

Under the first of these headings fall a vast number of hieroglyphic inscriptions on stone, wood, shell, and bone, as well as three hieroglyphic manuscripts written on paper made of ficus tree bark covered with a fine surface of chalk. These three manuscripts, the Dresden codex, the Tro-Cortesianus codex, and the Perez codex are preserved in European libraries.

The deciphering of the hieroglyphs is advancing rapidly. Thirty years ago little was known as to what they contained. Now everything relating to the astronomical calculations of the sun, i. e., the Solar Calendar, can be read. We know that the monuments contain dates and astronomical calculations, and it is believed that they furthermore contain some historical data. The manuscripts more justly may be called books of astrology combined with astronomical tables.

To the second group belong the books of Chilán Balam, the Popol Vuh, and the Anals of the Cakchiquels, written by Indians who had learned to use the Spanish characters shortly after the Conquest.

The Conquerors themselves were more occupied with wielding the sword than the pen, so it fell to the clergy to write the first records about the Mayas. Foremost among the sources of the history of the Mayas stands the "Relaciones de las Cosas de Yucatan," by Bishop Landa, closely followed by books of Cogolludo, Lizana, Remesal, Nuñez de la Vega, and others. Most of what we know regarding the religion and customs of the ancient Maya we draw from these sources.

Under the last heading comes a multitude of explorations done in the various fields of Maya research in recent times, such as studies of language and dialects, and records of the daily life, the superstitions and beliefs of the now living Mayance Indians, as well as explorations of the ruined cities.

The greater part of the Mayance Indians of today are officially Catholic, but when living among them one soon discovers that they really lead, so to say, an archaeological life. They worship the Catholic Saints with pagan ceremonies. They live much as their forefathers, and have adopted exceedingly few modern facilities, of which the most important is the machete, or steel bush knife.

Turning to the history of the Mayas, we soon see that the written sources begin with purely mythological data, and do not reach historical ground before the period when the Mayas founded a colony at Bacalar, in the southern part of the peninsula at Yucatan. This means that we have no history connected with the Old Empire region, the region where we find such great quantities of ruined cities. We must, therefore, reconstruct the history of the Old Em-