The Jalostotitlan Petitions, 1611–1618

John Sullivan*

SOME YEARS AGO a colleague of mine at the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas handed me a roll of microfilm from the Archivo General de la Nación and informed me that it contained an interesting early seventeenth-century manuscript from western Mexico, including some text written in Nahuatl. Upon examining the material I identified twenty petitions on a total of 43 pages, written in Nahuatl by ten different scribes. The documents, which are included in a larger Inquisition case file of 225 folios, are addressed to the cathedral chapter of Guadalajara. They accuse the local vicar, Francisco Muñoz, of solicitation and physical and psychological mistreatment, demanding his removal from the area.

I decided to begin the project by digitizing the petitions. I reasoned that having the material on my laptop would enable me to work comfortably at home, in a library or a cafe. Later I learned that the electronic manipulation of the digitized text greatly facilitated analysis of the language. First I photographed the images of the 1618 documents directly off the screen of a microfilm reader with a digital camera, then downloaded them into my computer. I projected these images in a window on the top half of my computer screen. Here I could zoom in on hard-to-read details of the manuscript writing. Then with a word processing program I opened a two-column window on the lower half of the screen. On the left side I began transcribing the petitions, and on the other side I initiated the translation.

The petitions expressed the complaints of indigenous people from six towns which exist to this day: Jalostotitlan, San Gaspar de los Reyes, Teocaltitlán de Santiago, San Miguel el Alto, Mezquitic, and Mitic. They occupy a region in western Mexico known as los Altos de Jalisco, about a three-hour drive from where I live in Zacatecas. I visited each of these towns in order to observe the presence of sacred landscape features associated with Mesoamerican settlements, an earlier interest of mine, and to inquire into the existence of local colonial archives.

The question soon arose as to how to treat these materials, of great interest

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1Archivo General de la Nación, Ramo Inquisición, vol. 320, exp. 1, ff. 1–225. I call the settlement Jalostotitlan, the form in current use with the omission of a final accent used in Spanish; the original Nahuatl form would have been Xalozotitlan, “next to the sand caves.” I give exact citations in the text itself for all examples from the corpus, with the 1618 materials giving the folio number; (2) means folio 2 recto, and (2v) means folio 2 verso. For the 1611 materials I cite a page number, which means the page in Anderson, Dibble, and Lockhart 1976.

2It was only late in the game, after my initial transcription and translation of the petitions, that I became aware, through Kevin Terraciano and Jim Lockhart (from whom I received my introduction to Nahuatl), that there is another Jalostotitlan petition in Beyond the Codices (Anderson, Berdan and Lockhart 1976). Though I had long known the book, I had never made the connection. But sure enough, Document 27 there, “Petition for the removal of the priest of Jalostotitlan, 1611,” has virtually all the same characteristics and features the same priest, Francisco Muñoz, being accused of the same crimes in the same region seven years earlier. I immediately included the document in my corpus.
both because of their nature as a uniform corpus arising in a single small area at one specific time and because Nahuatl texts from western Mexico are rare. One thing that was clearly desirable was to make them available by publishing an edition of them, and that I have done (Sullivan 2003), including a full transcription in the original orthography with all diacritics and abbreviations reproduced as well as possible in print, plus a complete Spanish translation.3

In the past, my research with Nahua texts had focused on argument strategies and their relation to spatial organization,4 and I was planning to continue my work with the petitions along this line. Indeed, such work is still among my plans, and I consider it a promising direction. But it soon became clear to me that the most striking aspect of this corpus was its difference from the much more numerous and frequently studied body of texts from the Valley of Mexico and immediately surrounding areas, which for our purposes here we can call central Mexico.

The rhetoric of the Jalostotitlan petitions seems much less elaborate and high-flying than what we tend to imagine as typical of central Mexico. There a petition is likely to begin with a battery of phrases like “O high ruler, hear the unworthy prayer of us, the humblest of your vassals, who bow down deeply to kiss your hands and feet.” In the Jalostotitlan corpus a petition may begin right away with something on the order of “The priest beat me on Monday. He beat me again on Tuesday.” The first impression of anyone who is accustomed to central Mexican petitions is one of comical rusticity.

