writing. In 1873, through his cousin, Alexander von Frantzius, he was named a corresponding member of the Berliner Gesellschaft fur Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte. With this, he established his ties with the world of German Anthropology. During his stay in the United States, his health continued to suffer greatly.

Berendt once more returned to Nicaragua in 1874, visiting the already known and beloved cities of Masaya, León and Granada. Most of his researches in Lower Central America belong to this period, when he also visited Costa Rica, Panama and Honduras.

In 1875, he was called to Guatemala. While preparing for the move he came upon a trunk full of Western Nicaraguan antiquities which were believed lost. The find included items from the Island of Ometepe. Through von Frantzius these were sold to the Berlin Museum. In Coban, Guatemala, where Berendt enjoyed the hospitality of the American Consul, Francis Sarg, he decided to make his permanent home. Indeed, in the following year he purchased a small coffee plantation in the vicinity. His hopes for more permanency were further strengthened, when Prof. Bastian of the Berlin Museum expressed interest in setting up archaeological excavations in Guatemala. Berendt met him in New York, where plans for the future were discussed. A Berlin funded program was initiated to excavate the ruins of Santa Lucia Cozumalhuapa on the Pacific Coast of Guatemala, with Berendt in charge. In the company of Bastian, Berendt visited Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. In the latter city, Berendt examined the manuscripts of the Philosophical Society Library. Returning to New York, Berendt had the privilege of giving an address at a festive meeting of the Geographical Society of New York to honor Dom Pedro, Emperor of Brazil.

He journeyed back to Guatemala in 1877 to commence the survey preceding the excavations of the Santa Lucia Cozumalhuapa site. Having traced several monuments, he took many measurements and made drawings of the stone carvings. His reports met with the approval of Bastian. Completing the first phase of the excavation, Berendt returned to Coban. The hot, humid climate of the Pacific Coast further undermined his already weak constitution. He was, however, at this time also commissioned by the Sociedad Economica de Guatemala to write a book on the Indian tribes of Guatemala. He accepted this with great enthusiasm and began work immediately. His ill health, however, necessitated the assis-

tance of Prof. Erwin Rockstroh of the Instituto Nacional de Guatemala. He attempted to return to his archaeological commitment in the Spring of 1878, but the fever prevented him from reaching the site. He was taken back to his home in Coban, where his illness reached the critical stage and he died. His valuable books and manuscripts, filling five boxes, were forwarded to the Smithsonian Institution.

### Research in Central America

Since the middle of the 19th Century, there has existed a growing public interest in the prehispanic cultures of Central America, thanks to the excellent narratives of Stephens, Ephraim George Squier and others. However, the anthropology of these regions at the time of Berendt's researches was still virtually unknown. The Central American officials' attitudes toward their prehispanic cultural heritage and its preservation differed sharply from the Mexicans'. Although the Aztec empire was soon destroyed after the first Spanish contact, through the more enlightened policies of Viceroy Mendoza and others, many Mexican cultural traditions were recorded before they could fall into oblivion. No such "Golden Age of the Chronicles" ever dawned on the rest of colonial Central America, despite the fact that its area nurtured the most developed aboriginal literary tradition in the entire Americas. Nevertheless, the Indian literary traditions persevered in colonial Yucatan, Chiapas and Guatemala. These were perpetuated by the native nobility, who having acquired the skills of European writing, left multitudes of documents in their native languages, recording within them their cultural origins, mythology, prehistory and other traditions. Some of these manuscripts were jealously guarded by the elders of the towns through the centuries, while others found their way to mission or civil archives. These manuscripts are invaluable tools for the reconstruction efforts of linguists and ethnohistorians.

It is important to note that from the earliest days of his explorations, Berendt fully recognized the immense research potential in these documents and concentrated his energies in locating the earliest and "purest" aboriginal writings. He himself made great advances in the learning of many Indian languages and always sought to combine his linguistic researches with ethnographic data.

It seems best to divide Berendt's researches according to the cultural-geographical divisions of Central America. He visited practically every corner of these lands, often

returning to the same area more than once.

