

Early Scholars' Visits to Central America: Reports by Karl Sapper, Walter Lehmann, and Franz Termer, edited by Marilyn Beaudry-Corbett and Ellen T. Hardy, Theodore E. Gutman, translator, 2000, The Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, Los Angeles, Occasional Paper 18. vii + 119 pp. ISBN 0-917956-95-8 (paper) \$25.00.

by

Charles C. Kolb
National Endowment for the Humanities

The Cotsen Institute's Director of Publications is archaeologist Marilyn Beaudry-Corbett, herself a specialist on the production and distribution of archaeological ceramics in Mesoamerica and Central America and a scholar of complex society economic organization. Her colleague and the co-editor of this volume, Ellen Hardy, is a Research Associate at The Cotsen Institute and an expert on mortuary customs of the Nicoya region. Theodore (Ted) Gutman (1909-1997) was a longtime supporter of the Institute at UCLA worked on a number of translation projects, several of which are presented here. He was the translator of Karl Sapper's *Verapaz im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, which appeared as *The Verapaz in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Contribution to the Historical Geography and Ethnography of Northeastern Guatemala* (Los Angeles, University of California, Institute of Archaeology, Occasional Paper 13, 1985). The contributors to the volume's narrative include, in addition to Beaudry-Corbett and Hardy, nine other anthropologists who are recognized experts on the region and subject matter.

The volume includes the English renderings of nine never before translated German language articles written by three scholars who were preeminent in Central American studies during the early 20th century. Collectively, they studied and wrote about a diversity of subjects: geology, geography, archaeology, ethnography, epigraphy, physical anthropology, and linguistics. Beaudry-Corbett and Hardy's edited publication includes ten chapters, comprised of an introduction followed by seven articles written by Karl Sapper, and one each by Walter Lehmann and by Franz Termer. Each of the nine translations is prefaced by a commentary on its significance for contemporary scholarship. Ten maps, 23 illustrations, glossaries, tables, and a bibliography of 77 items emend the volume. There is no index.

Karl Theodor Sapper (1866-194~), a German geographer who held a doctorate from the University of Munich (1888), lived in the Alta Verapaz for 12 years during a period of German colonialism. His brother Richard owned a large coffee finca (plantation) that he used as a base for his studies of geology, geography, ethnology, archaeology, linguistics, history, and physical anthropology. Following a stint as a geologist for the Mexican government in 1900, he returned to Germany where he held professorships at prestigious German universities (Leipzig, Tubingen, Strassburg, and Wurzburg). Walter Lehmann (1878-1939), a German physician turned linguist, is perhaps best known for defining the Tlapanec language of northeastern Mexico in 1920 (later studied by Sapir). Lehmann, a student of Eduard Seler, specialized in pre-Hispanic art, astronomy, calendrics, and mythology, and translated numerous Nahuatl texts. His professional career was spent at the Universities of Munich and Berlin. Franz Termer (1894-1968), an exemplar of the Kulturkreis school of anthropological thought, was a student of Sapper's and wrote extensively on Mesoamerican ethnology, archaeology, and linguistics. He served as a professor at the University of Wurzburg and in 1939 became the Director of the Museum fur Volkerkunde in Hamburg and held a chair at the University of Hamburg.

Marilyn Beaudry-Corbett and Richard M. Leventhal (UCLA) prepared the introduction, "Karl Sapper, Walter Lehmann, and Franz Termer and the Study of Central America." This five-page essay accompanied by one regional map provides a context for the nine selections that follow by considering Central America at the end of the 19th century, early explorers and entrepreneurs (Squire, Bringham, Sanbom, and Keable), and academic research reported at the International Congress of Americanists meetings (1904 through 1949).

The initial contribution, "Fray Bartolome de las Casas and the Verapaz (Northwest Guatemala)," by Karl Sapper was published originally as "Fray Bartolome de las Casas und die Verapaz (Nordost-Guatemala)" in *Baessler-Archiv* 19:102-107 (1936). The translation (five pages plus one map) is accompanied by a commentary prepared by Brian D. Dillon (consulting archaeologist from Sepulveda, California) and Matthew A. Box (California State University at Northridge). The article relates the importance of las Casas beginning in 1531, and the Cedula of 1540 which effectively prohibited major Spanish incursions into the Verapaz until 1840, thus preserving the region's socio-cultural patterns and gene pool despite the advent of Christianity and the Spanish practice of reducciones (collecting the natives into large villages). "Food and Drink of the Q'eqchi' Indians" by Sapper appeared initially as "Speise und Trank der Kekchiindianer" in *Globus* 80:259-263 (1901). A map, glossaries (97 items total), and cogent commentary written by Marilyn Beaudry-Corbett accompany the eight-page essay. Sapper related his observation of food preparation and household activities, noting a mixture of indigenous and introduced foodstuffs (maize, chiles, manioc, cacao, and coffee), elaborating the kitchen inventory (basketry, gourd containers, and clay vessels), and defining types of tortillas.