And yet on close examination, things are not so simple. I found ultimately that the series of set phrases that normally occur in central Mexican petitions are also present in the Jalostotitlan documents, although with diminished frequency. The formulaic two-way definition of the social relation between the petitioner and the addressee can be found: “antoqueytatocaquan . . . tamomaçequalguan,” “you are our great rulers . . . we are your vassals” (10v). Another embodies the face-to-face scenario in which the petitioning process would take place in an oral culture: “tinessico moyspantzin[co]” “we come to appear before you” (51). The bowing and kissing are also not entirely lacking: “mispantzinco ninopechtecaco,” “I come to bow before you” (121), and “cenca dictodenamiguillia amotlaçomavizmatzin yvan amotlaçoycxitzin,” “we kiss your precious revered hands and your precious feet” (6). The reverential suffixes and elaborate modifiers here are the same as they would be in central Mexico. The phrase “ma totecuiyo tiyos amechmotaço-capiyeli,” “may our lord God lovingly keep you” (10v), places the discourse in the requisite religious context in a familiar way and has the same sort of reverential equipment. Again as in central Mexico, doublets juxtapose two words or phrases which complement each other, as in “yn tino mahuiztlatoguah yn ti[no]-teopizquach” “you who are my revered ruler, you who are my priest” (93). Yet though all of these formal elements are present in the Jalostotitlan corpus as a whole, they do not appear as a complete set in any one document, and their concentration seems much lower than would be the case in central Mexican petitions. As a matter of fact, seven of the Jalostotitlan documents have none of these ele-

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3The publication invites comparison with Dakin 1996.
ments, and only nine have four or more.

The problem with going more deeply into the relation of western and central Mexican petitions is that the central Mexican petitions themselves have not yet been systematically studied. When one goes looking, one will indeed find texts with a highly polished formulaic rhetoric, but also examples of bareness and directness no less striking than what one sees in the Jalostotitlan petitions. A large-scale study of the Nahuatl petition genre wherever and whenever it appears is what seems to be called for.

Meantime, comparison with central Mexico is more propitious in the area of the language itself, for the standard language of that region has been well studied in grammars written in that time and in ours and is exemplified in a huge corpus of texts. Thus much of my research on the petitions to date concerns their language, and I will proceed to give some of my results.

An important tool I employed in this work was the electronic manipulation of my digitized text of the petitions. I have never learned how to use a spreadsheet program, but I understand the two-axis coordinant or Cartesian plane system upon which it is based. I figured that if I could isolate all the instances where a phenomenon I wished to study appeared within a text, I could record them as items in the first column of the spreadsheet. Then, in successive columns I could note such pertinent information as the tense, plurality, animacy, presence or absence of a particular morpheme, associated with each item. Finally, I could repeatedly reorganize the material by column, using the “sort” command in the program. I immediately found that many of the insights I had arrived at intuitively regarding the language of the petitions appeared as quantifiable patterns on the spreadsheet. And new patterns appeared which I had not been aware of.

I was able to identify and describe a number of language features, as well as organize them into methodological categories I had defined. Included in the group of characteristics which set the language of the petitions off from that of central Mexican Nahuatl were present tense plural construction, preterit tense construction, the durative -ya suffix, the absolutive suffix, grammatical number, vocabulary, and phonology.

**Linguistic idiosyncrasies of the Jalostotitlan corpus compared to central Mexico**

**Present tense plural construction.** Central Mexican Nahuatl in the time of the petitions marked plurality in the present and some other tenses by means of a final glottal stop virtually never represented in writing. In 1976 Anderson, Berdan and Lockhart commented on the use of the passive verbal suffix -lo as a plural marker for active verbs in a manuscript from seventeenth-century western Mexico. Five years later, Jeff Burnham wrote about this phenomenon in Nahuatl and Pochoytec documents from peripheral areas of Mexico, citing its use in the present, im-

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5See Document 7 in Karttunen and Lockhart 1976, p. 106. Three other petitions there (Docs. 4 through 6) contain elements of petition rhetoric, but in a quite reduced form little different from some of the Jalostotitlan documents. The petitions from Guatemala in Dakin 1996 also vary greatly.