(a) The Maya Lowlands

Berendt made at least four visits to Yucatan. He intensively studied the Maya<sup>2</sup> (i.e., Yucatec) dialects by actually living in the villages that were relatively isolated from European influences. In Merida, he discovered a very important native manuscript collection which had been assembled by the late Juan Pio Perez (1798-1859), which represented the accumulation of the lifelong researches of this first truly modern Yucatec scholar.<sup>3</sup> Bishop Carrillo y Ancona honored the Perez tradition regarding the importance of Mayan studies by naming the collection "Codex Perez."<sup>4</sup> The manuscript collection contained the copy of the Books of Chilam Balam, which were discovered and first recorded by Perez. Berendt copied all important documents of the Codex Perez and this material later formed a vital part of the Berendt Linguistic Collection. By faithfully copying the texts, Berendt not only made them known outside of Yucatan but inadvertently salvaged many, as the Codex Perez was subsequently dispersed and part of its content lost.

During his adult life, Perez diligently worked on a dictionary of the Maya language. His work was based on the Padre Beltran vocabulary and grammar (1740), several smaller ecclesiastic works written in Maya, and on the dictionaries of Ticul (1690) and the Grand Convent of San Francisco (nd).<sup>5</sup> Since the death of Perez prevented the completion of the dictionary, the work had to wait the arrival of a competent scholar. In 1870, Berendt finished the task, not only adding the remaining entries, but also editing and enlarging the entire work. That he was able to do so was the result of his penetrating studies of the Maya language, in particular his work with the 16th Century Motul dictionary of the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island.<sup>6</sup>

Berendt combined linguistic studies with ethnographic research;<sup>7</sup> he also published a monograph on the cultivation of henequen (Berendt 1871b).

He visited the Crown Colony of British Honduras and the southern Maya Lowlands (Petén) under the auspices of the Smithsonian expedition. Detailed reports of his activities were given subsequently to the expedition (Berendt 1867). In Belize, through the courtesy of the Rev. Henderson,<sup>8</sup> a missionary and linguist, he obtained vocabularies of Carib, Misquito and Maya dialects spoken on the Caribbean Coast and offshore islands. He recorded the Maya dialects of a

newly arrived group, who originated from Balacar Yucatan. In Petén, similarly, he recorded languages spoken by the Itza, Lacandon and other Maya groups.<sup>9</sup> Valuable ethnohistoric information is contained in his report to the Smithsonian about these groups, and his researches of the Petén folklore<sup>10</sup> were incorporated by Brinton (Brinton 1890).

Berendt's cartographic efforts of the Lowlands, combined with similar efforts by others resulted in the "best, largest, fullest map of Yucatan" (Means 1917:198).

#### (b) The Isthmus of Tehuantepec

Berendt made his home on the Gulf Coast for many years, exploring this humid marshy environment. He also extended his interest across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, studying the diverse ethnic groups of this large area.

His linguistic studies embraced perhaps all major groups on the Isthmus. The studies of the Huastec language led to the composition of a Spanish/Huastec dictionary.<sup>11</sup> His work on the Chontals of Tabasco confirmed that the language belongs to the Maya family and is very similar to the Tzendal dialect. Berendt felt that the Chontal was probably spoken once in the entire Usumacinta Basin (Brinton 1891:148-49). He collected vocabularies, and documents, and carried out comparative studies among the Zoque<sup>12</sup> and Mixe<sup>13</sup> languages. He also succeeded in obtaining a short vocabulary of the Populca spoken in Oluta, Tepistepec, San Juan Volador and vicinity (near Puebla). Comparisons showed that the idiom belongs to the Mixe family (Brinton 1891:151). His major triumph was the discovery of some 16th and 17th Century manuscripts in the Zoque language. Of the Chinantec, Berendt concluded, after a considerably long study, that:

spoken in the midst of a diversity of languages connected more or less among themselves, it is itself unconnected with them and rich in peculiar features, both as to its roots and its grammatical structure. It is probably that we have in it one of the original languages spoken before the advent of the Nahuas on Mexican soil, perhaps the mythical Olmecan...(Brinton 1891:144).

