Nahuatl Dialect Subgroupings

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1. 2.   Traditionally, the numerous Nahua dialects spoken in Mexico and South of Mexico have been classified as ƛ-dialects (Nahuatl), t-dialects (Nahuat), and l-dialects (Nahual) according to their reflex of Uto-Aztecan *t before *a,

Uto-Aztecan *taka	ƛa:ka-
(Miller #272)	ta:ka-
	la:ka-

Underlying this classification is the assumption that Uto-Aztecan *t became ƛ only in some of the dialects

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              *t
             /  \
           ƛ      t
          / \
         ƛ   l
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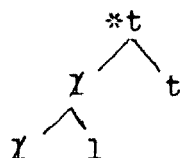
and presumably this ƛ later developed into l in some dialects. This last developement is still in progress in some areas.

However, Campbell and Langacker have recently suggested (ms p. 55-56) that Uto-Aztecan *t became ƛ already in Proto-Aztecan, and that this ƛ later changed back to t in some of the dialects:

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Uto-Aztecan        *t
                    |
Proto-Aztecan      *ƛ
                   /  \
                  ƛ    t
                 / \
                ƛ   l
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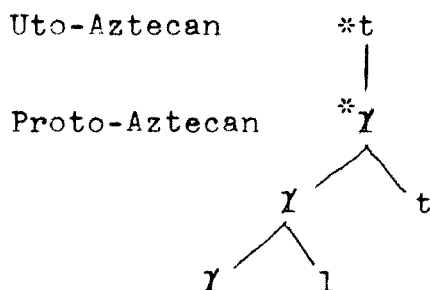
They support this hypothesis with two arguments:

First: ʎ is assimilated to a preceding l also in t-dialects
so that there is   contrast between a cluster ll < lʎ < *lt
and a cluster lt in which the t has not passed through a ʎ-stage.
Their example is koma:l-li 'comal', koma:l-lan 'place of co-
males' which have l(l) also in t-dialects.

Second: in a few words, original*a following *t has changed
into o or e(i), Cl. N. ʎo?-ʎi 'hawk', ʎe-ʎ 'fire', and ʎe?ko
'ascend'. Since all dialects share this change of vowel, it
is assumed to have taken place in Proto-Aztecan, and in these
words, preceding the vowel in question, *t shows up as ʎ in
the ʎ-dialects. The development of *t to ʎ is conditioned by
a following a, consequently the development of *t to ʎ must
have taken place prior to the vowel change, i. e. also in
Proto-Aztecan:

1. *t > ʎ/_a

2. *a > o/'hawk'
          e/'fire', 'ascend'

Their first argument is not immediately convincing in the
case of Pipil since the obvious situation where lʎ > ll is
expected, namely -l-ʎi, noun plus absolutive suffix, does not
occur in Pipil; the absolutive suffix is not found with nouns
ending in l:

Cl. N.	Pipil	
kal-li	kal	house
ʎa:l-li	tal	earth
koma:l-li	kumal	comal

(cf. p.13 for other cases of the absolutive suffix being
dropped after l.)
The absolutive suffix is not lost after other consonants
in Pipil:

Cl. N	Pipil	
po:k-ʎi	puk-ti	smoke
ne:kʷ-ʎi	nek-ti	honey
mec-ʎi	mec-ti	moon
iĉ-ʎi	iĉ-ti	fiber

teksis-łi	teksis-ti	snail/egg
miš-łi	miš-ti	cloud
sin-łi	sin-ti	corn
o?-łi	uh-ti	road

Clearly there is no tendency towards dropping the absolutive suffix in Pipil in general, and since the Campbell/Langacker argument involving assimilation of ł to a preceding 1 can be demonstrated for the other t-dialects, it is reasonable to consider the loss of the absolutive suffix after 1 an indirect indication of the fact that it had the shape łi at some time also in Pipil. It is thus beyond doubt that all the t-dialects, including Pipil, have passed through a stage with ł from *t before *a.

As to their second argument, it should be pointed out that the word for 'hawk' does not have initial ł in all the t-dialects (or initial 1 in the 1-dialects):

CC, Teloloapan	tu?dli
Ixcatepec	to?łi
Tetelcingo	tohłi
Acatlan	tohłe
Zitlala	tohłi
Xalatzala	tohłi

In fact I know of _ło?łi_ only in Cl. N.

