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MAYA CHRONICLES**

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**DANIEL G. BRINTON**

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EDITED BY  
D. G. BRINTON, M.D.

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PHILADELPHIA:  
1882.

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## PREFACE.

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The belief that the only solid foundation for the accurate study of American ethnology and linguistics must be in the productions of the native mind in their original form has led me to the venturesome undertaking of which this is the first issue. The object of the proposed series of publications is to preserve permanently a number of rude specimens of literature composed by the members of various American tribes, and exhibiting their habits of thought, modes of expressions, intellectual range and æsthetic faculties.

Whether the literary and historical value of these monuments is little or great, they merit the careful attention of all who would weigh and measure the aboriginal mind, and estimate its capacities correctly.

The neglect of this field of study is largely owing to a deficiency of material for its pursuit. Genuine specimens of native literature are rare, and almost or quite inaccessible. They remain in manuscript in the hands of a few collectors, or, if printed, they are in forms not convenient to obtain.

as in the ponderous transactions of learned societies, or in privately printed works. My purpose is to gather together from these sources a dozen volumes of moderate size and reasonable price, and thus to put the material within the reach of American and European scholars.

Now that the first volume is ready, I see in it much that can be improved upon in subsequent issues. I must ask for it an indulgent criticism, for the novelty of the undertaking and its inherent difficulties have combined to make it less finished and perfected than it should have been.

If the series meets with a moderate encouragement, it will be continued at the rate of two or three volumes of varying size a year, and will, I think, prove ultimately of considerable service to the students of man in his simpler conditions of life and thought, especially of American man.



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# I.

## INTRODUCTION.

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1. THE NAME "MAYA." 2. THE MAYA LINGUISTIC FAMILY.
  3. ORIGIN OF THE MAYA TRIBES. 4. POLITICAL CONDITION AT THE TIME OF THE CONQUEST. 5. GRAMMATICAL OBSERVATIONS. 6. THE NUMERAL SYSTEM. 7. THE CALENDAR. 8. ANCIENT HIEROGLYPHIC BOOKS. 9. MODERN MAYA MANUSCRIPTS. 10. GRAMMARS AND DICTIONARIES OF THE LANGUAGE.
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#### § 1. *The Name "Maya."*

In his second voyage, Columbus heard vague rumors of a mainland westward from Jamaica and Cuba, at a distance of ten days' journey in a canoe.<sup>1</sup> Its inhabitants were said to be clothed, and the specimens of wax which were found among the Cubans must have been brought

<sup>1</sup> "Tambien diz [el Almirante] que supó que . . . aquella isla Española ó la otra isla Jamaye estaba cerca de tierra firme, diez jornadas de Canoa que podía ser sesenta á setenta leguas, y que era la gente vestida allí." Navarrete, *Viages*, Tom. I, pag. 127.