"Religious Customs and Beliefs of the Q'eqchi' Indians" also by Sapper was translated from his report entitled "Religiose-Gebrauche und Anschauungen der Kekchi-Indianer" which appeared in *Archiv fur Religionswissenschaft* (7:453-70 [1904]). A map, glossary, and two sidebars of prayers accompany the eight-page translation amended by a commentary by Richard Wilk (Indiana University at Bloomington). Sapper employed an "idols behind altars" theme in documenting religious syncretism, the effects of the conquest, missionization, and an assumption of minor acculturation. Religious topics covered include patron saints, floods, lightning, snakes, pilgrimages, prayers, life after death, pig sacrifices, burial houses, and boundary markers. "The Payas of Honduras" by Karl Sapper was originally "Die Payas in Honduras" and appears in *Globus* (75:80-83 [1889]); the six-page essay is supplemented by a map, a glossary, and two tables. There are separate commentaries by Christopher Taylor Begley (University of Chicago) and Dennis Holt (Quinnipiac College), a total of four pages. The Payas, now called the Pech, reside in eastern Honduras and resisted ladino encroachment by practicing a policy of withdrawal in order to maintain traditional elements of their culture and their Chibchan family language. Sapper discusses their history since 1528, relates exorcism and hypnotism as cures, the preparation of manioc, sociopolitical and linguistic characteristics, and material culture. Notable is the description of the collection of metates from archaeological sites for contemporary use.

"A Visit with the Guatusos of Costa Rica" written by Sapper was rendered from "Ein Besuch bei den Guatusos in Costarica" which appeared in *Globus* (76:348-353 [1889]). One map, a glossary, and four illustrations accompany the eight-page translation, the commentary is by Payson D. Sheets (University of Colorado). By 1899 the Guatusos had been defeated by well armed Nicaraguan soldiers in order to gain access to the chicle resources in their territory, and Guatusoan culture was at low ebb — Sapper actually postulated a cultural demise that would not occur. The wide range of topics he considers include settlements, palenques (dwellings built of poles), house variations, the adoption of polyandry, the preparation of chicha (maize beer), burial practices, diseases, music, and

the influence of Bishop Bernhard Thiel. "A Visit with the Chirripo and Tlarnanaca Indians" by Sapper was derived from "Ein Besuch bei den Chirripo- und Tlarnanaca-Indianer von Costarica" appearing in *Globus* (77: I-X [1900]). This ten-page essay has a map, two glossaries, ten illustrations, plus a commentary by Ellen Hardy. The article contains Sapper's travel observations on Costa Rican coffee plantations, native settlements, variations in dwellings, material culture, foodstuffs (maize, manioc, and chiles), hunting and fishing, bark cloth production, and musical instruments.

"Huacas of the Nicoya Peninsula" by Karl Sapper was published originally as "Huacas der Halb Insel Nicoya" in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (31:622-632 [1899]) and has a seven-page narrative, one map, and nine illustrations. The commentary is by Costa Rican specialist Ellen Hardy who points out the value of Sapper's description of the Las Huacas archaeological site and cemetery. Tomb architecture, burial customs, grave goods, cire-perdue gold metallurgy, and petroglyphs are reported. Jadeite artifacts, highly decorated ceramic vessels with complex design motifs, and elaborate three-footed stone metates are notable in the burials, and Sapper observes striking stylistic differences in architecture and rock art between northern and southern Nicaragua. Once again, local people "mine" the archaeological contexts in order to obtain ancient metates for modern "reuse."

"Importance of Pipils in the Cultural Formation of Guatemala" by Franz Termer is a translation from "Die Bedeutung der Pipiles für die Kulturgestaltung in Guatemala" in *Baessler-Archiv* (19:108-113 [1936]). A map and two glossaries emend the six-page translation, while William R. Fowler (Vanderbilt University) provides the commentary observing correctly a number of errors in fact and interpretation. Termer stressed the need for additional archaeological research to define Pipil influence in southern Mesoamerica. He reports on Pipil settlement areas, linguistic affiliation, and socio-cultural characteristics, and relationships to Mexican Toltec populations. The final chapter, "Travel Letter from Puerto Mexico" by Walter Lehmann, was derived from "Reissbrief vom 18. Januar aus Puerto Mexiko" and appears in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (58:1711-77 [1926]). One map and a glossary supplement this five-page letter, and Frederick J. Bove (University of California at Santa Barbara) provides accompanying commentary. Lehmann describes briefly his trip from Havana to Veracruz, then to Mexico City and Teotihuacan, linguistic research in Guerrero, and visits to the Pedregal and Azcapotzalco. He focuses on his Guatemalan research, noting stylistic similarities in antiquities from Teotihuacan and Guatemala City (Kaminaljuyu). Lehmann also describes excursions to Cotzumalguapa, Ouirigua, Pantaleon, El Castillo, El Baul, and Tapachula. There are useful observations on Maya inscriptions and linguistics. His description ends at Puerto Mexico (present-day Coatzacoalcos) in anticipation of a trip to the archaeological site of Palenque.