6Anderson, Berdan and Lockhart 1976, p. 175 (not the Jalostotitlan document there).
perfect and conditional forms. Examples from Pómaro, Michoacán include: “mocahualo,” “they stay”; “ticnequiloya,” “we wanted it”; and “mitzcualoquizqui-aya,” “they might have eaten you.”\textsuperscript{7} This construction appears frequently in the Jalostotitlan petitions. There is even a case of the plural -lo suffix used in a compound verb, which complements Burnham’s list. In the phrase “san quali tielos-nequi,” “we want to live in peace” (28), the -lo is not in the main verb nequi, “to want,” but in the verb that is incorporated into it in future form as an object. The position of the -lo suffix here is the same as when it is used with the conditional verb form: immediately preceding the future -s.

The -lo plural appears 39 times in 10 of the petitions and with the instance just cited as a partial exception is used only in the present tense. However, five of the documents also contain present tense verbs pluralized in the traditional central Mexican way. This suggests that either the two forms were used in free variation or that they had slightly different connotations.\textsuperscript{8}

**Preterit tense construction.** Central Mexican Nahuatl had four verb classes in respect to preterit tense formation.\textsuperscript{9} In the oldest, Class 1, preterit stems were unreduced; in Class 2, by the sixteenth century the dominant class, the final vowel of the present was lost in the preterit; in the related Classes 3 and 4 the vowel was also lost, but the preterit ended in a glottal stop which was the reflex of a consonant once preceding the final vowel of the present but now lost there. All preterit plurals had the suffix -que [ke’], but only Class 1, with a vowel stem, retained the singular suffix -c. An additional element of standard central Mexican preterit morphology is the antecessive o-, appearing as a loosely attached initial prefix. In central Mexican texts of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries it was not always present, but by the eighteenth it was virtually universal.

As I began reading the Jalostotitlan petitions, it became apparent that while the elements of central Mexican preterit construction were present, many forms were irregular by central Mexican standards. I observed that unreduced Class 1 preterits might either retain the -c suffix or lose it: “vquivica” “he took it” (129), but “oniquinhuicac” “I took them” (26). A Class 2 preterit might look as in central Mexico, “vmic” “he/she died” (133), or, much more often, have an unreduced stem and a -c suffix, as in “vmicquic,” with the same meaning (also 133). The preterits of Class 3 verbs might replace the glottal stop with the -c suffix, as in “otzoloc,” “he fled” (168), or look the same as in central Mexico, as in “ochol-lo,” “she fled” (27v), for as mentioned above, the final glottal stop or aspiration was virtually never written.

My spreadsheet arrangement was particularly useful in this case for deter-

\textsuperscript{7}Burnham 1981, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{8}This situation recurs with many of the phenomena I describe, that examples of the standard central Mexican versions appear as well as a distinctive Jalostotitlan version. Some of the possible explanations are: residual influence of the first instruction in writing Nahuatl by friars trained in central Mexican; the presence of migrants from central Mexico; a difference between local inhabitants at a higher social level, more cosmopolitan and in touch with central Mexico, and more parochial residents at a lower level.