The change of *a to e(i) (in _łeł_ and _łe?ko_) is not so foreign to Nahuatl that it could not have taken place independently in several localities.

If it is assumed that UA *t went to ł in Proto-Aztecan -- I find this a correct assumption -- then the classification into nahuatl, nahuat, and nahual does not reflect a split as old as it has formerly been thought to do. Furthermore, it runs counter to a number of isoglosses.

For the purpose of recognizing subgroupings within the Nahuatl dialect area, I consider one grammatical isogloss basic:

The perfect of verbs is formed in a number of ways in the various dialects:

N. G.	Valley of M	La Huasteca	Isthmus	
pala:ni	paƛa:ni	paƛa:ni	pata:ni	present
opala:ni	opaƛa:n	paƛa:nki	pata:nik	perfect

(cf Hasler 1961 p. 459)

Importance has been ascribed to the presence versus absence of the suffix -k(i) and to the presence/absence of the prefix o (cf Hasler 1961 p. 459 and Lastra de Suarez 1974 p. 390).

However, the fundamental distinction is found somewhere else, namely in the loss versus the retention of the stem final vowel in the perfect. The original form is here assumed to have been *pata:ni-ka:. In N.G. the suffix *ka: > ki was lost. In the Valley of Mexico and La Huasteca the stem final vowel i was lost and later the suffix was lost in the Valley of Mexico. In Isthmus only the final i (of the suffix) was lost (for a detailed treatment of the perfect formation see Canger forthcoming).

The loss of the stem final vowel in the perfect represents an innovation which has spread out from the Valley of Mexico some time before the conquest. It is a characteristic feature of the dialects spoken in the Valley of Mexico, Tlaxcala, Morelos, Central Guerrero, Central Puebla, Northern Puebla, and the dialect area called La Huasteca comprising dialects spoken in San Luis Potosí, Hidalgo, Vera Cruz, and the Northernmost tip of Puebla. The dialect areas which participated in the loss of the stem final vowel I call the Central dialects.

The dialect areas which did not participate in the loss of the stem final vowel I call Peripheral. They encompass a number of areas to the West, South, and East of the Central area, which are not specifically closely related. Recently some of the Peripheral dialects have lost the stem final vowel due to a general tendency towards loss of final vowels, and that has made the innovation a less obvious, distinguishing feature.

This line the [illegible]
Not an old split but an isolated [illegible] in the [illegible]
Central represented a crucial important division of the dialect area

In compounds made up of a nuclear verb, the ligature -ti-,
and a verb of motion or position, the stem final vowel of the
nuclear verb was lost already in Proto-Aztecan and so is gene-
rally not found in any Peripheral or Central dialects:

N. G.	Valley of Mexico	La Huasteca	Isthmus
pala:n-ti-ka	paƚa:n-ti-ka?	paƚa:n-t-o-k	pata:n-t-o-k

The occurrence of the prefix o̲ does not coincide with any
other feature I know of. By occurrence I do not mean obliga-
tory or frequent use of o̲, but contrast the absolute absence
(hard to prove) of o̲ with the occurrence of o̲ with even just
a few verbs.

But the isogloss separating off the Central dialects from
the Peripheral ones coincides exactly with another isogloss.
In all the Central dialects (excepting only those in the Valley
of Mexico, San Martín de las Pirámides, and possibly Tlaxcala)
a certain class of verbs have the suffix -wi̲ for the intransi-
tive and the suffix -wa̲ for the transitive verb,

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toma:wi   he gets fat
ki-toma:wa   he fattens him

as opposed to the Peripheral dialects and -- curiously enough
-- the very central ones (Valley of Mexico, San Martín d.l.P.,
and possibly Tlaxcala) in which both the transitive and the
intransitive have the suffix -wa̲:

Peripheral	Sierra de Puebla		
	Isthmus	toma:waya	tr/intr
	Jalisco 1765	ĉikawayia	tr/intr
	Jalisco 1692		
	N. G.	toma:wa	tr/intr
	Pipil	tomawa	tr/intr
Central	La Husteca West. Sect.	toma:wiya	intr
	North Puebla	toma:wi	intr

		Morelos	toma:<u>wi</u>	intr
<u>Narrow core</u>	Cl. N. San Martín d.l.P.		toma:<u>wa</u>	tr/intr

Furthermore, in none of the Central dialects is ɬ changed into t, but is retained as ɬ (possibly excepting one village in Morelos, Xoxocotla (Hasler 1961 and Dakin 1974).

