

Edited with an Introduction by Manu Samriti  
Chander

# SCRIPTOLOGY

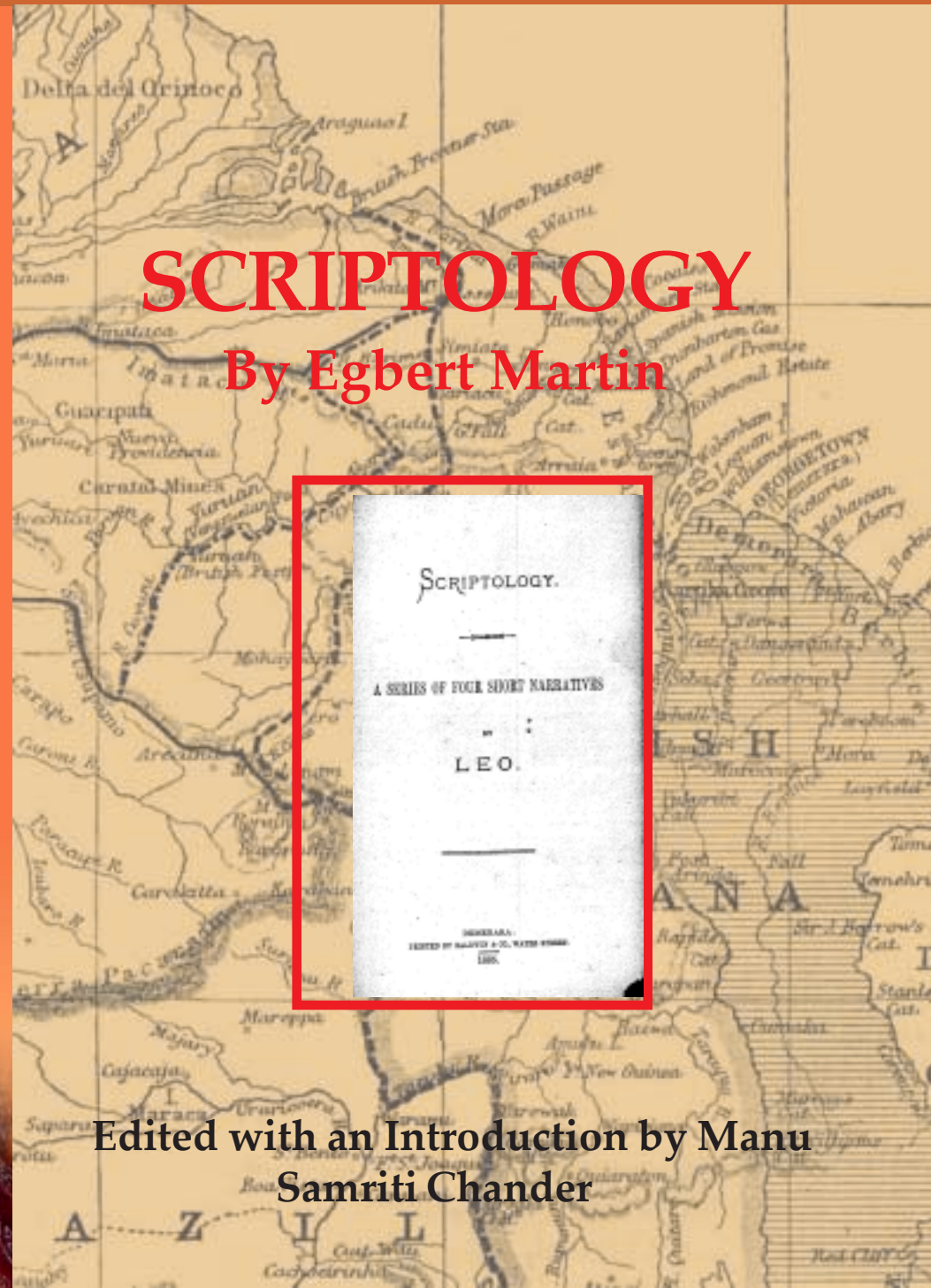
By Egbert Martin

**Scriptology documents the “knots and notches” that comprise colonial life, offering a record of the quotidian that is at once fictional and real.**

Without Egbert Martin, there would be no such thing as ‘scriptology.’ Martin (writing under his penname ‘Leo’) seems to have coined the term to describe the four stories published in 1885, between his two poetry collections, *Leo’s Poetical Works* (1883) and *Leo’s Local Lyrics* (1886). Like those other works, *Scriptology* announces its genre, or rather it *suggests*—in the absence of a ready definition—a genre, the conventions of which are left for us, his readers, to determine.

Martin’s characters form a discrete class of people, held together by something stronger than geography (in fact, specific geographical references are carefully excluded from *Scriptology*). They share a language—English—with its own peculiarities and they share an unspoken vocabulary as well, a system of social codes, assumptions and expectations. *Scriptology* gives voice to these ideas, sometimes to affirm them, often to satirize them, always to make them visible to an audience familiar with Victorian colonial mores.

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