NAHUATL DIALECTOLOGY:
A SURVEY AND SOME SUGGESTIONS[1]

UNA CANGER

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

1. Introduction. No American Indian language offers a richer and more diversified fund of material than the Uto-Aztecan language Nahuatl. From the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we have a wide variety of texts covering a great many different subjects, a comprehensive Spanish–Nahuatl, Nahuatl–Spanish dictionary (Molina 1571), and a number of grammars written by Spanish missionaries; the language is abundantly documented from the colonial period, and a number of modern dialects and the dialect situation in general have been studied in this century.

Undoubtedly, Nahuatl is also the American Indian language most frequently quoted and employed by scholars from other fields who base their research in history, archaeology, art history, sociology, etc. on the interpretation of texts and specific terms from the Nahuatl lexicon.·

Thoroughly and explicitly argued descriptions of the language and its history involving also its dialectology are therefore basic tools for both linguists and other scholars working with the Nahuatl culture. But we need more collaboration between scholars from these different fields. As linguists we must try to present the results of our work with the Nahuatl language in a manner sufficiently freed from technical and theoretical jargon to make it immediately accessible to scholars from other fields.

The main purposes of the present paper are two: (1) to clarify how we should view the known Nahuatl dialect subgroupings, and (2) to outline how we may recognize some stage—or stages—of the dialect situation which existed prior to the Spanish conquest by combining the study of modern Nahuatl dialects with the registration and study of variation and dialect evidence in the written materials, a study which must lean on traditional philological methods. However, as a basis for both of these

purposes and as a chapter in the study of an American Indian language of importance to scholars in many fields, I have found it useful to preface the paper with a review of Nahuatl dialectology and of the resulting classifications of Nahuatl dialects.[2]

2. Survey of Nahuatl dialectology in the twentieth century. Nahuatl dialectology has attracted surprisingly little attention among scholars concerned with the various aspects of Nahuatl culture. One reason for this may be that Classical Nahuatl—a concept to which I shall return in some detail later—until recently has been considered the only correct and original form of the language; therefore, no other dialect invited any general interest; nor did Nahuatl dialectology seem to have anything to offer since it was the common idea that the dialects had all developed from (or were corruptions of) Classical Nahuatl.

In the early studies of contemporary Nahuatl, Classical Nahuatl is used for comparison and as a backdrop (take, for example, Boas 1917, Gonzalez C. 1922, Preuss 1925, Schultze Jena 1935, Whorf 1946 [1939], and Croft 1953*b*), but then that is only natural since Classical Nahuatl for a long time was the only (well) documented dialect. Understandably enough, it is still by far the best-known dialect.

2.1. The early period: Lehmann, Whorf, and Mason and the origin of the λ-*t*-*l*-trichotomy. It is thus characteristic of those who made the early attempts at a classification of the Nahuatl dialects that they had a restricted knowledge of modern dialects and their diversification, and that they tried to connect the linguistic evidence on which they based their classifications with the preconquest history of the many Nahuatl-speaking groups. This is true of Lehmann, Whorf, and Mason.

In his comprehensive presentation of the Central American languages, Walter Lehmann gives a lengthy treatment of the history of different Nahuatl-speaking groups as related by the early chroniclers, and he quotes some previous classifications of the Nahuatl dialects, García de Palacio (1576) and Juarros (1857) (Lehmann 1920:993 and 101–4). He suggests a basic distinction between Nahuatl and Nahuat (1920:978), considering the latter to be older than even the antiquated Nahuatl of the old hymns. He says on page 990:

The great age of the Aztec language is attested above all in the hymns collected by Sahagún which Seler (Gesammelte Abhandlungen II, pp. 961–1007) published in the

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2 Where others have used Aztec, Nahua, or Nahuatl-Nahuat-Nahual, I prefer Nahuatl as a general term for the language and its many dialects. In making this choice, I wish to emphasize the recognition of λ as a Proto-Nahuatl phoneme and rid us of the λ-*t*-*l* trichotomy, which can no longer be maintained.

original from the Sahagún manuscripts in the Biblioteca Laurenziana and the Biblioteca del Palacio accompanying the text with a translation and comments. At the time when Sahagún recorded them in Tepeopulco (Province of Tezcoco), these hymns were already so difficult to understand that it was necessary to provide them with a commentary in the Aztec language of that time; this Aztec commentary has fortunately been preserved and permits us to compare the ancient Nahuatl forms with the younger Aztec ones. Remarkably enough, in spite of numerous peculiarities, due partly to the poetic metre, the ancient dialect still appears as old Aztec since the distinctive sound *tl* which is completely missing in Nahuat (vulgar Mexican) is used throughout. In Nahuat, Pipil (from Guatemala and El Salvador), Nicarao, Nahuat from Jalisco and San Juan de Teul, Nahual from Pochutla etc. *l* after *t* is not pronounced. From this characteristic one should probably draw the conclusion that the *tl*-less dialects derive from Toltec, and Toltec was precisely Nahuat, a language which deviated "somewhat" from Aztec (Mexican). Consequently the Nahuat-Pipil dialects must in their origin have been older than Sahagún's already ancient hymns because the Toltec precedes the Aztec both linguistically, culturally, and archaeologically. As the dialect from Izalco in El Salvador according to my notes has preserved fuller grammatical forms than the Mexican Aztec, it follows that the former must be older than the latter, yes even older than Sahagún's Oldaztec hymns, older than Pipil from Guatemala. [My translation—UC.][3]

Concerning the relationship between t and λ, which later acquired such an important role in the classification of Nahuatl dialects, Lehmann (1920:980) considers λ to be a development of Uto-Aztecan t which has taken place in the one central dialect area only. He quotes Sapir, with whom he disagrees on this point:

[3] Das hohe Alter schon der aztekischen Sprache wird vor allem durch die von Sahagun gesammelten Götterhymnen bezeugt, die Seler (ges. Abhdlg. II pp. 961–1007) im Urtext mit Übersetzung und Anmerkungen herausgegeben hat nach den Sahagun-Manuskripten der Biblioteca Laurenziana und der Biblioteca del Palacio. Diese Hymnen waren schon zur Zeit, als sie Sahagun in Tepeopulco (Provinz Tezcoco) aufzeichnete, so schwer verständlich, dass es nötig war sie mit einem Kommentar in der damaligen aztekischen Sprache zu versehen; dieser aztekische Kommentar ist glücklicherweise erhalten und gestattet uns die altertümlichen Nahuatl-Formen mit den jüngeren aztekischen zu vergleichen. Bemerkenswerterweise erscheint die altertümliche Mundart trotz zahlreicher, zum Teil durch das poetische Versmass bedingter Besonderheiten insofern immer noch als altes Aztekisch, als der charakteristische Laut *tl* durchgehend verwendet wird, der jedoch dem Nahuat (Vulgärmexikanischen) grade fehlt. Im Nahuat, Pipil (von Guatemala und Salvador), Nicarao, Nahuat von Jalisco und San Juan de Teul, Nahual von Pochutla etc., wird *l* nach *t* nicht gesprochen. Aus dieser Eigentümlichkeit darf man wohl den Schluss ziehen, dass die *tl*-losen Dialekte sich vom Toltekischen ableiten, das ja eben ein vom Aztekischen (Mexikanischen) "etwas" abweichendes Idiom, ein Nahuat, war. Mithin müssen die Nahuat-Pipil Dialekte in ihrem Ursprung älter sein als die schon altertümlichen Hymnen Sahagun's, weil das Toltekische dem Aztekischen sprachlich, kulturhistorisch und archäologisch vorhergeht. Da das Izalco von Salvador nach meinen Aufnahmen vollere grammatische Formen bewahrt als das Mexikanisch-Aztekische, so folgt daraus, dass das erste älter sein muss als das letzte, ja sogar älter als das Altaztekische der Hymnen Sahagun's, älter als das Pipil Guatemalas.

To Nahuatl *tl* regularly correspond in all Shoshonean and Sonoran dialects reflexes of Uto-Aztekan *t*; in other words, it is possible to keep apart Uto-Aztekan *t* from *tl* only in Nahuatl itself (in Pipil and Nahuatl dialects spoken in Oaxaca, however, *tl* has developed to *t*). If it were possible to formulate some law accounting for Nahuatl *tl* as developed from original *t* according to certain phonetic circumstances, we could dispense with an Uto-Aztekan *tl*. As this cannot be done, it seems necessary to assume Uto-Aztekan *tl* as well as *t*. It may be that more complete and carefully sifted evidence than can now be presented will later show that the reflexes of Uto-Aztekan *t* and *tl* are not always identical even outside of Nahuatl itself. (Sapir 1919:456.)

Without adducing any supporting arguments, Lehmann maintains his own position (1920:980):

Sapir thinks that the *t* in the Nahuat dialects is a development from old *tl*: but it is precisely the *t* in these dialects, which go back to the language of the old Nahua (Toltecs), that is the more ancient, and *tl* the younger. It is not *tl* which has developed into *t*, but *t* has changed to *tl*. One should thus not speak of Uto-Aztecan *tl*, but of Aztec (Nahuatl) *tl*.

"Nahuatl" is (from an Aztec point of view) the classical Aztec or classical Mexican, strictly speaking the *tl*-language. Opposed to this we have the ancient *t*-dialects of the Nahua or Tolteca-Chichimeca (i.e., Toltecs who have come from the North) who thus did not speak Nahuatl, but Nahuat. Broadly speaking, Nahuat and Nahuatl are Mexican languages, dialects which go back to an old parent language, the language of the Proto-Mexicans or the Proto-Nahuas. [Translation mine—UC.][4]

In various places Lehmann thus uses the distinction between Nahuatl and Nahuat as a basic division of the Nahuatl dialects, and some consider him to be the originator of this division (see, for example, Lanczkowski 1970:12):

The language of the Pipil, of the "princes," the Pipil of El Salvador and Guatemala, as well as the Nicarao from Nicaragua, was under Toltec influence. Walter Lehmann, a student of Eduard Seler's, has used the observation of a striking and generally valid difference between these languages and the Aztec language as a terminological distinction, viz. where Aztec has the *tl*-sound, we find a *t*-sound in Toltec, Pipil, and Nicarao; in other words, there they speak *nahuat* and not *nahuatl*. Lehmann therefore proposed the then generally accepted distinction between *t*- and *tl*-languages. [Translation mine—UC.][5]
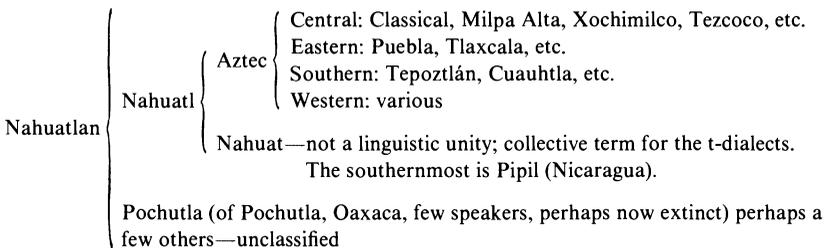
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[4] Sapir meint, dass das *t* der Nahuat-Dialekte erst eine Entwicklung aus altem *tl* sei: aber gerade das *t* dieser Dialekte, die auf die Sprache der alten Nahuâ (Tolteken) zurückgehen, ist das altertümlichere, das *tl* das jüngere. Nicht *tl* hat sich zu *t* entwickelt, sondern *t* zu *tl*. Man kann also nicht von Uto-Aztekischem *tl* reden, sondern nur von Aztekischem (Nahuatl) *tl*.

Das "Nahuatl" (vom Aztekischen Standpunkt aus) ist das klassische Aztekisch oder klassische Mexikanisch im engeren Sinne, die Tl-Sprache. Im Gegensatze dazu stehen die altertümlichen T-Dialekte der Nahua oder Tolteca-Chichimeca (d. h. der von Norden gekommenen Tolteken), die also nicht das Nahuatl sprachen, sondern ein Nahuat. Nahuat und Nahuatl sind mexikanische Sprachen im weiteren Sinne, Mundarte, die auf eine alte Grundsprache zurückgehen, die Sprache der Protomexikaner oder Proto-Nahua.