This is a significant collection of translations that scholars of Central American anthropology and history will find very useful. Researchers new to the area will find the contributions illuminating and illustrative of the nature of the discipline of anthropology and archaeology a century ago. Therefore, this is also an important contribution to the history of archaeology. The editors and translator must be thanked for their diligence in translation and for having made these resources available to a wider audience and for commissioning the chapter commentaries and providing the essential glossaries of terms as chapter sidebars.

Because there is so little biographical information available in English on Sapper, Lehmann, and Termer, I would have liked to have a more fulsome discussion about each scholar. For example, Sapper published in German and in Spanish and also wrote a major three volume ethnological and linguistic work on the natives of German New Guinea *Wissenschaftliche ergebnisse einer amtlichen Forschungsreise nach dem Bismark-Archipel in Jahre 1908* (Berlin: Mittler und Sohn, 1910-1 g 13). He was a senior author of the five-volume history of science work entitled *Weltall und*

menschheit: geschichte der erforschung der natur und der verwertung der natulrrafts im dienste der volker (Berlin: Bong, 1902-1904) and his travels in Central America are related in *Mittelamerikanische reisen und studiem aus den jahren 1888 bis 1900* (Braunschweig: Vieweg und Sohn, 1902). Sapper's publications in the natural sciences include a pioneering work on Guatemalan physical geology, *Grundzuge der physikalischen geographie von Guatemala* (Gotha: Perthes, 1894); geology and physical geography, *Über gebirgsbau un boden des nordlichem Mittelamerika* (Gotha: Perthes, 1899); on Central American volcanoes and earthquakes, *In den vulcangebieten Mittelamerikas und Weshndiens* (Stuttgart: Schweizerbartsche, 1905) and *Die vulkane* (Breslau: Hirt, 1925); and he authored *El infierno de Masaya* (Saale: Niemeyer, 1925) about a volcano in Nicaragua. Other major writings include *Geologischer Bau und Landschaftsbild* (Braunschweig: Vieweg und Sohn, 1922), a treatise on climatology, *Klimakunde von Mittelamerika* (Berlin: Borntraeger, 1932), and a work on Mexican economic conditions entitled *Mexico: Land, volk und wirtschaft* (Wein: Seidel und Sohn, 1928).

Lehmann, who published 17 major works, is not well known for his Central American writings. His efforts focussed on a number of Mexican codices (Aubin and Chimalpopoca), the Aztec site of Colhuacan, and Mexican and Peruvian art. Among the publications are *Geschichte der Azteken: Codex Aubin und verwandte Dokumente* (reprinted Berlin: Mann, 1981), *Altmexikanische kunstgeschichte* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1921), and *Aus den Pyramidenstadten in alt-Mexico* (Berlin: Hobbing, 1933). Franz Termer published nearly a dozen major works on Central America including a history of Guatemala to 1821, *Quauhtemallan und Cuzcatlan* (Hamburg: Heitmann, 1948), a study of mariner John Cockburn, *Los viajes de Cockburn y Lievre por Costa Rica* (San Jose: Editorial Costa Rica, 1962); and geography, *Deutsche und nordamerikanische Auslandforschung in den iberomerilanischen Landern* (Hamburg: de Gruyter, 1936) and *Die Halbinsel Yucatan* (Gotha: Geographisch-Kartographische Anstalt, 1954). He also prepared a monograph on John Jewitt, a captive of the Nootka Indians of British Columbia, which was published as *Der Sklave der Nootka: Leben und Abenteuer des John Jewitt* (Stuttgart: Franckh, 1954).

Lastly, I wished that there had been a discussion about the process employed to select these particular nine contributions while excluding others. The reader may assume that these are representative publications of the work of these scholars but it also reflects the research interests of the translator, editors and commentators. Nonetheless, these are valuable to scholars of Mesoamerican and Central American prehistory and culture, and a tribute to the efforts of Ted Gutman.

An Old and Reliable Authority: An Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities, by Raymond Harris Thompson, with contributions by Ronald Frøeman Lee and George Alexander Grant. 196 pp., 39 photographs, References. A special issue of the *Journal of the Southwest*, edited by Joseph Carleton Wilder, Volume 42 (2):187-382 (Summer 2000). \$6.00.

by

Jonathan E. Reyman
Illinois State Museum Research and Collections Center
Springfield, Illinois 62703-3535

"An old and reliable authority" is how George Benjamin Hartzog, Director of the National Park Service (1964-1972), characterized the Antiquities Act of 1906. And it has been quite a reliable