Berendt also studied the Chiapanec (Chapanec) ethnic groups, whose language shows a close relationship with the



Chorotega of Western Nicaragua and the Nicoyan Peninsula. Amongst them, he succeeded in collecting various examples of religious literature (*las pasiones*) derived from chants of the early *cofradías* in Tehuantepec (Brinton 1883:42). He also obtained information regarding their history, grammar, and calendar.<sup>14</sup> He compiled a comparative vocabulary of the Chana-ebal (four languages) dialect and discussed the geographic distribution of this interesting mixed idiom.<sup>15</sup> His studies on the Tzontal and Tzetzil (Mayan) dialects spoken in Highland Chiapas are incorporated in several miscellaneous collections of notes.<sup>16</sup> His report to the Smithsonian (Berendt 1867) covers some of his researches conducted on the Putun (Chol) Mayan language.

In addition to his ethnolinguistic efforts, Berendt made considerable achievements in cartography by accurately charting the course and tributaries of the Usmacinta River, recording the settlements' location, and by the detailed survey of the Coastal areas of Tabasco and Veracruz.

While surveying the Tabasco coast in 1869, Berendt discovered and correctly identified the ruins of the ancient city of Centla, a populous, civilized capital described by Juan Grijalva in 1518. The account of this is now incorporated in one of Brinton's articles (Brinton 1896a).

### (c) Lower Central America

Berendt began his first anthropological enquiries in Nicaragua, where he stayed from 1851 to 1853 and to where he once more returned in 1874. His activities from the first period are very poorly documented. Many of his unpublished works indicate the very fruitful researches of his second stay. During this period, he also extended his investigations to Honduras and to Costa Rica and Panama.

His particular interest in the origin, role and extent of the Chorotega culture in Mesoamerica remained a persistent theme during his entire research career. His ideas on this matter were expressed in his address given at the meeting of the Geographical Society of New York in 1876 (Berendt 1878a), where he discussed the question of geographical distribution of the ancient Central American civilizations. It is not surprising that he invested a considerable amount of time and energy to discover surviving traces of the Chorotegan population, despite the commonly held view that their language was already extinct. Eventually, Berendt successfully located ancient Mangué-speaking Indians in the vicinity of Masaya and Lago de Apoyo. He also found a small remnant of Chorotegan Mangué population on the Island of Ometepe,

which was believed to have been occupied by the intrusive Nicaraos at the time of the Spanish Conquest. His vocabularies greatly helped the study of the idiom, since very small samples survived otherwise.<sup>17</sup> Among Berendt's most noted discoveries was the collection of texts pertaining to the surviving aboriginal theatrical traditions of Western Nicaragua. His records on and penetrating analysis of the origin and cultural setting of these native plays are contained in his neatly written and bound manuscript notes,<sup>18</sup> which unfortunately were never printed. This collection includes the text of *Gueguence*, a comedy ballad spoken and sung in the mixed language of Spanish and Nahua and text of *Logas* (poems) of Mangue origin. *Gueguence*, a unique representative of its genre, was subsequently translated by Brinton, who also incorporated Berendt's researches in linguistics, ethnography and ethnohistory in his 1883 volume.<sup>19</sup>

Berendt did comparative work with the Xicaque, Lenca and Carib of Honduras and Ulua, Chontal and Misquito of Northeastern Nicaragua.<sup>20</sup> He also investigated the language of the Guatuso (Huatuso) of the Rio Frío area south of Lake Nicaragua. These Indians were considered a "wild tribe," who collected native rubber in the wilderness and had minimal contact with the Mestizo population. A group of Guatuso children were captured at the time of Berendt's stay in San Carlos; from them, Berendt obtained the vocabulary and grammar of their language.<sup>21</sup> In Costa Rica, he compared seven languages<sup>22</sup> and he also compared the Costa Rican languages with those spoken in the Darien, namely the Cholo, Cueva, Cuna, Tule, Sabanero, Bayano, San Blas, Boruca and Viceisa.<sup>23</sup> He spoke about his linguistic researches in Lower Central America before the American Ethnological Society in Philadelphia in 1873.