[5] Vom Toltekischen beeinflusst ist die Sprache der Pipil, der "Fürsten", das Pipil von El Salvador und Guatemala, sowie das Nicarao von Nicaragua. Walter Lehmann, ein Schüler

In his sketch of the Milpa Alta dialect, written in 1939 (see Carroll 1956:273), Benjamin Lee Whorf presents the following—as he puts it— "simplified version of Mason's and Whorf's classification of Nahuatlan" (Whorf 1946 [1939]:367):

In the classification of the stock by the author and J. Alden Mason, Aztec is the name given to a number of closely similar, mutually intelligible dialects of Central Mexico, all distinguished by λ ('tl') as representing original UA *t before UA *a. This linguistic area merges into a fringe of dialects closely related to Aztec, but having t in place of λ. There is less mutual intelligibility among these dialects than within Aztec itself, and some of the dialects well distant from the central territory rank as separate, mutually unintelligible languages, Pochutla being probably the most distinct. Aside from these the group forms in a broad sense one language, Nahuatl, and including these a subfamily, Nahuatlan, of the Aztecoidan family (containing also Cora and Huichol) of Utoaztecan. The following is a simplified version of Mason's and Whorf's classification of Nahuatlan:

Nahuatlan
  Nahuatl
    Aztec
      Central: Classical, Milpa Alta, Xochimilco, Tezcoco, etc.
      Eastern: Puebla, Tlaxcala, etc.
      Southern: Tepoztlán, Cuauhtla, etc.
      Western: various
    Nahuat—not a linguistic unity; collective term for the t-dialects. The southernmost is Pipil (Nicaragua).
  Pochutla (of Pochutla, Oaxaca, few speakers, perhaps now extinct) perhaps a few others—unclassified

I do not know of any classification which Whorf published jointly with J. Alden Mason, and his interest in relating the classification of dialects to the preconquest history of the various Nahuatl-speaking groups does not emerge very clearly here. However, Mason in (1940:69) refers to personal correspondence with Whorf in his discussion of the "Nahuatlan sub-family." Mason says:

Both the Nahuatlan sub-family and the Piman family, although covering great areas, have such little linguistic variation, as American languages go, that each might be considered to consist of only one language with marked dialects. Tepecan, the southernmost Piman tongue, is not exactly intelligible to a Papago, the northernmost, but the difference is probably not greater than between Spanish and Italian.
    The break-up of the Toltec "Empire" about the year 1000, the Aztec custom of establishing colonies for trade and control of subjugated peoples, and the similar Spanish

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Eduard Selers, hat die Beobachtung eines auffälligen und durchweg gültigen Unterschiedes zwischen diesen Sprachen und dem Aztekischen zur terminologischen Abgrenzung verwendet. Wo nämlich das Aztekische den *tl*-Laut hat, findet sich im Toltekischen, Pipil und Nicarao ein *t*-Laut; hier wird also *nahuat* und nicht *nahuatl* gesprochen. Deshalb schlug Lehmann die dann allgemein aufgegriffene Unterscheidung zwischen *t*- und *tl*-Sprachen vor.

practice with friendly colonists, especially the Tlaxcaltecs, spread Nahuatl groups all over Middle America, often supplanting more autochthonous languages.

The most variant of the Nahuatlan languages seems to be that of Pochutla which Whorf puts in a category by itself as opposed to the Aztec-Toltec group; he considers it very different from Aztec.

The most obvious characteristic of the languages of the Aztec group is the use of the phoneme *tl*; Pipil and certain other Nahuatlan languages employ *t* in its stead. Lehmann therefore distinguishes the two groups as the "Nahuatl" and the "Nahuat." The latter seems to be more peripheral in northern Mexico and older in Central America, where enclaves of both are found as far as Panama. Lehmann is dogmatically confident that the language of the Toltec-Chichimec was Nahuat. Whorf thinks that it was Nahuatl, basing his argument on the main grounds that "the location and place-names of the 'Toltec' area suggest rather the Nahuatl group." The archaeological and geographical evidence seems to me to support Lehmann more; Toltec place-names would naturally have become "aztecized" by the time of the Conquest.

In his well-known article, "The Origin of Aztec *tl*," Whorf in 1937 conclusively demonstrates that λ is an innovation in Nahuatl rather than a Uto-Aztecan phoneme as Sapir had suggested. I have already mentioned that the idea of λ being the result of an innovation in Nahuatl had been suggested previously by Lehmann in 1920, but also by Alden Mason in (1923:199). However, Whorf is the one who presents the conditions for the change: *t* is changed to λ before Uto-Aztecan *a*. But Whorf as well as Lehmann and Mason believed that the change had taken place only in one dialect or in one group of dialects, that the dialects which have *t* today never had λ, and that the innovation reflects an early split between the two groups of dialects. By achieving the task suggested by Sapir—namely, to "formulate some law accounting for Nahuatl *tl* as developed from original *t* according to certain phonetic circumstances"—Whorf is thus now able to "dispense with a Uto-Aztekan *tl*" and concludes that "λ or *tl* is purely a local development in the Aztec or Central Nahuatl dialect from Uto-Aztecan *t*, and does not represent an original distinct sound of Uto-Aztecan" (Whorf 1937:274).

In a footnote on the same page, he—I believe as the first—introduces the idea of a group of dialects that had *l* where dialects of the central area have λ and thus originates the division into Nahuatl, Nahuat, and Nahual: "Certain present-day Nahuatl dialects that do not contain λ evidently once did, as they have -*l* corresponding to final -λ but *t* corresponding to λ before vowels. An example of one is given in Kroeber, *Uto-Aztecan Languages of Mexico* (Ibero-Americana: 8, 1934). Such dialects are derived from Aztec or old Aztec, and are to be distinguished from original *t*-dialects of Nahuatl."

At the IV Reunión de Mesa Redonda sobre Problemas Antropológicos de México y Centro América in 1946, the three dialect groups were mentioned in a discussion of Nahuatl dialects:

Weitlaner: Con respecto a los tres dialectos, el caracterizado por la *t* se extiende a la costa de Veracruz hasta América Central; el dialecto con *l*, al contrario, forma un grupo compacto. Es difícil decir cual grupo es anterior.

Gamio: Pregunta qué quiere decir "el mexicano clásico" y cuál es el dialecto e idioma: *t*, *l*, *tl*.

Jiménez Moreno: El mexicano clásico es de *tl*; es la forma que se encuentra en los textos, en libros de gramática, etc.

Gamio: En San Salvador, se encuentra la forma de nahua con *t*; allá hay evidencia arqueológica de influencia tolteca, pero no de los aztecas; sugiere que tal vez la forma *t* sea más antigua.

Barlow: En cuanto a la diferencia de los dialectos, hay otras consideraciones importantes además de la *t*, *l* y *tl*, por ejemplo, formas de cortesía, diferencias de vocabulario, etc. El dialecto con *l* puede corresponder a los Couixca. Según la tradición asociada con Cuezala, las gentes salieron de Michoacán al mismo tiempo que salieron los mexicanos que fundaron Tenochtitlan. (El Occidente de México 1948:132.)[6]

To sum up, Sapir assumes λ to be of Uto-Aztecan origin and to have changed to *t* in only some of the Nahuatl dialects:

Uto-Aztecan	*t*-dialects	λ-dialects
*t	t	t
*λ	t	λ

However, he hopes that more careful analyses will uncover EITHER phonetic circumstances accounting for Uto-Aztecan *t changing into λ in Nahuatl, whereby *λ would be removed from Uto-Aztecan and relegated to Nahuatl alone, OR reflexes of *λ in other Uto-Aztecan languages whereby its existence in Uto-Aztecan would be confirmed.

Lehmann (1920), Mason (1923), and Whorf, on the other hand, have consistently considered λ to be an innovation in the Nahuatl dialects spoken in central Mexico, and only in those:

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[6] *Weitlaner*: With respect to the three dialects, the one characterized by *t* stretches along the coast of Veracruz to Central America; the dialect with *l*, on the contrary, forms one compact group. It is difficult to say which group is the earliest.

Gamio: Asks what "Classical Mexican" means, and what is the dialect and language: *t*, *l*, *tl*.

Jiménez Moreno: Classical Mexican is with *tl*; it is the form which is found in texts, in grammars, etc.

Gamio: In San Salvador is found the Nahua dialect with *t*; there one finds archaeological evidence of influence from the Toltecs, but not from the Aztecs; this suggests that the form with *t* is probably the oldest.

Barlow: As to the difference between the dialects, there are other important considerations apart from the *t*, *l*, and *tl*, for example, forms of respect, differences of vocabulary, etc. The dialect with *l* may correspond to the Coixca. According to the tradition associated with Cuezala, the people set out from Michoacán at the same time when the Mexicans who founded Tenochtitlan set out.

Uto-Aztecan	t-dialects	λ-dialects
*t	t	$\lambda / \underline{\ \ } a$
		t

In 1937, Whorf presented the phonetic circumstances that Sapir had asked for, thereby confirming that λ is an isolated development in Nahuatl.

Common to both hypotheses is that the innovation—be it *$\lambda > t$ or *$t > \lambda / \underline{\ \ } a$—has taken place in only some of the dialects and therefore evidences an early and important dialect split in Nahuatl. They also share the idea that the t-dialects were spoken by the Toltecs and represent an older stage of the language.

Whorf introduces the l-dialects, and the trichotomy of Nahuatl into t-dialects, λ-dialects, and l-dialects is thus established as a basic division.

2.2. The second period: work in the field by North Americans and Juan Hasler's classification. In 1954, Juan Hasler was the next to attempt a comprehensive classification of the Nahuatl dialects. But during the fourteen years that passed between Whorf's and Mason's classifications and Hasler's, data from many different dialects were collected and became available, much of it in published form.

Whorf's description of the Milpa Alta dialect was published in 1946.

In the early forties, short vocabularies with comments on the phonologies were collected during brief visits in a number of villages in Guerrero and Puebla by Norman A. McQuown, Robert Weitlaner, and Pedro Hendrichs Pérez (McQuown 1941; 1942, Weitlaner 1940, Weitlaner, P. Velásquez, and P. Carrasco 1947, Weitlaner and I. Weitlaner de Johnson 1943, and Hendrichs Pérez 1946).

Robert Weitlaner in 1948 also briefly presents his view of the linguistic situation in the state of Guerrero; he writes that "Con el material de 34 vocabularios, tomados por varios investigadores en los Estados de México, Guerrero, Morelos, Michoacan y Jalisco, se hizo un estudio fonético y semántico" (Weitlaner 1948:129).[7] In less than one page he then gives some highly interesting observations on the phonology of the various dialects in Guerrero and his suggested subgrouping of them. To my knowledge and regret the phonetic and semantic study to which he refers was never published; neither am I aware that the thirty-four valuable vocabularies are available anywhere.

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[7] With material from thirty-four vocabularies, collected by various investigators in the states of México, Guerrero, Morelos, Michoacan, and Jalisco, a study was made of the phonetics and semantics.

Long-term fieldwork was carried out by several missionaries affiliated with the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Richard S. Pittman did fieldwork in Tetelcingo, Morelos, 1940–47 and 1948–51, and contributed linguistic publications in 1948 and 1954.

Howard W. Law began his work with the Isthmus dialect in Mecayapan 1944; he published an article on Greeting Forms in 1948 and other linguistic analyses in 1955, 1958, and 1962; in 1954 Swadesh used an unpublished vocabulary from Mecayapan compiled by Howard Law (Swadesh 1954–55).

Arch McKinlay, who did fieldwork in Zacapoaxtla, Sierra de Puebla between 1942 and 1947, was followed by Harold and Mary Key in 1948. They published a description of the phonemes of Sierra Nahuat of Zacapoaxtla and a dictionary of that same dialect in 1953. Harold Key also collected vocabularies from a number of Nahuatl-speaking villages (Key 1954), and in 1952 he published a paper, "Algunas observaciones preliminares de la distribución dialectal del Náhuatl en el área Hidalgo-Veracruz-Puebla." There he presents the vowels and consonants in six quite divergent dialects spoken in the following localities: Xalacapan, Puebla (Sierra de Puebla); Acaxochitlan, Hidalgo (North Puebla); Chicontepec, Veracruz (La Huasteca); Oztotitla, Veracruz (Central area); Mecayapan, Veracruz (Isthmus); Cacaloapan, Puebla (Central area). He finds a number of phonetic and phonemic differences: the realization of -Vn#; the realization of w before unvoiced consonants and word finally; presence or absence of b, d, g; λ versus t versus λ ~ -l#; phonemic versus phonetic status of ʔ; and [u] versus [o]. The distribution of three of these characteristics he plots onto geographical maps. However, he does not attempt any interpretation of the isoglosses or a classification of the dialects.

Earl Brockway did fieldwork in Naupan, Puebla between 1953 and 1962; he did not publish anything before 1963, but by 1954 he had made a vocabulary of the dialect available (Swadesh 1954–55).

It is true of all of the missionaries from the Summer Institute of Linguistics (S.I.L.) I have mentioned that they have also published Nahuatl texts in the journal *Tlalocan*.

In addition to work done by investigators from S.I.L., a comprehensive study of a dialect from La Huasteca was carried out by Kenneth Croft who was affiliated with the Instituto Mexicano-Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales and later with the International Information Administration, Department of State. Croft did fieldwork in Matlapa, San Luis Potosí, 1949–50, and he published his analysis of the dialect in three articles (Croft 1951; 1953a; 1954).