Thus the characteristics of the Central dialects as a group are:

1) participation in the loss of the stem final vowel, an innovation spread from the Valley of Mexico starting before the conquest

2) inchoatives in -<u>wi</u>, possibly superseded by a change to -<u>wa</u> in the core area *(excepting a small core area which has -wa)*

3) ɬ

The third feature is not exclusively charateristic of the Central dialects.

Other important isoglosses cut through this area, some simply dividing it into more restricted areas and some connecting these restricted areas with one or several of the Peripheral dialects.

3. <u>Core area</u> - <u>metathesis</u>. We have already seen that a narrow core area is characterized by having *tr/intr* inchoatives in -<u>wa</u>. A slightly larger core area, including Morelos, shares an innovation in the formation of the so-called applicative verbs. The basic suffix employed in forming applicatives is -<u>lia</u>. In and around the Valley of Mexico verbs in -<u>oa</u> have applicatives in -<u>lwia</u> which is the result of a metathesis not found outside this area:

	<u>N.G./La Huast.</u>	<u>Cl. N.</u>	
kotocoa	kotoca:wilia	kotocalwia	'shrink'
ihk^{w}iloa	ihk^{w}ilwilia	iʔk^{w}ilwia	'write'

Probably the i between w and l was dropped, then metathesis

of wl took place, and in verbs with l preceding oa of the
simple transitive form one l and the i separating the two l's
dropped:

	*kotoc̷a:wilia	*iʔkʷiliwilia
i > ∅	↓	↓
	kotoc̷awlia	iʔkʷiliwlia
metathesis	↓	↓
	kotoc̷alwia	iʔkʷililwia
"lil > l"		↓
		iʔkʷilwia
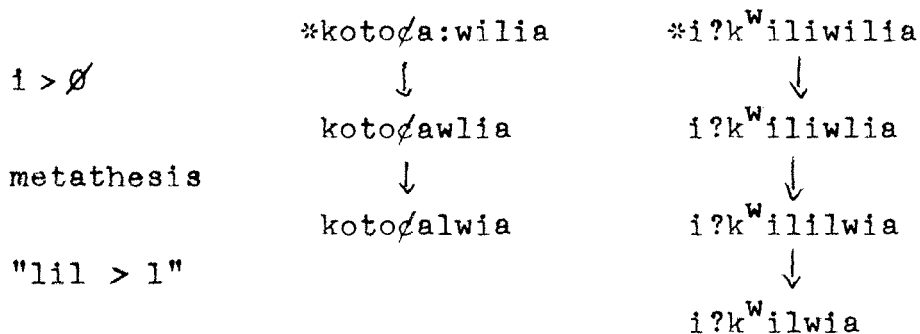
Unfortunately only a few publications include data on
applicatives formed from verbs in -oa, so it is impossible
for me to plot the exact boundary of this innovation.

La Huasteca.   Another distinct area within the Central area
is La Huasteca characterized by
1) forming the future plural in -seh as opposed to -skeh in
most other dialects; in some of the dialects in La Huasteca
-seh varies with -skeh

Cl. N.	La Huasteca	
ki:sa-skeh	ki:sa-seh	they will go out

-seh for futre plural is found also in Acatlán, Central Gro.
and in Michoacán.
2)(optionally)retaining the suffix -ki in the singular perfect

ki:s-ki   he went out
ki-miktih-(ki)   he killed him

3) using the form -ic̷tok for the singular of the verb 'be
somewhere'
4) La Huasteca is distinct from most of the other Central
dialects in not employing the plural suffix -tin with nouns,
but only -meh. And it shares the use of -tin for plural of
pronouns with the Western Peripheral dialects.
        La Huasteca displays features which connect it with some
of the Eastern Peripheral areas,

5) initial <u>e</u> does not get a prothetic <u>y</u>

	La Huasteca	Central Gro.	
	eλ	<u>y</u>eλ	'beans'

This prothetic y has probably developed fairly recently. It does not occur in Cl. N. nor in the two Jalisco grammars from 1692 and 1765, but today it is found in almost all the Western Peripheral dialects and in the Central dialects, excepting La Huasteca area.

