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NOTES ON "CHOLTI" AND CHORTI

(on an anonymous author's "Cholti")

(on Charles Wisdom's Chorti)

(on Ernest Noyes Chorti)

by

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and

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MICROFILM COLLECTION

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ON

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# Notes on Cholti

(several times) — the author uses chol and cholti as synonymous.

## Independent pronouns:

- natgen
- natget
- ne
- natgon
- natgox
- natgot

## Possessive pronouns:

- in + u (before vowel)
- a + u
- u ~~change to~~ ui (?)
- ca + u
- i + u
- uob + i

Forms which may (perhaps be possessive) but seem to be mainly indirect objects:

- timba
- taba
- tuba
- ticaba
- tiba
- tubaob

## Object pronouns

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en

et

ne

on

ox

ob

---

i n menel = por mi

a "

n "

ca "

i menel

n menelob

---

Notice the following numerals:-

"Unus una unum = huntul [or] huntel = unie  
= un homme"; huntul taca = uno = 1.  
uxtul taca = sob tres.

---

machi = i'juin?

"Two verbs for estar": chumul ~~xxx~~ and aian :

agan ta ixim = hay maiz

There is a note saying: "Los Lacandones: an ixim."

chumul: chumulen = yo estoy

chumul paie tuzotot = está el padre en su casa. chumulon, chumulox, chumulot.

chunuanen = yo estuve

xchuleken = yo estaré

chulen = imperatius

chulenic = imper. pl.

He says that the present is formed by the auxiliary iual "le cual significa actualidad"

iual in chobben dios = amo a dios.

iual a chobben "

" u " "

" ca " "

" i " "

" u chobbenot..

In the preterite there is no auxiliary: -

in chobben dios = yo amé a dios

The future ~~of~~ means of the "auxiliary" x :-  
xin calen in chol = haré mi milpa

ahan = señor

ahanil = señora

tzutz = pelo ~ u tzutzel in kol = el cabello de mi casa

chu = idolo

u chaul ahitza ob = Los idolos de los ahitza

utz = bueno > utzil vinic = buen hombre

to = derecho > toil bihil = camino derecho (til = camino)



5.

Dec. 13, 1932

Dr. A. V. Kidder  
Andover, Mass.

Dear Dr. Kidder:

I suppose you have heard of Mr. Charles Wisdom, the young man who went to the field with Eric Thompson in his last field trip, and spent some time among the Chorti doing ethnological work. In his first trip he collected a rather extensive Chorti vocabulary. I went over the material with him, questioning him very critically, and gave him certain suggestions which he followed in his last trip to the same region.

He has now a very important vocabulary of the Chorti language. So far as accuracy of recording is concerned I would not hesitate in using his material in my future comparative work. The nature of the vocabulary is also something to be considered. A person doing linguistic work primarily would not be likely to get many of the terms he has recorded, or to obtain their full meaning in their culture, as one whose primary interest is ethnology.

Considering the scarcity of linguistic material on this language, and the fact that it is disappearing rather fast, I think his material should be published. I wonder whether this could not be done as a supplement to some future publication of the Institution. I asked him to give me a sample page, which I enclose herewith. He says he can limit the material to 150 pages like the sample, or extend it to 200 pages.

depending on how much information he gives with each word listed. He has considerable information, particularly on the terms related to the various aspects of their culture.

Some of the items on the sample page could be criticised from the point of view of clarity, but that is a matter to which I could attend before the manuscript is submitted for publication. The inclusion of family names, and the correct Chorti pronunciation of small geographical items constitute important material for comparative purposes. He collected many of these at my suggestion in his last trip.

I went over his phonetic transcription very carefully, and he agrees to use the system that I have adopted for the whole Maya area. The only change that will be made on the transcription of the sample page is that the International Phonetic Association symbol for the sh-sound will be substituted for the c used in American Indian languages, which I think is very confusing to any one but American anthropologists.

It is so doubtful that we could find a publisher for such a vocabulary, that I advised him not to prepare it for publication until we knew whether it could be published and how much space was available. The only other outlet I can think of is the American Anthropologist, and it is doubtful that they would give enough space. A vocabulary of this nature is of little value if the words are merely translated into English without further details.

Kindly let me know at your convenience whether you think there is any possibility of giving some space to this material in your future publications.

With best wishes,

Very sincerely,

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March, 1, 1934

Dr. A. V. Kidder  
Andover, Mass.

Dear Dr. Kidder:

I have delayed so long in answering your letter of Feb. 8 because I wished to give you a full report on Wisdom's material.

I am glad you approve of my plans for the year. I have already ordered from Germany the things I needed. Unfortunately, the Mark is exceedingly high just now, but I did not think it was practical to wait till it would go down. It might go higher, perhaps, and I cannot proceed to analyze the material I bought from Yucatan this last time till I get the instruments.