However, initially he had intended to make a study of the Nahuatl dialect situation. He writes in his dissertation:

> The original plan for my linguistic study and research in Mexico was extensive dialect work on the Nahuatl language. This was undertaken at the suggestion of my sponsor, Dr. C. F. Voegelin of Indiana University and Dr. Daniel Rubín de la Borbolla, Director of the Mexican National Museum.
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> The first step was to acquire a practical command of one dialect of Nahuatl, before proceeding to gather linguistic material in the many regions where Nahuatl is still spoken. With the assistance of the late Mr. R. H. Barlow of Mexico City College, and his assistant, Mr. Miguel Barrios Espinosa, a native speaker of Nahuatl from Hueyapan, Morelos, I was able to gain a good working knowledge of one dialect of the language in approximately three months.
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> With the idea of fashioning a pilot study and questionnaire for dialect work, I made use of three informants from other parts of the Nahuatl-speaking area: Mr. Rubén Correo of Tehuacán, Puebla (approximately 36 informant hours), Mrs. Agustina Serán de Sánchez of Cuazimalpa, D.F. (about 50 informant hours), and Mr. Arcadio Sahagón of Matlapa, San Luis Potosí (about 100 informant hours).
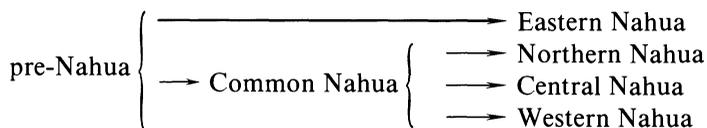>
> From the sampling of four dialects it could readily be seen that the differences between Nahuatl dialects in the various areas where the language is still spoken were far from negligible, both in phonology and morphology.
>
> Because of time limitation on my fellowship, it was decided after consultation with my sponsor that the remaining time should be devoted to gathering field data for a descriptive grammar of a single Nahuatl dialect. Early in January I began to do intensive informant work with the dialect of Matlapa, S. L. P. (Croft 1953b:v–vi.)

Croft also published a Nahuatl bibliography, "Six Decades of Nahuatl" (Croft 1953c).

Following this exciting period of extensive work by many linguists with such a coverage of different dialects, Juan Hasler suggested the first classification of the Nahuatl dialects which appears to cover more or less the full geographical area where Nahuatl is spoken. He first launched it in a brief summary in 1954; and in 1958 and 1961 he presented it in more detail.

Hasler divides the area into four dialects: the Eastern, the Northern, the Central, and the Western. The three last-mentioned dialects are developments of an earlier common Nahua. He presents it graphically in the following way (Hasler 1958:336):

$$
\text{pre-Nahua} \begin{cases} \longrightarrow \text{Eastern Nahua} \\ \longrightarrow \text{Common Nahua} \begin{cases} \longrightarrow \text{Northern Nahua} \\ \longrightarrow \text{Central Nahua} \\ \longrightarrow \text{Western Nahua} \end{cases} \end{cases}
$$

The classification is based on ten features which he states briefly in 1961.

A discussion of Hasler's articles is very important because his classification—simple as it is—seems to be widely known and still much

quoted (see, for example, Reyes and Christensen 1976:12, 124, Launey 1979:346, and Luckenbach and Levy 1980:456).

Hasler is unhappy with what he calls the classical division into Náhuatl, Náhuat, and Náhual. He gives two reasons for this unhappiness. First, he finds it unsatisfactory that the classification be based on a single feature; second, he cannot accept the form of the absolutive suffix ($\lambda \sim t \sim l$) as the only diagnostic feature because that implies—he claims—that all dialects are in fact clearcut cases of one of the three types and exhibit an unambiguous form of the keyword—$\lambda aka\lambda$, takat, or lakal—and, he says, "nada más inexacto."[8] There are dialects in which voiceless l varies with voiced l, or λ varies with l, or even t varies with l; within one dialect we may get tlacatl varying with tlacal, tlacatl with lacatl, tlacatl with tlacat, or tlacatl with tacatl.

This second point clearly shows how he wishes to base his dialectological work on absolute surface forms and how he does not want to or is not able to carry out a phonological or historical interpretation of linguistic variants.

Wanting to work entirely synchronically in dialectology seems to me to be perfectly legitimate; however, if a classification or subgrouping of the area is attempted, one must either propose some criteria for attributing special value to the features on which the classification is based or else include a vast amount of features and work statistically. But however the dialectologist works, he must present the reader with a minimum of information about his data, his criteria, and his methodology.

Nowhere in Hasler's publications does one find a list of localities included in his classification; nowhere is there anything but casual mention of the data on which he bases his classification—"cuestionarios enviados a la región del Nahua Septentrional,"[9] for example—but absolutely nothing about the size of the questionnaire or about the types of questions; in spite of the wealth of newly collected and analyzed data from a great variety of areas, there are no references in his articles to any published material on modern dialects; reconstructed phonemes are introduced as though their empirical value were no different from that of the phonemes in his few actual examples; the first of his ten diagnostic features he presents as TYPICAL VOCABULARY, but not one example exemplifies this feature. Some of the other features are phonological and some are morphological, but none of them supports his "tetradialectología" convincingly. To give just one example: his sixth feature is "el

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[8] Nothing more inexact.

[9] Questionnaires sent to the region of Northern Nahua.

fonema /*ʔ/ del *pre-nahua* ha encontrado en casi todos los dialectos actuales una solución fonética [h], a excepción de unos cuantos pueblos del Valle de México (Nahua Central) que conservan /ʔ/ = [ʔ]" (Hasler 1961:460).[10] This feature is thus not defining for his Nahua Central—it is characteristic of only a few villages in the Valley of Mexico—or for any of his other three dialects, but only for a very restricted area within Nahua Central.

Now, what about his results, the actual suggested classification? Obviously there is some truth to part of it: it is no doubt possible to find a feature or features shared by most of what he calls subdialects within each one of his four dialects, and such shared features can of course be said to define the dialect. However, alternative classifications based on other shared features have been suggested. It is not a matter of finding just one or two features to define an area by. We want to try to find out why, in what sense, in what historical perspective, one dialect boundary can be said to be more important than some other boundary.

In three recent articles (1975, 1976, and 1977) Hasler has expanded his dialectology back in time, but the "tetradialectología" for modern Nahuatl is retained. He says, "Mi cuadro teórico parte de la actual tetradialectología nahua, ya dada a conocer con anterioridad, agregándole la novedad de una capa precedente, generadora de los dialectos" (Hasler 1976:269).[11] In these articles he also elaborates on the migrations of speakers of the various Nahuatl dialects through history, but again unsupported by references to printed material; and his linguistic work is here no better founded or documented than in the earlier articles. Let me give one example of his kind of argument: "El pipil se diferencia del náhuatl clásico (forma literaria del s. XVI y XVII); pero el hecho que yo aprendí a hablarlo en tres días, es demostración suficiente de que no es un idioma, sino simplemente un dialecto del nahua" (Hasler 1975:181).[12]

2.3. The recent period. In "Apuntes sobre dialectología náhuatl" (1974), Yolanda Lastra de Suárez gives a sober assessment of the situation within Nahuatl dialectology. She presents Whorf's and Hasler's classifications with a few critical comments and states that: "Todavía hoy (1973) es prematuro tratar de hacer una classificación lingüística

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[10] The phoneme /*ʔ/ in pre-Nahua has in almost all the modern dialects undergone a phonetic change to [h], with the exception of some villages in the Valley of Mexico (Central Nahua) which preserve /ʔ/ = [ʔ].

[11] My theoretical picture departs from the present-day Nahua tetradialectology, already presented, adding to it the novelty of a preceding layer which has generated the dialects.

[12] Pipil is different from Classical Nahuatl (the literary form from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries); but the fact that I learned to speak it in three days is sufficient to demonstrate that it is not a language, but simply a dialect of Nahua.

pues la situación dialectal que salta a la vista al examinar el material y localizarlo es sumamente compleja y había que completar los datos antes de aventurarse a una verdadera clasificación. Lo que aquí se presenta no es más que una tipología" (1974:384).[13]

She then proceeds to comment on the inventory of material available on modern Nahuatl dialects (phonological descriptions, vocabularies, grammars), and she lists the seventy-five towns which that material covers. The results arrived at in the article she herself summarizes in English in this way: "A comparison of phonological data, of one grammatical trait, and a short list of lexical items for 75 localities yields a typology which is more similar to Whorf's [than to Hasler's]: Pochutla is considered separate from the rest of the dialects of Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador which are grouped into Center and Gulf dialects and these in turn classified into subgroups. A historical classification is considered premature given the lack of data from a large number of localities where the language is currently spoken" (Lastra 1974:395).

The classification looks as follows:
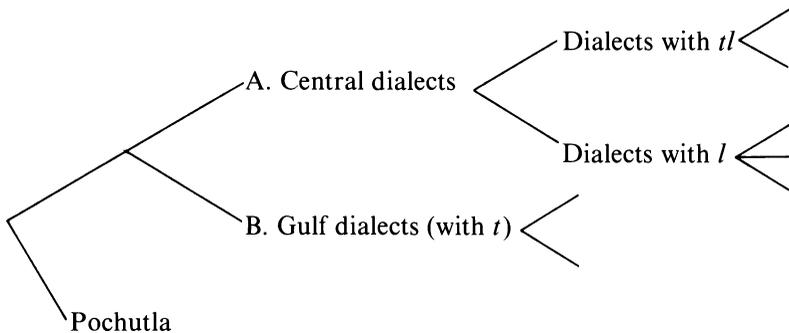
I here interpret her term typology as a diagrammatic representation of surface features not subjected to any historical interpretation or comparison with ethnohistorical evidence.

Finally, Lastra sketches what ought to be done in the future within Nahuatl dialectology; hereby she anticipates the enormous project of a comprehensive collection of Nahuatl dialect data which she has now completed and which only awaits publication.[14]

The past ten years have seen other important studies of Nahuatl. I am thinking particularly of the work by Campbell and Langacker, "Proto-Aztecan Vowels" (1978), and by Karen Dakin, "Phonological Changes

[13] It is today (1973) still premature to try to make a linguistic classification since the dialect situation which leaps to the eye when one examines the material is exceedingly complex, and it would be necessary to perfect the data before one can venture a true classification. What is here presented is nothing but a typology.

[14] The results of the project have now been published in a book (Lastra 1986), but it has reached me only after the completion of the present paper.

in Náhuatl: The Tense/Aspect/Number Systems" (1979), and her mono-graph, "La evolución fonológica del protonáhuatl" (1982).
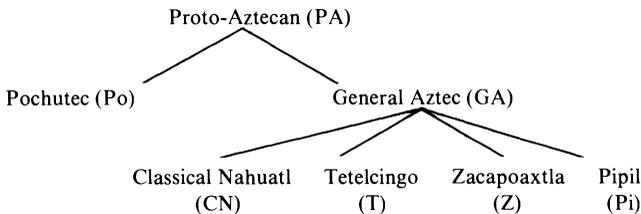
Their work has implications for Nahuatl dialectology even though that is not what they focus on. They share an interest in the relationship between Uto-Aztecan and Proto-Nahuatl and specifically—through internal reconstruction—in the developments that have taken place within Proto-Nahuatl or from pre-Proto-Nahuatl to Proto-Nahuatl. Karen Dakin says in the introduction to her monograph: "El presente estudio tiene un enfoque histórico, es decir, trata de reconstruir ciertos aspectos lingüísticos del protonáhuatl. . . . También se presenta hipótesis sobre las formas del preprotonáhuatl que se pueden ver mediante alternancias morfofonémicas en común a todos los dialectos que repre-sentan cambios que han ocurrido en el idioma entre la separación de otras lenguas yutoaztecas y el desarrollo subsecuente del idioma en dialectos" (1982:9).[15]

The purposes of Campbell and Langacker's three-part article are "to reconstruct the vowel system of PA, taking the Pochutec evidence into account, and to reconsider the implications of this reconstruction for Aztecan and Uto-Aztecan subgrouping and reconstruction generally" (1978:85).

These authors thus work in a period which is prior to actual dia-lectology and take only marginal interest in the more detailed geo-graphical configurations.

About their view on dialects and dialectology in this connection, Campbell and Langacker state (1978:86):

The languages and dialects that we will consider are shown in figure 1. We choose these both for availability of materials and for their inherent linguistic interest, and we confine our attention to them. With this overall classification (we ignore possible subgrouping within GA) we find ourselves in considerable agreement with Whorf and Lastra de Suárez, but differ from Hasler. We believe our classification and analysis of the PA vowel system to be correct; however, we attempt no complete resolution of all the loose ends and minor details, since that would involve us in the extreme complexities of Aztec dialectology, a task for which neither our energies nor available data are sufficient.