6) the prefix <u>o</u> does not occur in La Huasteca

7) in agreement with Pipil, Isthmus, and Sierra de Puebla, La Huasteca preserves the stem final vowel in the words for 'warm' and 'green':

Cl. N.	La Huasteca	
totonki	toto:nik	warm
šošo:wki	šošo:wik	green

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8) With Pipil and Isthmus it shares the word <u>teksisλi</u> for 'egg' as opposed to <u>totolteλ</u> found in almost all the other dialects

5. <u>Central Guerrero</u>. Another distinct area in the Central area is Central Guerrero which is characterized by the following features:

1) A system of negations in which ~~three~~ different negative markers are used: for three distinct :
  α1) in declarative and interrogative sentences and with <u>λah</u>,'something' and <u>aka</u> 'some one', always (<u>ko)š</u> (cf Cl.N. <u>k</u>^w<u>iš</u> 'yes-no-question coming up')
  b 2) with imperatives and single words, <u>a:mo</u> or <u>ma:ka</u> according to dialect
  c 3) the simple answer 'no', everywhere <u>ka</u>

examples <u>Cl.N.</u>   <u>Zitlala</u>

α 1)	a?-mo: koči	(ko)š koči	he doesn't sleep
	a?-λe(in)	(ko)š-λah	nothing
	a?-ya:k	(ko)š-aka	no one

2) $\begin{Bmatrix} \text{ma:ka(mo:)} \\ \text{a?mo:} \end{Bmatrix}$ šikk^{W}aka:n   ma:kaš(i)k^{W}aka:n   do not eat it [pl

ma:ka(mo:) kik^{W}aka:n   ma:ka ma k^{W}aka:n   that they don't ea
                                                                    it

a?mo: ne?wa:ɤ   ma:ka nahwa   not I ...

3) a?mo: ka   no

2) For a kind of progressive form with the ligature -ti- and
the verb 'be' Central Gro. has -ti-kah for the singular and
-t-o-keh for the plural as opposed to -ti-kah, -tikate(h) of
the Central area and the Western Periphery, and -t-o-k and
-t-o-keh for La Huasteca and the Eastern Periphery. In La
Huasteca, Sierra de Puebla, Ahuacatlan, and some other adjacent
dialects -ti-kah, -ti-kateh are used also but with a marked
reverential or affectionate meaning.

Zitlala: ɤa-k^{W}ah-ti-kah   he is eating
         ɤa-k^{W}ah-t-o-keh   they are eating

Xalatzala, near Tlapa, does not share this feature, but has
-tikah, -ti-kate.

3) Except in the Eastern section around Tlapa, the plural
suffix -tin is used with nouns alongside with the suffix -meh.
In addition -meh is employed for the plural of pronouns and
in some villages also with the word for all:

Zitlala: tahwameh   we
           yehwameh   they
           nočimeh   all (plural)

Central Gro. shares this feature with Isthmus and Pipil:

Pipil: te(he)-met   we
           ye(he)-met   they

Isthmus   tehe-meḵ   we
           yehe-meț   they

4) With parts of Morelos and Northern Gro., Central Gro.

shares a phonologic reinterpretation of a word used to indicate possession:

Cl. N.	Central Gro.	
no-aška	no-waška	it is mine
i-aška	i-waška	it is his

Western Periphery. The dialects spoken in Durango, Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacán share a number of features:

1) -lo for plural of subject in the present tense and in some places also in other verb forms (cf Jeff Burnham here):

Michoacan	ti-k-ana-lo	we take it
Jalisco 1692	ti-ahui-lo	we go
Durango	an-tiš-maka-l	you (pl) give it to us

2) The conditional and the imperfect have the suffixes skiaya and -(y)aya as opposed to -skia and -ya in other areas. This feature is shared also by Northern Gro.

3) Also shared by the Western Periphery and Northern Gro. is the singular of the verb 'be' in onkah:

ni-unka(h)	I am somewhere
ti-unka(h)	you are somewhere
ti-kate	we are somewhere

4) The word used to indicate possession is in the Western Periphery reinterpreted as beginning with y, thus

no-yaška	it is mine
i-yaška	it is his

5) The plural suffix -tin is not used with nouns, but it occurs with pronouns and a few quantifiers.