Answering your question concerning the amount to be budgetted for 1935, I would say that an amount equal to that of 1934 will be quite sufficient. I am very glad of the opportunity I have this year to get the things I have had need of since I entered the field. I may have to make minor improvements here and there, as difficulties in the field may suggest, and replace parts of the apparatus that may get out of order. I think I have all the essential instruments that can be taken to the field. I expect to go to Guatemala next year with the best equipment that to my knowledge has even been used in recording primitive languages. In this work, as in any other, machines save time and help to reduce the personal equation. I feel very hopeful for the progress of this work from now on.

Regarding Wisdom's Chorti material, I took the matter up with Redfield, and he suggests that it would not be desirable to publish it as an appendix to the ethnological material. I believe now he is right. The subject-matter has no direct bearing on the main manuscript, and it would be another instance of material being hidden where no one would think of looking for it. Also, it would make a rather long appendix.

As I wrote you before, Wisdom does not care how it is published, so long as something is done with it. As for myself, I shall have to use his vocabulary later on in my comparative work, and naturally, it would not be proper to ask him to let me use it to the extent that I would need to before it is in print. I realize that it is contrary to the policy of the Institution to accept manuscripts from those who are not members of the staff, and hence, I am just recommending it to your consideration in case an exception can be made. If the Institution does not accept it, I imagine it would be harder to find a publisher for the linguistic material than for his ethnological manuscript. The latter is of general interest, but a Chorti vocabulary is of very minor interest, except to those engaged in Maya research. From a more practical point of view, I would say that it is of value chiefly because it fits into our linguistic project. I have examined it carefully, in fact, I have given quite a few hours of my time to it, and I am convinced that one who is not doing ethnological research would not be likely to come across a good many of the words he has collected, and would not be able to give as full an account of their meaning. I wish we had that kind of material for all the other Maya groups. The vocabularies I may be able to record

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in addition to the other linguistic data are not likely to contain such terms. One has to penetrate to a considerable extent into the culture to find them. Needless to say, such words are likely to be very archaic. One cannot at present predict to what extent they may aid our historical reconstruction, but there is no reason to doubt that they can be valuable.

I asked Wisdom to make a rough estimate of the bulk of the data in his files, and true to the reputation for thoroughness he has in our Department, he went through an elaborate statistical sampling, and now reports that the manuscript would contain an approximate total of 71,000 words (Chorti and explanations), that at an average of 300 words per page there would be from 220 to 250 typewritten pages. This is the maximum bulk. In case the Institution should be disposed to take care of it, it may perhaps be possible to set a limit to the cost of publication, and then, without excluding any of the Chorti words collected, try to reduce the whole manuscript by a careful selection of the most essential items to be included under each word. It might happen that some of the items excluded would have to be referred to in future publications, but we can take a chance on that.

With kind regards from Mrs. Andrade,

Very sincerely yours,

Regarding Wisdom's Chorti material

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I have been told that it may be possible for the Institution to publish a part of his ethnological study of the Chorti. If this possibility materialises, would you consider including in this publication his Chorti vocabulary, about which I wrote you some time ago? If not, would you still consider publishing the vocabulary by the photographic process you mentioned at that time?

~~Mr. Noyes of the Dept. of Middle American Research of Tulane University sent a couple of weeks ago the Chorti~~ Having in part the same ground as Wisdom in the study of the Chorti language, and Wisdom is somewhat apprehensive that he will not get the priority that he deserves. In my opinion there is little to fear on this score, because Wisdom's work is the result of three field trips by a thorough and conscientious worker. However, I grant that it would be desirable that his work come out first.

I foresee that free lancing in the Maya field may bring about unpleasant conflicts, but the fault lies with the free lancers. Mr. Noyes suggested to me, when I went through New Orleans this last time, that "those of us" who plan to do linguistic work in the Maya languages should come to some understanding as to what languages each is going to study, so that there may not be unnecessary duplication. My reply was that I had already stated in the reports of the Carnegie Institution that my project was a comparative study of the whole family, which naturally necessitated a study of all, or most of the languages and dialects. Frans Blom seems to have endorsed Mr. Noye's project of doing comparative studies in the same field. Thus, I would conclude that if there will be unnecessary duplication, it will not be my fault. It seems to me that it is not customary to ask a man to change his project just because some one else chooses to undertake practically the same thing. Therefore, I shall go ahead with my original plans, and disregard whatever other work is done by others until some person of recognized qualifications turns up. When such a person enters the field of Maya linguistics I need not duplicate his work, but rather take advantage of it when published to facilitate an earlier completion of my project.

Very sincerely yours,

**END**  
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