Proto-Aztecan (PA)

Pochutec (Po)   General Aztec (GA)

Classical Nahuatl   Tetelcingo   Zacapoaxtla   Pipil
     (CN)   (T)   (Z)   (Pi)

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[15] The present study has a historical focus, i.e., it attempts to reconstruct certain linguistic aspects of Proto-Nahuatl. . . . Also presented is a hypothesis concerning some

The crucial difference between Whorf, Lastra, and Campbell and Langacker on the one hand and Hasler on the other resides in their view on Pochutec: the former treat it as a separate branch coordinate with some dialect or stage from which all the other Nahuatl dialects have developed. Hasler is quite explicit concerning his opinion about the position of Pochutec (1958:336): "el extinto nahua de Pochutla, Oax., clama a gritos ser considerado pipil [i.e., un subdialecto del Nahua del Este]."[16] He has taken a different position since; in 1976 he wrote "La Situación Dialectológica del Pochutec," which is an elaborate presentation of how a series of phonological changes is connected with migrations and the distribution of Nahuatl dialects. He here suggests that Pochutec is most closely related to Western Nahua, but again he does not provide information concerning the sources on which he bases his claims.

Dakin says about the position of Nahuatl dialectology in her monograph and about her choice of dialect material:

La distribución dialectal del náhuatl moderno no es un fin del análisis, pero se espera que éste pueda contribuir en ese campo en cuanto a la relación que tiene el ordenamiento histórico de los cambios tratados, y sus implicaciones. . . . La selección de dialectos modernos para el análisis se hace principalmente con base en las áreas que muestran mayor variación en cuanto a las formas tratadas, pero también se consideran otros datos disponibles. . . . Los diez dialectos modernos escogidos, sus fuentes principales y las áreas que representan son los siguientes. . . . Como se puede ver en el mapa, los dialectos representan casi todas las áreas que tienen hablantes del náhuatl, según los datos del censo (México, 1971). (Dakin 1982:10, 11–12.)[17]

The last remark shows that she considers geographical coverage equivalent to dialectal coverage.

Campbell and Langacker's study contains two points of importance for the classification of Nahuatl dialects—the first concerning the position of Pochutec and the second treating the history of λ in Nahuatl.

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pre-Proto-Nahuatl forms recognized through morphophonemic alternations which are common to all the dialects and which represent changes that have occurred in the language between the separation from other Uto-Aztecan languages and the subsequent development of the language into dialects.

[16] The extinct Nahua of Pochutla, Oaxaca, cries out to be considered Pipil [i.e., a subdialect of Eastern Nahua].

[17] The dialectal distribution of modern Nahuatl is not a purpose of the analysis, but it is hoped that it will contribute in this field to the relationship which holds between the historical ordering of the changes dealt with and its implications. . . . The selection of modern dialects for the analysis is above all made on the basis of the areas which demonstrate the most variation in the forms dealt with, but other data available are also considered. . . . The ten modern dialects which were chosen, the main sources for them and the areas they represent are the following. . . . As it is seen on the map, the dialects represent almost all the areas which have speakers of Nahuatl, according to information from the census (Mexico, 1971).

Actually, most scholars have agreed that Pochutec constitutes a separate branch of Proto-Aztecan coordinate with a second branch from which all other Nahuatl dialects have developed, but Campbell and Langacker are the first to have presented detailed and systematic arguments in favor of this position of Pochutec. Dakin has since argued against their most important claims, namely, that Pochutec evidence requires the reconstruction of a fifth vowel for Proto-Aztecan. She also questions the need to reconstruct *ə rather than *e in Proto-Aztecan "since the front vowel forms a more symmetrical system with *a, *aa, *o, *oo, *i, *ii, and *ee" (Dakin 1983:202). However, she agrees with them that "Pochutec in all respects is still an extremely divergent dialect and probably should be separated from the rest of Aztecan as Campbell and Langacker have done" (1983:202).

So we have one dialect, Pochutec, which diverges markedly from all the other Nahuatl dialects, but which is no longer spoken. Now what can we use the Pochutec evidence for? The speakers of Pochutec were probably never numerous. Were they the first to start the migration toward the South?

Doris Bartholomew has recently claimed that certain phonological features characteristic of Pochutec—above all word-final stress—suggest influence from Chatino (Bartholomew 1980); however, she has identified no loanwords to support the suggestion. Obviously it is possible that the Pochutecos ran into the Chatinos and became influenced by them shortly before they settled in Pochutla, but then could they not just as well have been in contact with some other group that favored word-final stress earlier in their wanderings? Bartholomew also attempts to date their arrival in Pochutla but does not reach any clear or convincing result. She does not question the number of vowels reconstructed for Proto-Aztecan but prefers to reconstruct *i and *e rather than Campbell and Langacker's *ɨ and *ə.

In other words, so far the only hypothesis based on Pochutec evidence that has received wide acceptance is that Pochutec "is parallel to all the other Aztec dialects and languages as can be shown in a branching diagram" (Campbell and Langacker 1978:98).

Campbell and Langacker's demonstration that UA *t became λ in Proto-Aztecan and only later changed back to t in some dialects is of much greater interest for Nahuatl dialectology. This had not even been suggested in print before; and in all previous classifications of the Nahuatl dialects it had been taken for granted that the change of UA *t to λ had occurred in only some dialects. I have already quoted Lehmann and Whorf on this. Hasler and Lastra also adhere to the restricted application of the rule. Hasler explains that "parte del idioma pre-nahua no participió del desarrollo de la sílaba /ta/ en [tla] y posteriormente en

/λa/, y otra parte del idioma pre-nahua sí tuvo esta innovación" (Hasler 1958:335).[18] And Lastra says: "Después de comparar las fonologías y los datos fonológicos extraídos de los vocabularios se seleccionaron las siguientes características como criterios tipológicos: resultado de *t del yutoazteca (este rasgo serviría para una clasificación lingüística ya que se sabe que tl es una innovación de algunos dialectos del náhuatl)" (Lastra 1974:388).[19]

It is interesting however, that—because of their focus on Proto-Aztecan and General Aztec and not on Nahuatl dialectology—Campbell and Langacker did not emphasize the impact which the new way of looking at the UA *t to λ rule has for Nahuatl dialectology: "Aztecan scholars have generally held the tl-change to be quite late, accounting for the traditional classification of GA dialects into the so-called t-dialects and tl-dialects. In our interpretation, we must assume that the tl-change had occurred already in PA times, but was later obscured by a change of tl back to t in the so-called t-dialects" (Campbell and Langacker 1978:206).

Lehmann, Whorf, Hasler, and Lastra were burdened by the conviction that UA *t changed to λ in only some dialects and not in all, and since they assumed that their classification of the dialects should reflect the history of the language from the earliest time, they accordingly had to consider the split between t-dialects and λ-dialects as the basic and most important division.

However, now that it CAN be and has been shown conclusively—no one has argued against it—that UA *t had already become λ in Proto-Nahuatl and only subsequently changed back to t in some dialects, then Nahuatl dialectologists are free to make other features or isoglosses basic in their classifications, if they want classifications that can be represented in a branching diagram.

In this survey of Nahuatl dialectology in the twentieth century, I have left unmentioned two studies, Giselle Hertle's "Nahua-Dialekte in Puebla-Tlaxcala" from 1972 and Leopoldo Valiñas's *El náhuatl de la periferia occidental y la costa del Pacifico* from 1981.

The most valuable part of Hertle's publication consists of lists of 189 elicited words and three forms of 35 verbs from eight localities, Coapan/

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[18] Part of the pre-Nahua language did not participate in the development of the syllable /ta/ to [tla], and later to /λ/, and another part of the pre-Nahua language did have this innovation.

[19] After having comparing the phonologies and the phonological data extracted from the vocabularies, the following features were selected as typological criteria: the result of Uto-Aztecan *t (this feature may serve in a linguistic classification since it is known that tl is an innovation in some of the Nahuatl dialects).

Tehuacán, Tlaxcalancingo/San Andrés Cholula, San Miguel Canoa, Atequexquitla/Xicotepec, Atla/Pahuatlán, Ahuacatlán, Las Balsas/ Francisco Z. Mena, and Tlaola. There are also maps showing what languages—Nahuatl, Mixtec, Totonac, Popoloca, or Mazatec—are spoken in the villages of Puebla and Tlaxcala. However, the Nahuatl data listed are not analyzed, and no isoglosses are suggested.

Valiñas's important book presents an analysis of the scant and not easily accessible Nahuatl material from the Western Periphery. He also includes informative discussions about the history of the area in his study.

3. A concept of shallow Nahuatl dialect subgroupings. In 1978 I suggested the recognition of a number of subgroups within the Nahuatl dialect area which I defined in terms of separating isoglosses and unifying features. The suggestion was based on available dialect material and on material I had collected in 1973 and 1976. A basic distinction between CENTRAL groups and PERIPHERAL groups was introduced and the boundary demarcating the Central groups was explicitly stated and shown on a map (see fig. 1—the legend for this map appears in Appendix A); the Peripheral dialects were defined negatively simply by not having the features descriptive of the Central dialects.

The suggested subgroups were Peripheral groups: Western Periphery, North Guerrero, Sierra de Puebla, Isthmus, and Pipil; and Central groups: La Huasteca, North Puebla, Central Guerrero, and a remaining central area (which was left undivided for lack of material) covering the D.F., Morelos, Tlaxcala, and parts of the state of Mexico and of Puebla. There were small Nahuatl-speaking areas which were not classified under any of the suggested subgroups, but I always indicated whether they belong to the Central dialect area or not.

Before I proceed I must call attention to the fact that the terms Central Aztec and Central Nahuatl have been used by others about a subgroup defined with criteria different from the ones I use:

The Guerrero Aztec described here is that spoken in the town of Atliaca, Guerrero and surrounding towns. Recent dialect intelligibility surveys conducted by the Summer Institute of Linguistics group it with other towns understanding the Tezcoco variety at a very high percentage into what is now being called Aztec. (Bartholomew and Mason 1980:197, n. 1.)

The estimated 160 to 180,000 speakers of Central Nahuatl (hereafter referred to as CN) reside in three states of Mexico: Guerrero, Morelos and Puebla. Approximate boundaries are drawn from Cuernavaca, Morelos in the north west to the extinct volcano Popocatepetl in the north east, to Tlalpa [should be Tlapa—UC], Gro. in the south east, to Chilpancingo, Gro. in the south west and north to Cuernavaca. The language center from which all speakers in the language area are able to communicate satisfactorily is north of the geographic center at a point somewhere near Cuautla, Morelos. The boundaries and
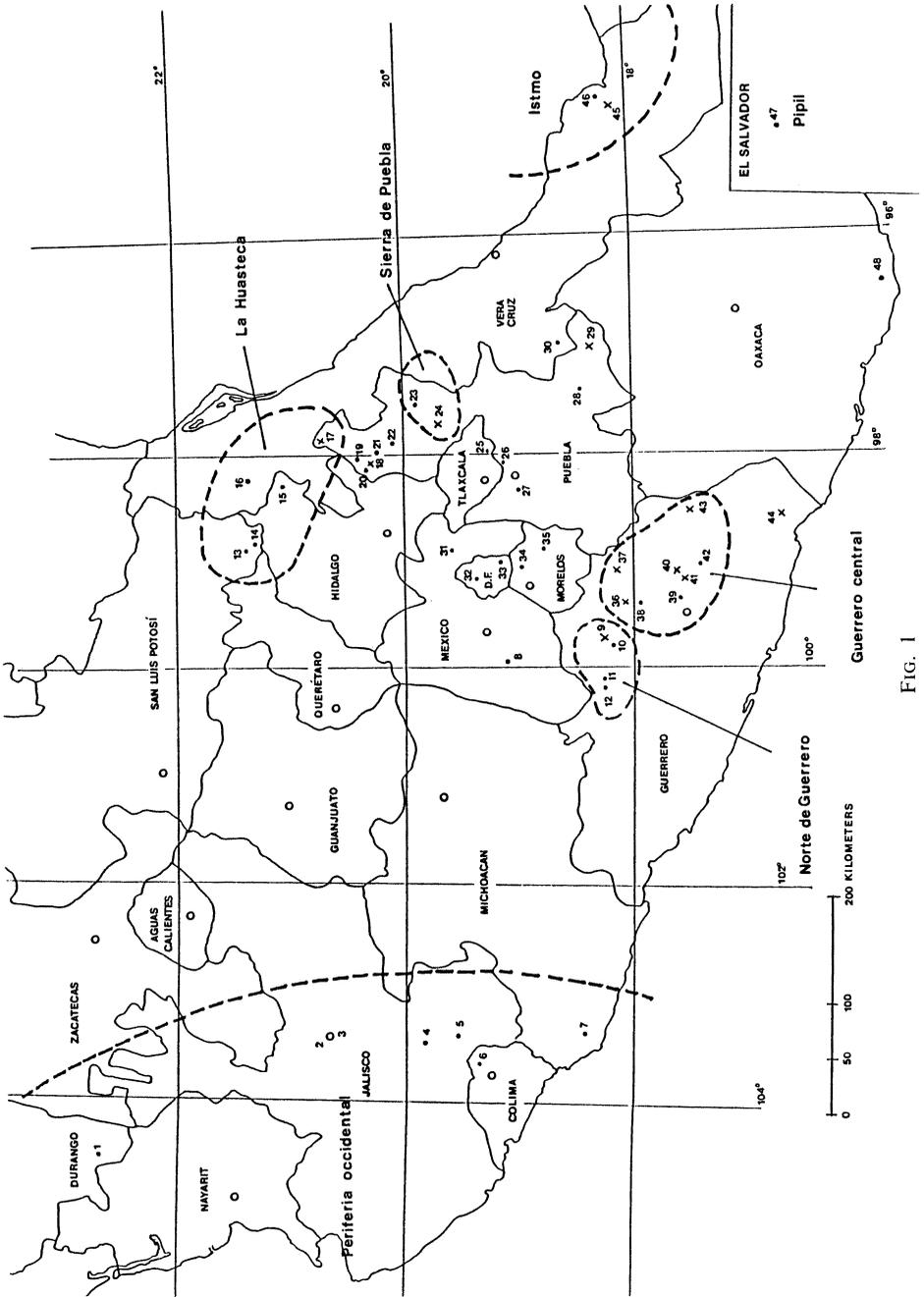
Fig. 1

the language center were determined by intelligibility testing done by survey teams under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. (Mason and Pickett, n.d.:1.)