6) The word for 'fire' is λešušλi in the Western Periphery, North Gro., and in some villages in Central Gro. as opposed to λeλ or λiλ in the rest of the area.

8/7) The word <u>komo:ni</u> is used for 'thunder' in the Western area including North Gro., some villages in Central Gro., and La Huasteca, Western section.

<u>North Guerrero</u>. Not far from Morelos and from the Central Gro. dialect area in Northern Guerrero a distinct Peripheral dialect is spoken. It was already seen that it shares a number of features with dialects of the Western Periphery. It is furthermore characterized by the following features:

1) Verbs which in other dialects end in <u>i</u> here end in <u>ia</u>

Cl. N.	N. G.	
koči	kočia	he sleeps
ne:si	ne:sia	he appears
k-(o:n)i	ko:nia	he drinks it

This development is found also in the Jalisco dialect described by Cortés y Zedeño in 1765.

2) The suffix for 1. person plural is in the present tense -<u>ka</u>

Cl. N.	N. G.	
ti-koči-?	ti-koči-ka	we sleep

3) In the imperfect the plural marker is -<u>?ke</u> rather than -<u>h/?</u>

Cl. N.	N. G.	
koči-ya	koči-yaya	he was sleeping
koči-ya-?	koči-ya-?ke	they were sleeping

4) A drastic reduction of the personal prefixes has taken place with transitive verbs

Cl. N.	N. G.	
ni-k-piya	mpia	I have it
ti-k-piya	h̃pia	you (sg) have it

5) North Guerrero has ? corresponding to Cl. N. ? and to h in most modern dialects.

North Guerrero shares the following three features with Michoacan:

6) In almost all environments it has 1 for ł of the Central dialects

Cl. N	N. G.	
ła:kał	la:kal	man

7) No trace of the directional suffixes -ti:w, -to, -kiw, and -ko is preserved in North Guerrero or in Michoacan (cf Sischo n. d. p.88).

8) Both in Michoacan and in most dialects of North Gro. the absolutive suffix is preserved optionally with the independent personal pronouns in the singular:

N. G.	Mich.	
na:l	newal/nel	I

This is the case in only a few other of the modern dialects:

Durango	nel
Milpa Alta	ne?wał/ne?wa?
North Puebla	ne?(wa:ł)
La Huasteca	na(ha)
Tlaxcala	neh
San Martín P.	ne(wa)
Tetelcingo	naha
Xalitla	newa
Copalillo	naha
Acatlan	nahwa
Zitlala	nahwa
S. Juan Tetelcingo	ne:hwa
Xalatzala	nehwa
Quetzalapa	neha
Sierra de P	nehwa
Zongolica	neh
Isthmus	neh, nehwa, neha
Pipil	na(ha)

In discussing La Huasteca (p. 8), I mentioned some features which this area shares with Sierra de Puebla, Isthmus, and Pipil (absence of prothetic y before e; absence of the prefix o 'past'; toto:nik and šošo:wik with the stem final vowel retained; and teksisλi for 'egg'.)

The three latter areas furthermore share

1) a development of t from λ

2) a tendency towards dropping the absolutive suffix after l, carried through under all conditions in Pipil; in Isthmus -li is dropped only with polysyllabic nouns; and in Sierra de Puebla -li is dropped with polysyllabic nouns and with monosyllabic nouns which have a long vowel:

Cl. N.	Isthmus	Sierra de P	Pipil	
komal-li		koma:l	kumal	comal
λak^walli	taba:l	tak^wa:l	tak^wal	food
λaškalli	taškal	taškal		tortilla
či:lli	čihli	či:l	čil	chile
mi:lli	mihli	mi:l	mil	field
λa:lli	tahli	ta:l	tal	earth
kalli	kahli	kali	kal	house

This tendency is seen also in Tlaxcala where -li is dropped with polysyllabic roots as in Isthmus.

Isthmus and Pipil are separated off from Sierra de Puebla by a number of features:

1) Plural of the independent personal pronouns is in Isthmus and Pipil expressed by -meh/-met, whereas Sierra de Puebla has neither -tin nor -meh, but only the old plural suffix -n if even that; this is true also of the areas adjacent to Sierra de Puebla: North Puebla, Tlaxcala, and Central Puebla.