#### (d) Highland Guatemala

The investigations of the Highland Maya area were undertaken during Berendt's last years. His activities were divided between his ethnolinguistic studies of the native Guatemalan population for the Government of Guatemala and his archaeological excavations for the Berlin Museum. Unfortunately, his untimely death prevented the completion of both.

Even before Berendt settled in Guatemala, he became familiar with some of the native languages from the Highlands. While in the Peten, he had contact with Indians of Coban Verapar, from whom he obtained knowledge about the Kekchi language (Berendt 1867). In one of his earlier manuscripts, he dealt with the Pokoman idiom,<sup>24</sup> while the Berendt Linguistic Collection contains material on vocabularies comparing

Maya (Yucatec) with Cakchiquel, Quiche, Zutujil, Mani, Pokonchi dialects.<sup>25</sup> While living in Verapaz, he continued to collect linguistic material from the Chorti, Kekchi, Ixil and Cakchiquel Indians.

By far the most complete body of linguistic material was compiled by Berendt in preparation for his linguistic summary on the Guatemalan Indians.<sup>26</sup> This material was in the possession of Prof. Rockstroh after Berendt's death, who planned to complete the task undertaken earlier by Berendt.<sup>27</sup> However, the principal beneficiary of Berendt's researches was Otto Stoll.<sup>28</sup> Stoll (1884) essentially followed Berendt's classifications for the Maya languages, with his own inclusions of the Aguacatan and Uspantan, the only two Mayan dialects that Berendt did not study.

His archaeological researches only accomplished the preliminary phase of the surface survey and recording at the site of Santa Lucia Cozumalhuapa.

Berendt naturally followed with interest the welfare of the native documents in all Central American countries. He was especially distressed by the Guatemalan officials' indifference towards the preservation of these valuable documents. He made a survey of the manuscripts, which were found scattered through a number of archives and public and private libraries. Among the treasures he found the original writing of Bernal Diaz del Castillo, the historical works of Francisco Antonio Fuentes y Guzman, Francisco Jimenez, and the bishop Pedro Cortes y Larraz, as well as the anonymous *Historia de la Provincia San Vincent Ferrer de Chiapa y Guatemala*, (comprising the *Isagoge apologetico*), and scripts by Indian authors, including the *Memorial de Tecpan Atitlan*. He made a plea to ensure the safety of these manuscripts in his report to the Smithsonian Institution (Berendt 1877).

### Conclusion

Assessment of the work of such prolific scholarship by Berendt is hardly possible without lengthy research. Berendt made the task more difficult by publishing little of this immense amount of work. Brinton, in his memoir to Berendt, reiterated his opinion that, "...of the considerable number of larger works he began, he never finished one..." (Brinton 1884:207), yet a brief glance at Berendt's activities should reveal that he was not the restless researcher who found his satisfaction only in perpetual mobility. He worked by definite plans, which he actually implemented and completed: "...Having occupied myself in former travels

and during the years of residence in Tabasco, with research relative to the geographical and ethnological features of this almost unknown part of America, I resolved to complete my observations by a visit to the belt extending to the Pacific Ocean..." wrote Berendt in 1867. Not only did he carry out this incredible plan but he extended his investigations subsequently to the Isthmus of Panama. Despite his ill health, he persevered where others would have given up.

Several important reasons contributed to his short list of publications. His own high standard of requirements was probably the foremost. Because of this he often retraced his steps to deepen his understanding of his topic. His search for the truth usually began with direct, in situ observations, wherever this was possible. He was a true fieldworker and for the sake of his field research, he sacrificed the very conditions conducive to writing: comforts of a permanent home, pleasant climate, clean and healthy surroundings. His manuscript material is of the highest quality, written in beautiful handwriting and with clear mind, which for a century constituted the gold mine of information available to students in Central American anthropology. It is better that his achievements should not be evaluated in terms of publication, but in actual contributions made.