El dialecto moderno de San Jerónimo pertenece al náhuatl central que se habla en el Distrito Federal, Estado de México, Tlaxcala, Morelos, Guerrero y parte de Puebla. (Lastra de Suárez 1980:5.)[20]

My reason for bringing this up is simply as a warning that terms used must be specified so as to assure clarity and avoid misunderstandings.

There was actually little new in what I suggested in 1978. I had gathered information from other scholars about subgroups and looked at a number of features—many of them morphological—for all the dialects recorded. So it is no wonder that there is a good deal of similarity between the groups Lastra found in 1974 and mine, but my criteria were different, and I included no classification in the form of a branching diagram. However, in 1980, in a book of *Five Studies Inspired by Nahuatl Verbs in -oa*, I presented such a classification, although with some reservation:
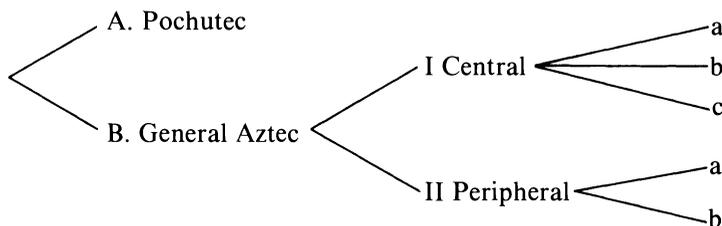
My reason for including this in 1980 was that it made it easier to label the groups systematically if they were ordered in a diagram. In addition, I wished to introduce the division into Central and Peripheral dialects as fundamental. That division is founded basically on one isogloss: the presence versus the absence of the stem-final vowel in the perfect of one class of verbs (see Canger 1980:chap. 2). However, I did not comment sufficiently on how the classification was to be understood.

In the chapter presenting the crucial development of the perfect tense forms, I hypothesized that the loss of stem-final vowel in the perfect of some verbs, which is defining for the Central dialects, had started only after the Mexica entered the Valley of Mexico, i.e., sometime in the fourteenth century (Canger 1980:98).

The time depth of the suggested dichotomy into Central and Peripheral is thus no more than some 500 years; and yet we know that Nahuatl has had divergent dialects much longer than that. However, the historical events of the fourteenth century were crucial for the later development

[20] The modern dialect of San Jerónimo belongs to Central Náhuatl, which is spoken in the Federal District, in the states of Mexico, Tlaxcala, Morelos, Guerrero, and parts of Puebla.

of the ethnic configuration in Central Mexico; and, moreover, the situation that was in force at the time of the Spanish conquest was frozen, so to speak, by the arrival of the Spanish.

I do not mean that the dialects stopped changing or developing, but rather that the configuration of dialects—and probably also to a certain extent the configuration of sociolects—was frozen: the influence and power of the Nahuatl-speaking leaders was interrupted, many communication networks stopped or were changed, and on a broad scale Nahuatl was often replaced by Spanish.

The classification I suggested in 1980, which was based on modern dialect material, can thus also be taken to represent the dialect situation which held at the time of the Spanish conquest; and it no doubt reflects parts of earlier situations as well. It was NOT meant to represent the history of Nahuatl—or rather the history of general Nahuatl—from the earliest period up to today's diverging dialects. In the diagram, General Aztec is shown to split into Central and Peripheral. However, the immediate point of departure for this bifurcation is not an old, more or less homogeneous dialect. Although the Central dialects share some features—which I consider defining for this group of dialects—these features are not, I believe, due to common inheritance, but rather to late influence from one prestigious and dominating dialect, Tenochtitlan, which was located where we find Mexico City today; and they have had the function precisely of unifying the dialects. Preceding the formation of the group of Central dialects, we should imagine a situation with an unspecified number of coordinate dialects or dialect areas developed from General Nahuatl:
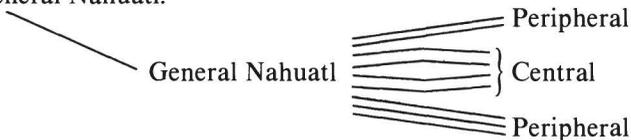
Within these dialects there may very well—or should I say must—have been subgroupings, some of which were blurred or made unrecognizable by the superimposed characteristic Central features; my idea was that we should be able to recognize some such subgroupings through further research, but until we have evidence to the contrary, we must posit that before the Mexica all the Nahuatl dialects were coordinate.

4. How can we uncover features characteristic of the Nahuatl dialect situation before the sixteenth century? The fact that the features shared by what I have called Central dialects are due to influence from Tenochtitlan does not mean that all these dialects are identical to

Classical Nahuatl. Within the Central dialects I have separated out two dialect areas, La Huasteca and Central Guerrero, which can be defined through some features that are specific to each of the two areas or which they share with some Peripheral areas (for details see Canger 1978). The remaining Central dialects, which do share a great many important features, are spoken in North Puebla, Valley of Mexico, Morelos, Tlaxcala, and Central Puebla, and my reason for not subdividing these further was insufficient data. Were THESE dialects then identical with Classical Nahuatl?

This brings us to the question of how the terms Classical Nahuatl, Classical Aztec, or Classical Mexican are used. I consider the three to be equivalent and shall hereafter refer to them only as Classical Nahuatl. I have tried to trace the origin of the term, but without luck so far, and I have collected some definitions or specifications of Classical Nahuatl.

Until the end of the nineteenth century the language was referred to simply as Nahuatl, Aztec, or Mexican, occasionally modified by Ancient. Rémi Siméon in 1867 wrote a "Note sur la numération des anciens mexicains," but he calls their language Nahuatl or Langue Mexicaine. In 1890, Daniel Brinton published a volume of *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry*, but he, too, uses an unmodified term for the language.

In Boas's article about Pochutec from 1917 appears the first example I have seen of the term "classical": "El vocabulario es muy semajante al del mexicano clásico" (Boas 1917:10).[21]

Walter Lehmann uses "classical" in the following way in 1920: "From the point of view of Aztec, Nahuatl is the classical Aztec, the classical Mexican (Mexican in a narrower sense), the tl-language of the Mexica (in a broader sense), of the Nahuatlaca (Tepaneca, the Acolhuaca, the Chalca, the Tlateputzca, the Tlaxolteca, the Huexotzinca, etc." (Lehmann 1920:978).[22]

It seems that the term "classical" was introduced sometime in the first decade of this century, but probably not by Boas.

A more important question is what the term refers to: Whorf (1946 [1939]:368) explains that "Classical Aztec (Cl.) at the time of the conquest was the dialect of populous Mexico City (meši?ko or teno:-čtiλan) and the surrounding Valley of Mexico"; that is, he defines it loosely in time and space.

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[21] The vocabulary is very similar to that of Classical Mexican.

[22] Vom aztekischen Standpunkt aus ist Nahuatl das klassische Aztekisch, das klassische Mexikanisch (Mexikanisch im engeren Sinne), die Tl-Sprache der Mexica (im weiteren Sinne), der Nahuatlaca (Tepaneca, Acolhuaca, Chalca, Tlateputzca, Tlaxolteca, Huexo-tzinca, etc. . . ."

I have already quoted Jiménez Moreno as having specified it at the IV Mesa Redonda as follows: "El mexicano clásico es de *tl*; es la forma que se encuentra en los textos, en libros de gramática, etc." (El Occidente de México 1948:132).[23]

Angel María Garibay restricts it to a certain period in time and to written materials, and in that connection he concludes nothing about the spoken language of the period. He says, "que suele llamarse 'Mexicano Clásico', o sea, aquel en que están escritos los documentos recogidos o redactados en el siglo XVI a raíz de la Conquista, y a más tardar, hasta mediados del XVII" (Garibay 1961:15).[24]

M. Launey probably means the same as Garibay when he says, "le *nahuatl classique*, langue littéraire de l'époque de la conquete" (1979:5). Karen Dakin is more generous in her use of the term. In her book she states (1982:11), "el náhuatl clásico era el dialecto de prestigio que también se usaba como *lingua franca* en México."[25] However, when dealing with the characteristics of a Nahuatl lingua franca, she suggests a more restricted definition of Classical Nahuatl, "the language spoken in Tenochtitlan in the sixteenth century and described by Spanish grammarians" (Dakin 1981:55).

Classical Nahuatl is thus not a very precise or well-defined concept. It has served as a useful cover term for most written Nahuatl material from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, except for manuscripts written in glaringly different dialects from the Western Periphery and the Eastern Pipil area.

Instead of attempting to arrive at a more precise and acceptable definition of Classical Nahuatl, we ought to look carefully at the information we possess concerning the situation of the speakers of Nahuatl in the sixteenth century. The Nahuatl-speaking population of Mexico was certainly not a homogeneous group. We know that they were made up of a number of distinct groups which had all come down from the north or northwest and entered central Mexico successively over many centuries.

We know a lot about the groups that settled in the Valley of Mexico or had contact with those in the Valley—the Xochimilca (Colhua), the Chalca, the Tepaneca, the Tezcoca (Acolhua), the Tlahuica, the

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[23] The Classical Mexican is with *tl*; it is the form which is found in texts and in grammars, etc.

[24] Which is customarily called "Classical Mexican," i.e., the language in which were written the documents collected or edited in the sixteenth century right after the Conquest, and at the latest till the middle of the seventeenth.

[25] Classical Nahuatl was the prestige dialect which was also used as a lingua franca in Mexico.

Tlaxcalteca, and the Mexica. The history of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is full of their wars, conquests, and other mutual relationships, and there is every reason to believe that the Nahuatl speakers' sense of identity with their ethnic group was very strong.

In certain cases the groups were kept separate by law. In writing about Oaxaca, John K. Chance (1978:18–19) cites Durán on this: "Huaxyacac was originally populated with 600 married men with their wives and children recruited from different provinces of the Aztec domain. The settlement was reportedly laid out in accordance with precise instructions from the Aztec ruler Ahuitzotl, who 'commanded that the city be ordered in such a way that the *mexicanos* be settled in one place, the *texcocanos* in another, the *tepanecas* in another, the *xochimilcas* in another, and all the groups separately in their barrios'." Chance goes on to say that "Ethnic subdivisions among the Nahuatl-speaking population were retained, with the different groups living in separate barrios, a practice that continued well into the sixteenth century."

That the sense of identity with ethnic group was prevalent not only during the strongly competitive period but persisted long after the Spanish conquest is confirmed by Miguel Barrios, who reports that in the town of San Juan Tlilhuacan in the Federal District the distinction between *tepaneca* and *mexica* was officially abolished in 1918, but that the members of the two groups who confirm this also add that none of them were pleased with this decision, and that they continue to recognize the membership of the tribe (Barrios 1957:287–88).

It is not surprising that the Nahuatl speakers felt a strong sense of identity with their group. What is surprising, however, is that we seem to have almost no reflection of it in the many extant Nahuatl manuscripts.

According to sociolinguistic investigations we should expect the various groups to assert their identity through language, as well as through other socially determined institutions such as clothing, etc. But except for an often-quoted passage from Durán about the language from Tezcoco, we seem to have little evidence in support of such ethnic differences.

It has occasionally been suggested that Classical Nahuatl was the language of the leading class of people, but they also belonged to various ethnic groups. However, there was undoubtedly a great deal of contact between the nobles across ethnic boundaries, probably more so than between the nobles from an ethnic group and commoners from that same group. We know that "matrimonial alliances between different dynasties were extensively practiced" (Carrasco 1971:361). This was a common strategy, it seems, in all of Mesoamerica; Carmack notes the same practice in the Quiché area, "En general, los señores se casaban

con personas de otros pueblos, así que los reinos de Guatemala estaban ligados por afinidad. También se aliaban con reinos lejanos . . ." (Carmack 1976:255).[26]

If the nobles felt more strongly about asserting their identity with other nobility as opposed to the commoners from their own ethnic group, then this could account for the relative homogeneity of Classical Nahuatl as we find it in the better-known manuscripts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that is, if we also assume that the nobles were responsible for writing the manuscripts; and that seems to be a reasonable assumption.