Pipil	te(he)-met
Isthmus	tehe-meh

Sierra de Puebla	tehwa
North Puebla	te?wã:
Ahuacatlan	tehwan
Tlaxcala	tehwah
Zoquitlán	tefa

2) A construction consisting of nemi plus a nuclear verb appears to be common for a kind of progressive both in Isthmus and in Pipil:

nemi tawantuk	'he is drunk'	Schultze-Jena p. 244
nemi ni-ta-k^{w}a	'I am eating'	Canger 1976c p. 33,36

3) The word for 'pig' is pičoł in most dialects, however, along the Pacific: in Michoacan and in Quetzalapa, and in Isthmus and Pipil we find a form koyame.

4) Pipil and Isthmus exclusively share the word -pal to express possession:

Isthmus	Pipil	
no-pal	nu-pal	it is mine
i-pal	i-pal	it is his

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INAE :	Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia
Inv.Ling.:	Investigaciones Lingüísticas
UNAM :	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

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KEY TO MAP

1.   San Pedro Jícora, Durango.   ~~Schultze-Jena 1935~~   Preuss 1971 and 1976
2.   Obispado de Guadalajara, etc.   Guerra 1692
3.   Obispado de Guadalajara.   Cortés y Zedeno 1765
4.   San Andrés Ixtlan, Jalisco.   Arreola 1943-34
5.   Tuxpan, Jalisco.   Arreola 1934
                                                          Ruvalcaba 1935
6.   Suchitlán, Colima.   Arreola 1934
7.   Pómara, Michoacán.   Sischo n.d.
8.   Almomoloa, México.   Schumann & García de L. 1966
9.   C.C., Teloloapan, Guerrero.   Canger 1976a
10. Chilacachapa, Guerrero.   Weitlaner 1940.
11. Totoltepec, Guerrero.   Hendrichs P. 1946
12. Ixcatepec, Guerrero   McQuown 1941
                                                          Hendrichs P. 1946
13. Cuatlamayán, Cd. Santos, SLP.   Kaufman 1969b
14. Matlapa, SLP.   Croft 1953
15. Huautla, Hidalgo.   Beller & Beller 1976
16. Tantoyuca, Vera Cruz.   Kaufman 1969a
17. Las Balsas, Puebla.   Canger 1976f
                                                          Hertle 1972
18. Huauchinango, Puebla.   Canger 1976b
19. Atequexquitla, Xicotepec, Puebla.   Hertle 1972
20. Atla, Pahuatlán, Puebla.   Hertle 1972
21. Tlaola, Puebla.   Hertle 1972
22. Ahuacatlán, Puebla.   Lara M. 1976
                                                          Hertle 1972
23. Zacapoaxtla, Puebla.   Key & Key 1953
24. Zautla, Puebla.   Canger 1976e
25. San Pedro Tlacuapan, Tlaxcala.   Bright 1967
26. San Miguel Canoa, Puebla.   Hertle 1972
27. Tlaxcalancingo, San Andres Cholula.   Hertle 1972
28. Coapan, Tehuacán, Puebla.   Hertle 1972
29. Zoquitlán, Puebla.   Canger 1976d
30. Zongolica, Vera Cruz.   Goller, Goller & Waterhouse 1974
31. San Martín de las Pirámides, México.   Gonzalez C. 1922
32. Classical Nahuatl.   Molina 1571, Carochi 1645
33. Milpa Alta, D.F.   Whorf 1946
34. Tepoztlán, Morelos.   Whorf 1946
35. Tetelcingo, Morelos.   Brewer & Brewer 1962

36.	Xalitla, Guerrero.	Canger 1976k
37.	Copalillo, Guerrero.	Canger 1976h
38.	San Juan Tetelcingo, Guerrero.	Weitlaner 1940
39.	Atliaca, Guerrero.	Mason & Pickett n.d.
40.	Zitlala, Guerrero.	Canger 1973
41.	Acatlán, Guerrero.	Canger 1976i Weitlaner 1943
42.	Hueycantenango, Guerrero.	Weitlaner 1943
43.	Xalatzala, Guerrero.	Canger 1976g
44.	Quetzalapa, Guerrero.	Canger 1976j
45.	Mecayapan, Vera Cruz.	Law 1958 Canger 1976c
46.	Pajapan, Vera Cruz.	García de L. 1976
47.	Izalco, El Salvador	Schultze-Jena 1935
48.	Pochutla, Oaxaca.	Boas 1917