Without doubt, Berendt's most important work concerns the Maya linguistic family. His linguistic classification of the Maya languages--as first published by Stoll (1884)--remains practically unchanged to date. His copy of the Motul dictionary, with amendments, additions and comparisons with other vocabularies, is a monumental work in itself. His *Lengua Maya Miscellanea* and his scrapbooks (MSS. nd)<sup>29</sup> of the Berendt Linguistic Collection contain a large mass of important material on the Maya language. Alfred Tozzer has remarked, "he was undoubtedly the greatest scholar of the Maya language, although his list of publications is a short one..." and "...up to the time when Mr. Gates began photographic reproductions, every student of Maya linguistics was absolutely dependent on the Berendt material" (1921:147).

The merits of Berendt's recognition regarding the value of early manuscripts in native languages are comparable to his contributions to Maya linguistics. His collection of manuscripts is not only unsurpassed in quantity, but superior in quality to most others and is "particularly designed for the scientific study of tongues. It is especially rich in dictionaries and grammars and in works written by natives" (Brinton 1884:209). His appreciation for future scholarship is exemplified by his concern and conscious efforts regarding the preservation and salvaging of this valuable material. Among the most important native writings were his copies of the books of Chilam Balam, El Gueguence and Logas of the

Mangue speaking peoples, 16th and 17th Century Zoque documents, and Chipanec religious poems.

Despite his very special affinity to the Maya linguistic family, Berendt was truly a Central American scholar. In his manuscript collection, entries regarding the languages between the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and Panama exceed 175, not counting the Mayan material. He covered areas with his researches which since have been hardly touched by anthropologists. His contribution in providing us with vocabularies and grammars of Indian tongues now extinct is, obviously, invaluable.

That Berendt was able to achieve so much in a relatively brief time and under such adverse conditions was due to his burning interest which "...was joined by a most sound judgment, which kept him clear of those hobbies and fancies which have done so much to destroy the usefulness of many eminent workers in his special branches" (Brinton 1884:205). To his enthusiasm and clear mind we should add his genial disposition, which helped him to communicate with his Western and Latin American colleagues and Indian informants alike.

#### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> No comprehensive biography of Berendt was found. I assembled this curriculum vitae from the following sources: Das Ausland 1874:120; 181-185; Annual Report of the Secretary, Smithsonian Institute 1864:50; 1865:62; 129; 209; 1866:27; 1867:48-49; 420-426; 1873:363-364; 1880:69-70; Brinton 1884:205-210; Strebel 1891:337-341; Tozzer 1921:146-147; Houwald 1974:5; Zimmermann n.d.:70 and from the content of Berendt's published and unpublished writings.

<sup>2</sup> Berendt used the designation Maya only in reference to the Indians of Yucatan, arguing that this was the original name

of the land and people of Yucatan (Brinton 1882:10).

<sup>3</sup> The scholarship of Juan Pio Perez is well documented by Berendt (Berendt 1871a).

<sup>4</sup> Another MS collection was also called Codex Perez. From this Perez extracted material which he presented to Lloyd Stephens. The English translation of this text was subsequently included in Stephens travelogue (Brinton 1882:91).

<sup>5</sup> The Diccionario de San Francisco bears no date, but it was estimated to be some 50 years older than the Ticul dictionary (Brinton 1882:76).

<sup>6</sup> "The Diccionario del Convento de Motul is by far the most valuable...and it has not been known to Yucatec scholars. The copy of it was picked up by the Abbé Brasseur, and sold by him to Mr. John Carter Brown, of Providence, R.I. In 1864 this was carefully copied by dr. Berendt, who also made extensive additions to it from other sources indicating such by the use of ink of different colors. This copy is in three large quarto volumes in all containing over 2500 pages, in which I have found indispensable assistance in solving some of the puzzles presented by the text..." (Brinton 1882:77).

<sup>7</sup> Much of it is found in MS form: *Miscellanea Maya: Ethnologia: Character de los indios, Calendarios, Jeroglificos, Antiquedades*, in BLC-PU (Part of Berendt Linguistic Collection, U. of Pennsylvania Museum); (Tozzer 1921:221).

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Henderson, Baptist Missionary: *Grammar of Misquito Language 1864, Gospel by Luke and Gospel according to Matthew in Caribbean of Honduras* (MS n.d.).