According to these speculations, the linguistic situation would then have been the following: the upper class spoke a more or less homogeneous dialect in most of central Mexico, whereas the commoners from each ethnic group had their own distinctive dialects. Carmack again notes a somewhat similar situation in the Quiché areas: "Parece que había diferencias lingüísticas entre los vasallos y los señores. Hay evidencia de que los señores empleaban, por lo menos algo, la lengua nahua. . . . Estudios lingüísticos modernos sugieron otras diferencias que habrían existido entre los estratos, por ejemplo, muchos vasallos sabrían la lengua quiché de K'umarcaj además de sus dialectos locales" (Carmack 1976:253).[27]

If we continue to speculate, we may imagine that the features characteristic of what I have called the Central dialects were spread geographically by the upper class and then slowly seeped down to the commoners. This of course still leaves a lot of questions. For example, what was the origin of the Nahuatl lingua franca? What was the role of the merchants? A thorough and comprehensive study of the language in the "mass of records concerning the everyday business of the Indian community of local Mexico [that] exists in Nahuatl wills, land transactions, municipal council minutes, local tax records, and . . . petitions and correspondence" (Anderson, Berdan, and Lockhart 1976:v) will undoubtedly answer some of these questions.

However, I must emphasize that this is only speculation. What we have is some well-founded descriptions of the ethnic and social structure

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[26] In general, the señores married persons from other towns, so that the kingdoms of Guatemala were leagued together by marriage. They also formed alliances with distant kingdoms. . . .

[27] It seems that there were linguistic differences between the vassals and the señores. There is evidence to the effect that the señores used, at least sometimes, the Nahua language. . . . Modern linguistic studies have suggested other differences which may have existed between the strata, for example, many vassals probably knew the Quiché language of K'umarcaj in addition to their local dialects.

of central Mexico, a great many manuscripts in a relatively uniform kind of Nahuatl, and a mass of less well known local documents, and some experience or results from sociolinguistic investigations in other language communities. So far we have no linguistic evidence in support of these speculations, but I do not think that we have linguistic evidence against them either. Jakob Schœmbs, who advocates a similar view of the language situation in the Valley of Mexico in the sixteenth century (Schœmbs 1949:10), supports it by citing from Molina *tecpillatoa* 'hablar cortes (to speak courteously)' as opposed to *macehuallatoa* 'hablar rusticamente (to speak in a rustic way)', however, these words cannot be considered strong arguments in favor of a marked difference between the language of the nobles and that of the commoners.

I suggest that we begin to look carefully at our language data in order to be able either to confirm the hypothesis or argue against it, or maybe to arrive at a better hypothesis founded on both historical and linguistic evidence.

Our language data are of two kinds, (1) the Nahuatl dialects spoken today and (2) the written material.

One problem with the MODERN LANGUAGE DATA is that there is so much of it that it is hard to know where to start. I have a number of suggestions. First of all, we must look at the results from Lastra's extensive survey and see how they can be interpreted on their own premises, what isoglosses and what resulting groupings they reveal, and how this relates to the history and geography of the Nahuatl areas and of the Mexica empire. We must also go on to establish the exact boundaries of some of the significant, known innovations in the Central area, for example, the metathesized applicative which seems to be found in only a small area around Mexico City.

This is starting from the linguistic evidence. But we should also look at the linguistic situation from the point of view of political boundaries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, for example, around Tlaxcala. Can we recognize these in our dialect material, correlate them with some isoglosses, and thereby confirm their status?

Our knowledge of the modern dialect situation is also needed in the registration and analysis of dialect features in texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The LANGUAGE IN THE MANUSCRIPTS AND DOCUMENTS provides a source of information on dialect variation, but to extract and evaluate that information from the texts is quite an intricate task. We want to recognize the features characteristic of each document, and if the origin (i.e., date and location) of the given document is known, then we should try to compare the registered features with our knowledge about the modern dialects of the area in question.

Exact knowledge about the provenience of a document (i.e., where and when it was written) does not automatically guarantee knowledge about which dialect it was written in. There are cases of documents from Chiapas, Guatemala, and the Western Periphery that manifest none of the local dialect features but which apparently display the known characteristics of the Central dialects. In order to assign a tentative place in the preconquest dialect situation to a document we thus need to compare all three factors—the specific language features, the provenience of the document, and the characteristics of modern dialects. However, thus far, little work has been done with the distinctive characteristics of different texts.

Another factor to be taken into consideration is that many of our important language sources are due to Spaniards who were not native speakers of Nahuatl and who may unknowingly have ignored or ironed out some of the dialect differences. Let us look at the career in Mesoamerica of the Franciscan Andrés de Olmos. He was about forty-eight when he first arrived in Mexico in 1528. He did not stay long in the same place; between 1530 and 1539 he spent three years in Tepepulco, three years in Cuernavaca, and three years in the colegio de Tlatelolco, and during that same period he traveled widely, visiting in Texcoco, Tlaxcala, Huexotzinco, Cholula, Tepeaca, Tlalmanalco, and Hueytlalpan in Totonac country, at the northeastern tip of the present state of Puebla, where he stayed until 1553. He completed writing his *Arte para aprender la lengva mexicana* in 1547.

When a man has reached the age of forty-eight, there is a limit to his ability to grasp the intricacies of a foreign language which is as exotic as Nahuatl must have been to a Spaniard in the sixteenth century, however well educated he is. And since Olmos moved around so much, he could not possibly have acquired fluency in one single dialect; and when occasionally he notes details of dialect variation in his *Arte*, no precise location is indicated.

Another man who has had great influence is the Jesuit Horacio Carochi, to whom we all owe much of our understanding of Nahuatl. His *Arte de la Lengua Mexicana* was written a hundred years later than Olmos's work. In spite of the time discrepancy, the language described by the two is not notably different, and neither of them comments particularly on variants in the language.

Carochi says about his book of adverbs that it is "muy prouechoso por los muchos exemplos, y excelentes frases de muy buenos Auctores, que con mi larga experiencia he recogido" (Carochi 1892 [1645]:400).[28]

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[28] Very useful due to the many examples and excellent sentences by very good authors which through my long experience I have collected.

Many of Carochi's examples belong in the Christian religious sphere, and it is unclear who the *buenos Auctores* are.

No doubt both Olmos and Carochi esteemed good, written language highly, and apparently the Nahuatl written language was homogeneous over a long period of time; but who dictated what was to be considered good, written Nahuatl, and what made it homogeneous if in fact it was?

In general, the Nahuatl of the manuscripts has not been expected to be heterogeneous, and even the best-known manuscripts have not been scrutinized for variation. For a number of reasons the few cases of variation that have been noted have not been studied or given any significance. The following are examples or some simple cases of variation, taken from Carochi (1892 [1645]):

λawa:naltia/λawa:ntia	'to get someone drunk'
ne:šiltia/ne:ši:tia/ne:štia	'to make something appear'
to:tolmeʔ/to:toltin	'chicken'
okičmeʔ/okičtin	'men'
te:mačtia:nimeʔ/te:mačtia:niʔ	'teachers'
kaʔ/katki	'is'
wa:llaw/wi:ȼ	'comes'
nikočtiwa:llaw/nikočvtiwi:ȼ	'I come sleeping'

The only way in which we shall be able to understand and possibly clarify this truly intriguing language situation is by beginning to register systematically and without prejudice the variation that occurs in the documents—because we do find variation and it is not accidental. In an article dealing with "Directionals in Classical Nahuatl," J. Richard Andrews remarks (1981:2): "Some writers are more competent than others in handling the distinction of *huāl-* and *on-*, especially over a long stretch of material. For example, it seems to me that Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc, in the *Crónica Mexicáyotl*, is quite skillful in the use of these prefixes, while the writer of the *Historia Tolteca Chichimeca* demonstrates a less felicitous use. The usage of Antonio Valeriano, the supposed writer of the Guadalupe story, seems to lie somewhere between these two."

The observation that different authors handle directionals differently is important and valuable, but we need a much more detailed and precise account of what the differences are and how they are distributed in order to make use of such an observation in a study of the dialect situation.

We find a good deal of variation in orthography which does not necessarily correspond to variation in pronunciation. In the preface to a volume edited by Pedro Carrasco and Johanna Broda on social stratification in Precolumbian Mesoamerica, Johanna Broda says: "En el caso

de algunos términos nahuas, existían en el siglo XVI diferentes maneras de registrar estas palabras. Por ejemplo, del título *teuctli* existen también las variantes *tecuhtli*, con el plural *teteuctin*, *tetecuhtin* o *teteuhctin*. Estas variantes se registran en los diferentes autores antiguos, o en los documentos; quizá provengan de diferencias dialectales, sin embargo esto no es seguro" (Carrasco and Broda 1976:15).[29]

This is precisely a case where variation in orthography is unlikely to reflect varying pronunciation; it probably stems from the fact that the Spaniards were unable to find a satisfactory way of writing k^w when it occurs syllable-finally since nothing similar exists in Spanish. However, variation in orthography can be very useful in dating—and probably also in determining the local provenience and approximate date of documents, as has been shown by James Lockhart and Frances Karttunen.

What is it then that we should be looking for? Since 1960, a few scholars have made scant suggestions of features peculiar to certain authors, texts, or areas. In the epilogue to his book on the historical work of Chimalpahin, Günter Zimmermann writes (1960:79):

> ... The Chalca manifest in their language as opposed to Nahuatl of the central part of the Valley of Mexico a clearly different dialect which stands out in phonetics, grammar, and semantics.
>
> As for phonetics, it is worth mentioning the often strong contraction of certain vowels and consonants or the "*w*-glide" also following the long accentuated close "*o*" (*ōw-an*- ... instead of *ō-an*- ...; *teōw-ātl* instead of *teō-ātl*, etc.); as for grammar, the excessive use of "*-âci*" in verbal (aspectual) compounds with *-ti-*, the avoidance of "*-oallauh*" and the substitution for it of "*quiça*" in the same type of compounds, or finally the preservation of certain older impersonals, like "*quixioa*" instead of "*quixoa*."
>
> These differences appear most strongly in the area of semantics. Here numerous expressions are used which in central Nahuatl are unusual, rare, or even unknown. This statement is confirmed by a gloss in the Cantares (f. 72, unpublished part), which explicitly defines and explains the verb "*toquia*" as "*Chalco tlatolli*," i.e., expression from the language of the Chalca. [My translation—UC.][30]

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[29] In the case of some Nahua terms, there were in the sixteenth century different ways of registering these words. For example, for the title *teuctli* we also find the variants *tecuhtli*, with the plural forms *teteuctin*, *tetecuhtin*, or *teteuhctin*. These variants are registered in the various old authors, or in the documents; perhaps they come from dialect differences, however, this is not certain.

[30] ... Die Chalca in ihrer Sprache gegenüber dem Nahuatl des zentralen Teils des Hochtals von Mexiko eine deutlich differenzierte Mundart erkennen lassen, die sich auf phonetischem, grammatischem und semantischem Gebiet abzeichnet.

Auf phonetischem Gebiet ist die oft starke Kontraktion gewisser Vokale und Kon-sonanten oder der "w-Nachschlag" a u c h des langen, akzenttragenden geschlossenen "o" zu erwähnen (ōw-an- ... statt ō-an- ... .' teōw-ātl usw.); auf grammatischem Gebiet die exzessive Verwendung von "-âci" bei den mit -ti- verbundenen Koppelverben (Aspekten),

There are others who have observed and presented cases of dialect variation. In her introduction to a volume of Tlaxcalan documents, Thelma Sullivan has singled out a number of features in these texts distinct from those found, for example, in Sahagún's material. She considers many of them to represent a more archaic stage of the language.

Dakin has examined the characteristics of "the Nahuatl used in twenty-one letters that were sent to Philip II about 1572 from the towns surrounding Santiago de Guatemala, today known as Antigua" (Dakin 1981:55). She finds that they differ both from Pipil and from Classical Nahuatl, and as a conclusion she suggests that the language used is a lingua franca which "was probably a direct predecessor of the Classical sixteenth century dialect" of the central area (1981:65).

