



# Alone in Mexico: The Astonishing Travels of Karl Heller, 1845-1848

*Karl Bartolomeus Heller*

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## **Alone in Mexico: The Astonishing Travels of Karl Heller, 1845-1848** Karl Bartolomeus Heller

This volume is the first-ever English translation of the memoirs of Karl Heller, a twenty-year-old aspiring Austrian botanist who traveled to Mexico in 1845 to collect specimens. He passed through the Caribbean, lived for a time in the mountains of Veracruz, and journeyed to Mexico City through the cities of Puebla and Cholula. After a brief residence in the capital, Heller moved westward to examine the volcanoes and silver mines near Toluca.

When the United States invaded Mexico in 1846–47 conditions became chaotic, and the enterprising botanist was forced to flee to Yucatán. Heller lived in the port city of Campeche, but visited Mèrida, the ruins of Uxmal, and the remote southern area of the Champotòn River."

From there Heller, traveling by canoe, journeyed through southern Tabasco and northern Chiapas and finally returned to Vienna through Cuba and the United States bringing back thousands of samples of Mexican plants and animals.

Heller's account is one of the few documents we have from travelers who visited Mexico in this period, and it is particularly useful in describing conditions outside the capital of Mexico City.

In 1853 Heller published his German-language account as *Reisen in Mexiko*, but the work has remained virtually unknown to English or Spanish readers. This edition now provides a complete, annotated, and highly readable translation.

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