<sup>9</sup> *Lengua Maya, Dialecto del Peten* (MS 1866) BLC-PU; *Vocabulario del dialecto del Peten* (MS n.d.) Note: this MS was translated by Means (Means 1917); *The Itza Dialect* (MS n.d.) BLC-PU.

<sup>10</sup> *Ein feen Marchen der Maya Peten* (MS 1866) BLC-PU.

<sup>11</sup> *Diccionario Espanol-Huasteco formado de las listas en la noticia y doctrina de Tapia Zenteno* (MS n.d.) BLC-PU.

<sup>12</sup> *Vocabulario de la lengua Zoque de Tupijulapa* (MS 1862) BLC-PU; *Apuntes y estudios sobre la lengua Zoque* (MS 1869-70) BLC-PU.

<sup>13</sup> *Apuntes sobre la lengua Mixe* (MS 1870) BLC-PU; *Los oraciones de doctrina cristiana...en la lengua Mixe* (MS 1871) BLC-PU.

14 *Apuntes y estudios sobre la lengua Chapaneca* (MS 1869-70) BLC-PU.

15 *Apuntes sobre la lengua Chana-ebal* (MS 1870) BLC-PU.

16 *Vocabulario comparativo de las lenguas pertenecientes a la familia Maya-Quiche* (MS n.d.) and the Berendt Linguistic Collection.

17 Comparative vocabularies of Mangué and Chapanec collected by Berendt are listed by Brinton (Brinton 1883:13-15).

18 *Palabras y modismos de la lengua castellana segun se habla en Nicaragua* (MS 1874).

19 In discussing the native literary traditions in Central America, especially that of the Chorotega-Mangués, Brinton writes: "...The logas seem to be peculiar to the Mangués. A small theatre is extemporized, music is provided, and the actor comes forward arrayed in some old garb, and recites a sort of poem, with gestures and dancing movements. The text of one of these was obtained in Namotiva by dr. Berendt, and is in my possession. It is entitled, Loga del niño Dios, and contains about 200 lines. The language is in corrupt Spanish with a number of Mangué words interspersed..." (Brinton 1883:XXV).

20 *Vocabulario de las lenguas de Honduras y de parte septentrional de Nicaragua* (MS 1873-74).

21 *Vocabulario de la lengua de los Huatusos con apuntes* (MS 1874) BLC-PU.

22 *Vocabularios comparativos de las lenguas de Costa Rica* (MS n.d.) BLC-PU.

23 *Comparative vocabulary of the Darien and Costa Rica* (MS 1873) BLC-PU.

24 *Vocabulario de la lengua Pokoman, compilado de Gage y Scherzer* (MS 1867) BLC-PU.

25 *Miscellanea Maya*--Folio scrap book BLC-PU.

26 *Vocabulario comparativo de las lenguas pertenecientes a la familia Maya-Quiché* (MS n.d.) BLC-PU.

27 Rockstroh apparently never published the material either, of which only 16 pages were completed for publication. This short text was printed entitled: *Los indigenos de la America Central y sus idiomas, reseña etnografica*, compilado de los escitos y apuntes del Doctor C. Hermann Berendt.

Edición de la Sociedad Economica, Guatemala, 1878. Note: a copy of this publication was added to the Berendt Linguistic Collection.

28 "...Diese wichtige Zusammenstellung umfasst über 600 Vocabelen in den verschiedenen Sprachen der Maya Familie, Das Manuscript ist gegenwartig in Besitz von Prof. Rockstroh, eines Freundes des verstorbenen Dr. Berendt und ich verdanke es der Freundigkeit Herrn Rockstroh dass es möglich war, dieses wichtige Manuscript wenigsten so weit es die Maya Sprache betrifft in extenso zu copieren..." Author's translation: This important collection contains over 600 vocabularies in different dialects of the Maya family of languages. The manuscript is at present in the possession of Prof. Rockstroh, a friend of the deceased Dr. Berendt and I thank Mr. Rockstroh for the courtesy of making it possible for me to copy the entire text, at least that which concerns the Maya language.

29 Brinton 1900:31-32.

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