Sullivan and Dakin have briefly surveyed variant forms as found in texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Tlaxcala, Cuernavaca, Morelos, and some from several peripheral areas, and also from twenty hymns, found in Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales*, which are "en lenguaje arcaico que dan una perspective histórica importante sobre la lengua náhuatl" (Sullivan and Dakin 1979:6).[31]

The language in an eighteenth-century document from the Valley of Toluca is discussed in detail by James Lockhart. He deals with variation in spelling, the word forms, and Spanish loanwords and compares his findings with "data published by Lastra and Horcasitas on the Nahuatl spoken in the same region today" (Lockhart 1981:151). It is precisely this kind of scrutiny and analysis of the documents which we need to achieve more accurate concepts of the dialect situation.

5. A broad sketch of the pre-Spanish dialect situation. In trying to demonstrate how a close look at variation can suggest to us something about dialect configuration in the past and about subsequent developments, I shall focus on a manuscript which lends itself exceptionally well to this purpose, and which has led me to form some broad ideas about the history of the Nahuatl dialects prior to the arrival of the Spanish.

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die Meidung von "-oallauh" und dessen Ersatz durch "quiça" bei den gleichen Formen oder schliesslich die Erhaltung gewisser älterer Impersonalia, wie "quixioa" statt "quixoa".

Am stärksten treten diese Unterschiede auf semantischem Gebiet auf. Hier werden zahlreiche Ausdrücke verwendet, die im zentralen Nahuatl ungewöhnlich, selten oder gar unbekannt sind. Diese Feststellung wird bestätigt durch eine Glosse in den Cantares (f. 72, unpublizierte Partie), die das Verb "toquia" ausdrücklich als "Chalco tlatolli", Ausdruck der Chalca-Sprache", definiert und erklärt.

[31] In archaic language which gives an important historical perspective of the Nahuatl language.

The dialectal characteristics of Ruiz de Alarcón's *Tratado de las Supersticiones de los Naturales de esta Nueva España* from the present states of Guerrero and Morelos were discussed first by Eike Hinz in 1970 and recently by Michael D. Coe and Gordon Whittaker in an appendix to their edition of the text (1982).

Ruiz de Alarcón's *Tratado* is a collection of some sixty ritual texts in Nahuatl, varying in length between 15 and 345 short lines as presented by Coe and Whittaker. Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón was "parish priest of Atenango, Guerrero" and as "ecclesiastical judge for northern Guerrero and most of Morelos" he was "to investigate and eradicate native sorcery and pagan beliefs of the people of that zone" (Coe and Whittaker 1982:1); and so he zealously set about to collect as much information as possible about the sorcery and beliefs of his congregation, including the wording of the spells and incantations. In the *Tratado*, he accompanies the Nahuatl texts with Spanish paraphrases; and for most of the texts he reports how they were collected, where, and from what informant. The material was gathered between 1617 and 1629 from twenty-three known villages in today's Guerrero and Morelos.

Since the texts were used for ritual purposes and were collected in one continuous area, one might fear that the language was the same in all of them. However, this is not the case, and the accurate information about the localities has enabled Coe and Whittaker to register cases of systematic variation, to enter them on a map, and draw a number of isoglosses through the area (1982:318–21).

These and other features characteristic of the texts can be used in support of a hypothesis concerning the pre-Hispanic dialect situation, to suggest the distribution of dialects in the area in the seventeenth century, and to contribute to a description of the later development of the dialects in the area.

In working with Nahuatl dialectology based on modern dialect material I have noticed two items shared by La Huasteca and some villages in Central Guerrero.

(1) In La Huasteca, the ordinary agentive noun derived from verbs is formed with the suffix *-ke:-λ* (*tiopis-ke:-λ* 'priest', *tekiti-ke:-λ* 'worker'). The same form is found in some villages in Central Guerrero, e.g., Copalillo, Xalatzala, Atliaca, San Agustín Huapa, Ameyaltepec, Huitziltepec. It also occurs—as *-keh*—in Sierra de Puebla and is found in some older texts, for example, in the *Anales de Tecamachalco* (1903:50)—*teopixcatl* 'sacerdote'.

(2) The word for 'now' in La Huasteca, Central Guerrero, and Isthmus is *a:man*, whereas all other dialects have *a:š(k)a:n*.

The sharing of these two items, which may well be simple retentions from an older stage, obviously is not sufficient evidence for drawing any conclusions, and yet it suggests some past contact of the two (or three) dialect areas.

This slim hypothesis of former contact between the dialect now spoken in Central Guerrero and the one spoken in La Huasteca is boosted by a few more features that appear in Ruiz de Alarcón's texts.

(3) The reduplicated form *yaya:w-*, with the meaning 'black', occurs only in La Huasteca and, profusely, in Ruiz de Alarcón's texts. The most common word for 'black' in the other dialects is *λi:ltik*, but *kapoɟtik* and *pistik* are also found in some of them. The original meaning of the root *ya:w-* is probably 'purple' (Spanish *morado*) or 'purple corn'; *ya:w-iλ* or *ya:-ya:w-iλ* refers in various dialects to a type of corn which has a very dark purple—almost black—color or to tortillas made from this type of corn.

In La Huasteca, the reduplication has a short vowel (Kaufmann 1969:1 and Canger 1976:27) like the word for 'green', *šošo:wki/šošo:wik*; therefore I assume that the form itself is old, since reduplication with a short vowel is a feature not productive in Classical Nahuatl or in the modern dialects (see Canger 1981).

Molina has various words made up of *ya:w* 'purple corn' + *pa* 'paint' (*yappalli, yapaltic, yapaleuac, yapalectic*) meaning 'black', 'colored black', and 'purple' (Sp. *cárdeno*); a slightly different form, *yaya:ktik*, appears in Classical Nahuatl and in some modern dialects meaning 'brown', 'dark', and 'dirty'. For the Spanish word *morado* ('mulberry colored') Molina gives *camopalli* and *camopaltic*, which contain the root *kamoʔ* 'sweet potato'; some sweet potatoes also have a purplish color (cf. Spanish *camotillo* 'a purple kind of wood').

Thus, what La Huasteca and the dialects represented in Ruiz de Alarcón's texts share is a slight change of meaning from 'dark purple' to 'black' of the reduplicated form, *yaya:wik*, from the root *ya:w*. Some examples of the root *λi:l-* occur in Ruiz de Alarcón's texts but only a few scattered cases.

(4) On the basis of the shape of some adjectives made up of a root ending in *w* or *n* and a form of the suffix *ki*, the Nahuatl dialects are divided into an eastern group, which in this case includes also La Huasteca, and a western group. In the western group, the roots end in *-w-ki* or *-n-ki* (*šošo:w-ki* and *toto:n-ki*), but in the eastern group the stem-final vowel is retained and the ending is shortened to *k* (*šošo:wi-k* and *toto:ni-k*; see Canger 1980:81–82). Although these adjectives in the modern dialects in Central Guerrero end in *-ki*, the forms with *-wi-k* and

-ni-k are abundantly attested in some of Ruiz de Alarcón's texts, again pointing to a closer connection with La Huasteca. Classical Nahuatl basically has the forms with *-w-ki* and *-n-ki*, but words like *šošo:wik* and *kosawik* occur next to *šošo:wki* and *kosawki* in Sahagún's material, possibly for stylistic purposes.

(5) The plural form of the personal pronouns varies between *-wa:n* and *-wa:n-tin* in La Huasteca, Classical Nahuatl, in some of Ruiz de Alarcón's texts, and in dialect areas west of these localities. In the other dialect areas (i.e., east of them), including present-day Central Guerrero, it varies between *-wa:n* and *-wa-meh*.

This demonstration that La Huasteca and some dialects in Morelos and Guerrero share or have shared a numer of features is significant not only because the two areas are geographically distant, but above all because they are separated by dialects which do not share the mentioned features. Ruiz de Alarcón's texts are of particular importance because they display some features that occur in La Huasteca but which are not found in the dialects spoken in Morelos and central Guerrero today.

	La Huasteca	Central Guerrero	Morelos/Guerrero	Classical Nahuatl
	1987	1987	1629	1571
(1)	*-ke:λ*	*-ke:λ*	*-ki*	*-ki*
(2)	*a:man*	*a:man*	*a:man/a:škan*	*a:škan*
(3)	*yaya:wik*	*λi:ltik*	*yaya:wik*	*λi:ltik*
(4)	*šošo:wik*	*šošo:wki*	*šošo:wik/-wki*	*šošo:wki*
	toto:nik	*toto:nki*	*toto:nik/-nki*	*toto:nki*
(5)	*-wa:n(tin)*	*-wa:n(meh)*	*-wa:n(tin)*	*-wa:n(tin)*
(6)	*tisi*	*tisi*	—	*tesi*

A less conspicuous case of variation which adds support to this concept of relationship beween La Huasteca and Central Guerrero across the Valley of Mexico might possibly represent a trace of a very old dialect split.

(6) We find a limited group of words which are pronounced with either *e* or *i*; this variation is not randomly distributed; the two forms occur systematically and divide the Nahuatl dialects into two—or three—large areas. The forms with *e* are found in the narrow central area including Tlaxcala (e.g., also Historia Tolteca-Chichimeca), North Puebla, and Tetelcingo Morelos; whereas in Central Guerrero, La Huasteca, Sierra de Puebla, Isthmus, and Pipil the same words are pronounced with *i*. The dialects of the Western Periphery do not seem to present a simple picture. They disagree among themselves, and internally they do not adhere consistently to any one of the two sets of forms.

Molina	Tlaxcala, North Puebla, Tetelcingo	Central Guerrero, La Huasteca, Sierra de Puebla, Isthmus, Pipil	
λeλ	λeλ	λiλ	'fire'
tešλi	tešλi	tišλi, tišti	'corn dough'
tesi	tesi	tisi	'grind'
atemiλ	atemiλ	atimiλ, atimit, atinλi	'louse'
senλi, sinλi	senλi	sinλi, sinti	'corncob'
isteλ, istiλ	-ste	-isti	'fingernail'
i?teλ, i?tiλ	-i?te	-(h)ti	'stomach'

If we leave out of account the Western Periphery, the distribution of this variation is well documented and it is much too systematic to be accidental. In fact, this distribution can be demonstrated to stem from differing developments of Proto-Uto-Aztecan *u under quite limited but well-defined conditions (see Canger and Dakin 1985 for a detailed presentation).

I have emphasized that the seventeenth-century texts collected by Ruiz de Alarcón show evidence of past contact with La Huasteca; but we also find clear indications that they belong in the Central Guerrero area and that the features characteristic of that area were already manifest in the seventeenth century.

(7) Nouns which in Classical Nahuatl and in other dialects end in -wiλ, -miλ, and -liλ have changed to -w-λi, n-λi, and -l-li in the modern dialects of Central Guerrero. Some examples from Zitlala are:

Zitlala	Molina	
čikiw-λi	chiquiuitl	'basket'
kʷaw-λi	quauitl	'tree'
šiw-λi	xiuitl	'year, herb'
atin-λi	atemitl	'louse'
čina:n-λi	chinamitl	'fence'
ko:n-λi	comitl	'pot'
ša:n-λi	xamitl	'adobe'
λake:n-λi	tlaquemitl	'clothes'
kil-li	quilitl	'a herb'

In Ruiz de Alarcón's texts, we find several cases of -w-λi for -wiλ: ayauhtli [a:yawλi] 'fog' for CN ayahuitl [a:yawiλ]; chiquiuhtli 'basket' for CN chiquihuitl; and chalchiuhtli 'jade' for CN chalchihuitl; but also variation between xihuitl and xiuhtli 'herb' or 'comet' and many cases of the unchanged quahuitl 'tree'. This suggests that, since the phenomenon is more consistent and more general in the area today, it had only

started and was in progress at the time of Ruiz de Alarcón. There are no examples of words ending in -miλ or -n-λi, or in -liλ or -l-li, in the texts, so they do not reveal which of the two forms were in use or whether the ones with -n-λi and -l-li were also being introduced at that time.

(8) In Central Guerrero today, the prefixes am- 'second-person plural subject' and im- 'third-person plural possessive'—and other cases of VmV—are, when followed by a vowel, pronounced [aŋm], [iŋm], etc. (in Zitlala, for example, eŋm-a:miki-h 'you (pl.) are thirsty', i:ŋm-a:ma-w 'their paper'). The explanation for this pronunciation is probably a development from a nasalization of the vowel preceding m to an actual nasal consonant ŋ: amV- > ãmV- > aŋmV-. Similar pronunciations are suggested by Ruiz de Alarcón when he writes, for example, anmixpan 'into your presence' for /am-i:š-pan/.

(9) In Classical Nahuatl and in many of the modern dialects, aʔ-mo: is used both as a negative adverb in a sentence and as the negative answer to a question, 'no'. In Central Guerrero, the word for 'no' is ka, and in connection with indefinite pronouns ('no one', 'nothing', etc.) and in declarative and interrogative sentences the negative adverb is (ko)š. In a grammar from 1713, Manuel Perez, who was a priest in Chiauhtlan de la Sal, a locality slightly to the northeast of Ruiz de Alarcón's area, writes that the negation in the areas south of Mexico City was ka for 'no', kwiš with the indefinite pronouns, but aʔ-mo like in Classical Nahuatl elsewhere (1713:75, 189).[32] In Ruiz de Alarcón's texts we find examples of such a use of ka; he even comments on it: "En todos estos conjuros donde ponen la palabra ca es particula adversatius y contradiçe toda la clausula preçedente" (Ruiz de Alarcón 1953:123).[33] But kwiš 'perhaps', which is the origin of Central Guerrero (ko)š, is not found in his texts in connection with indefinite pronouns—where he has aʔ-λe 'nothing' and aʔ-ya:k 'no one'—or as a negative particle, but only to introduce questions, like in Classical Nahuatl; and with that function it appears frequently in the texts.

In their registration and mapping of a number of features, Coe and Whittaker have also shown that within the texts there are clear dialect

[32] Perez indicates that ka ends in a glottal stop, but other examples in his grammar, e.g., yahui 'they go' (1713:33), seem to indicate that the dialect in question behaves like the Central Guerrero dialects and many other Nahuatl dialects today, namely, it uses a strong glottal stop after vowels in utterance-final position, whereas corresponding to glottal stop in word-final position is an almost imperceptible h. Therefore, I assume that the negation is /ka/ [kaʔ].

[33] In all these conjurations where they put the word ca, it is an adversative particle, and it contradicts all of the preceding clause.

differences. They have basically found that there is a northern and a southern area (Coe and Whittaker 1982:318); and such a division can undoubtedly be correlated with the history of the region; however, this will demand a much more detailed study of the area than I am capable of at present.

What can we conclude from this superficial survey of some of the features characteristic of the seventeenth-century texts collected by Ruiz de Alarcón in Morelos and Guerrero compared with the features found in Classical Nahuatl and in some modern dialects?

The evidence is too thin for any strong conclusions, but I find it inspiring and feel tempted to relate the findings and other features of the Nahuatl dialects to what we know about the geography and history of central Mexico and to suggest a broad sketch of how the dialect areas may be given their history, or how they may fit into the known history of central Mexico. Such a broad sketch should be considered a working hypothesis—to be strengthened, amended, confirmed, or invalidated by further studies. In the following, information about the chronology, history, and migrations of the Nahuatl-speaking groups is based on Carrasco (1971), Nicholson (1978), and on the more recent attempt by Michael E. Smith (1984) to evaluate the chronicles as valid historical sources and correlate their information with archaeological and linguistic evidence.

Three periods are pertinent here: (1) the Toltec period when Tollan flourished (–1175), (2) an intermediate period with non-Nahuatl Chichimec invasions (1150–), and (3) the arrival in the Valley of Mexico of the migrant tribes from Aztlan (1160–1230). The accuracy of the dates is not crucial for the present sketch.

It is generally accepted that the Toltecs spoke Nahuatl, and since they were settled in central Mexico long before the arrival of the migrant tribes from Aztlan, we should expect to find a major dichotomy of the Nahuatl dialects, representing on one side the early arrivers—the Toltecs—and on the other the later Aztlan migrants. Since the first group has a much longer history in the area, and since its speakers have probably entered the scene over a long period of time and in separate groups, we should not expect it to be in any way as uniform as the second. Moreover, due to movements, power shifts, and influences moving in many directions in central Mexico, the features which at one time characterized these two major groups will have been changed, over-layered, and lost or partly blurred. And yet I believe that we do—in the present-day dialect configuration and additional information from the written sources—find traces of such a very early dichotomy and of some of the subsequent groupings.

Some evidence of this earliest recognizable and major split is the distinction between (1) $i < *u$ in all environments versus $e < *u$ /t,s ___ alveolar consonant, and $i < *u$ /elsewhere (e.g., *tisi* versus *tesi* 'grind'); (2) *toto:nik* and *šošo:wik* 'warm' and 'green' versus *toto:nki* and *šošo:wki*; (3) absence versus presence of *o:* 'past'; (4) absence versus presence of -*tin* for 'plural' of nouns; and (5) *noči* 'all' versus *moči*. In these examples, the first form is characteristic of the early group, i.e., of the dialects of the Toltecs, and the second form characterizes the later group, i.e., the dialects of the migrants from Aztlan.

I thus imagine that the ancestors of today's speakers of the dialects of La Huasteca, Sierra de Puebla, Isthmus, and Pipil represented the first group of Nahuatl speakers—including the Toltecs—in central Mexico and further south. At least some of them formed one loosely connected area.

Other features than the ones mentioned are still shared by some of the areas: La Huasteca, Isthmus, and Pipil share the use of the word *teksisλi* for 'egg'; in other dialects the word for 'egg' is *to:tolteλ*, and where *te:ksisλi* occurs elsewhere, it means 'conch'. Both La Huasteca and Isthmus use the word *a:man* for 'now'. In Sierra de Puebla and La Huasteca, the agentive of verbs has an ending longer than just -*ki* found elsewhere, namely, -*ke:λ* in La Huasteca and -*keh* in Sierra de Puebla. Sierra de Puebla, Isthmus, and Pipil have changed λ to *t* (see fig. 2).

(1) *tisi*
(2) *šošo:wik, toto:nik*
(3) absence of *o:* 'past'
(4) absence of -*tin* 'pl' with nouns
(5) *noči*

LA HUASTECA

SIERRA DE PUEBLA

AZTLAN
MIGRANTS

ISTHMUS

(1) *tesi*
(2) *šošo:wki, toto:nki*
(3) +*o:* 'past'
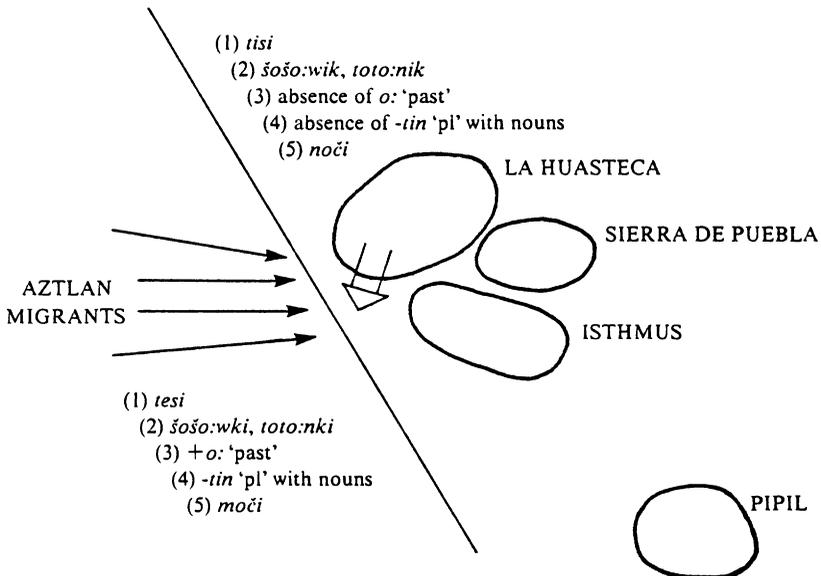(4) -*tin* 'pl' with nouns
(5) *moči*

PIPIL

FIG. 2

The dialect areas representing the Aztlan migrants are North Puebla, the whole undivided central area (encompassing Tlaxcala, central Puebla, and Morelos), and to a certain degree Central Guerrero. They share with the dialects of the Western Periphery most of the mentioned characteristic features—(1) *tesi*, (2) *toto:nki*, *šošo:wki*, (3) presence of *o:* 'past', and (5) *moči* 'all'. This indicates that they have been in close contact with these western dialects or formed a group with them at some time in the past; and it may also mean that they entered the Valley of Mexico from the west. Upon entering the Valley they spread out especially toward the east, into Tlaxcala and Puebla, and toward the south into Morelos. They may have contributed to splitting up the early group into three areas—La Huasteca, Sierra de Puebla, and Isthmus.

I have suggested that the dialects represented in Ruiz de Alarcón's texts share certain features with the La Huasteca dialect and that the dialects spoken in central Guerrero today agree with the "Toltec" group in having *i* < **u* (*tisi* 'grind') and *noči* 'all'. They also share the word *a:man* for 'now' with La Huasteca and Isthmus; on the other hand, they use the plural suffix *-tin* with nouns and *o:* 'past' in agreement with the dialects spoken by the Aztlan migrants. Smith (1984:175) has found that "there is no mention in the native histories of Nahuatl in the Basin of Mexico prior to the arrival of the Aztlan peoples. This implies that during the Early Postclassic period of Tollan's ascendance, Nahuatl had only penetrated as far south as Tollan, and that the language was later brought into the Basin of Mexico and the surrounding valleys by the Aztecan migrants after the fall of Tollan." He later (1984:176) says that, "While it cannot yet be determined whether the Aztlan populations represent the *first* Nahuatl speakers to settle in the Basin of Mexico and surrounding valleys, they almost certainly represent the largest and most important influx of Nahuatl peoples."

The distribution of the linguistic features seem to show that there WERE Nahuatl speakers in the Basin of Mexico prior to the arrival of the Aztlan migrants—or at least south of the Basin; and Colhuacan, which is located in the southern area, was reputedly affiliated with the Toltecs and Tollan (see Nicholson 1978:318). According to my interpretation of the features in Ruiz de Alarcón's texts and in the Central Guerrero dialects of today, the Aztlan migrants wedged in between the northern section and the southern section of a "Toltec" dialect area. Due to the strong influence from Tenochtitlan in the following period, the southern section spoken in parts of Morelos and central Guerrero lost most of the "Toltec" features, whereas the northern section was less influenced by the Tenochtitlan dialect and may have kept up some contact with the other "Toltec" groups.

6. Concluding remarks. I have tried to show that the known history of the Nahuatl-speaking groups suggests an interpretation of the dialect configurations: in the dialect subgroupings and in some obvious and some inconspicuous features, we find evidence for two separate waves of migration—the early arrivers, including the Toltecs, and the later migrants from Aztlan. I have previously shown that in the period immediately preceding the arrival of the Spanish, the dominance and influence from Tenochtitlan is documented in various innovations that spread out toward north, east, and south from the Valley of Mexico. More information about today's dialects will greatly refine our knowledge about the relative age and spread of these innovations and thereby contribute to our understanding of the history and structure of the Aztec empire.

Our knowledge about the social structure of the Aztec empire and the relative uniformity of the language found in the Nahuatl manuscripts suggest that there has been considerable sociolectal differentiation, so that greater dialectal differences were found in the language of the commoners, while the language of the upper class was more homogeneous. Only a more detailed study of the various types of written material from the earliest period can confirm this hypothesis.

Coe and Whittaker's careful registration of variation in the texts of Ruiz de Alarcón will undoubtedly reveal and clear up much more about the history of that particular area if compared in detail to archaeological and historical sources.

There is undoubtedly much more evidence to be found in lexical and other isoglosses in support of the suggested basic dichotomy between the early arrivers and the migrants from Aztlan. Minute registration and description of all kinds of variation found in the early written manuscripts and documents, in conjunction with more detailed studies of the modern dialects, will open up the possibility of new hypotheses and will provide evidence which, in collaboration with the work of historians and archaeologists, can be used to deepen our understanding of the history of the Nahuatl-speaking peoples.

APPENDIX A

The following legend is to be used for the map in figure 1 of the text.

1 = San Pedro Jícora; 2 = Obispado de Guadalajara, etc. (Guerra 1692); 3 = Obispado de Guadalajara (Cortés y Zedeño 1765); 4 = San Andrés Ixtlan; 5 = Tuxpan; 6 = Suchitlán; 7 = Pómaro; 8 = Almomoloa; 9 = "Tezcatitlan"; 10 = Chilacachapa; 11 = Totoltepec;

12 = Ixcatepec; 13 = Cuatlamayán, Cd. Santos; 14 = Matlapa; 15 = Huautla; 16 = Tantoyuca; 17 = Las Balsas; 18 = Cuacuila, Huauchinango; 19 = Atequexquitla, Xicotepec; 20 = Atla, Pahuatlán; 21 = Tlaola; 22 = Ahuacatlán; 23 = Zacapoaxtla; 24 = Zautla; 25 = San Pedro Tlacuapan; 26 = San Miguel Canoa; 27 = Tlaxcalancingo, San Andrés Cholula; 28 = Coapan, Tehuacán; 29 = Zoquitlán; 30 = Zongolica; 31 = San Martín de las Pirámides; 32 = Classical Nahuatl; 33 = Milpa Alta and Santa Ana Tlacotenco; 34 = Tepoztlán; 35 = Tetelcingo; 36 = Xalitla; 37 = Copalillo; 38 = San Juan Tetelcingo; 39 = Atliaca; 40 = Zitlala; 41 = Acatlán; 42 = Hueycantenango; 43 = Xalatzala; 44 = Quetzalapa; 45 = Mecayapan; 46 = Pajapan; 47 = Izalco, El Salvador; 48 = Pochutla.

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