mining the relative distribution of three preterit elements: the reduced stem, the o-
prefix, and the -c suffix. I located and isolated the 335 instances of regular preterit
verbs (that is, regular in central Mexico) that were conjugated in the singular, plu-
rals not being taken into account because of the universality of the plural preterit
suffix -que. I put these verbs on the spreadsheet along with columns for answering
the following questions: Which central Mexican stem class is the verb associated
with? Is the antecessive o- present? Is the -c suffix present? Is the final vowel of
the verb dropped? Finally, I sorted the columns a number of times, and in the
process obtained the following information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Class 2</th>
<th>Class 3</th>
<th>Class 4</th>
<th>Total / Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of verbs</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final vowel dropped</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o- prefix used</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-c suffix used</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither o- nor -c used</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o-not used, -c used</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o- used, -c not used</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both o- and -c used</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>190</td>
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<tr>
<td>57%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on these data, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. With a few exceptions, preterit stem formation in the Jalostotitlan petitions
makes use of only two verb classes: those which drop their final vowel (corre-
spending to central Mexican Class 3), and those which do not (corresponding to
central Mexican Classes 1, 2 and 4).
2. Use of the -c suffix is not confined to the central Mexican Class 1 verbs. Rather
these appear with approximately the same frequency (69%) in all regular verbs,
regardless of their central Mexican class.10 It is possible that in the absence of -c
a glottal stop is used, but that is impossible to ascertain.11 Furthermore, the fact

10There is a difference in the sense that in Classes 1, 2, and 4, -c always co-occurs
with an unreduced stem; in Class 3 it appears together with a reduced stem. In all cases it
is preceded by a vowel stem. I will not comment on the frequencies associated with the
Class 4 verbs due to their rarity in the petitions. It is also illusory to talk of their not
dropping the final vowel in view of the prominence of the Class 4 monosyllabic word
qua, “to eat.”
11It is also conceivable that the -c itself might represent glottal stop or aspiration. In
Stage 3 texts of central Mexico, especially among less well educated writers, it was not
uncommon to write c where a glottal stop or other weak syllable-final segment [cont’d]
that the same verb can appear at times with, at times without the -c suffix leads one to believe that its use was optional or in free variance with the final glottal stop or a zero suffix. This is even more likely given that the vowel reduction of Class 3 verbs has no influence on their use of the -c suffix.

3. Given that only 3% of the verbs in the sample lacked both the antecessive o- and the -c suffix, it is possible that these two elements also worked in free variation to signal the preterit.

Overall, then, the Jalostotitlan corpus represents a significant variance from central Mexico in preterit formation.

The durative -ya suffix. The durative element -ya is used among other things in central Mexican Nahuatl in the formation of the imperfect tense and the conditional mode. The imperfect tense is formed by suffixing -ya to the imperfective verb stem. The conditional mode is constructed using a complex element, -zquia, which is composed of an ancient form of the future tense, -z-qui, and the durative suffix -ya.

Thirty-one instances of verbs in the Jalostotitlan petitions are in the imperfect tense or the conditional mode. Eighteen of these make use of an optional reduplicated form of the suffix -ya, similar to the practice in modern Huastecan Nahuatl but rarely seen in central Mexican texts. Two-thirds of the fifteen conditional verbs employ the reduplicated suffix, while half of the imperfect verbs use it, including all Class 1 and 4 verbs, and two-thirds of the Class 2 and 3 verbs. For example, in the imperfect tense: Class 1, “momapatlayaya” “she was defending herself” (98), which in central Mexico would be momapatlaya; Class 2, “[peguac] netzmequitequiaaya,” “he [began to] beat me” (98v); Class 3, “quimictiayaya,” “he used to hit him” (84v); Class 4, “tlaquayaya,” “he was eating” (98v). Examples of reduplication in the conditional mode are: “miquixquiyaya,” “he almost died” (84), and “hualazquiaa,” “he would come” (26v). One of the examples from Pómaro, Michoacán cited in Jeff Burnham’s article regarding the -lo plural suffix is a conditional mode verb which also bears the reduplicated -ya suffix: “mitz-cualozquiaya,” “they might have eaten you”.12

The absolutive suffix and possession. Nahuatl in general makes elaborate distinctions between possessed and nonpossessed nouns. Nonpossessed nouns bear subject prefixes and absolutive endings, of which in the singular -t/-tli/-li is predominant; the corresponding plural endings are -tin, -me, and glottal stop or aspiration. Possessed nouns retain the subject prefixes but add a set of prefixes indicating the possessor. The absolutive suffix disappears. Singular nouns often have the suffix -u/-hui, which is however increasingly vestigial, and many possessed nouns, especially those with consonant stems, end with the bare stem. The Jalostotitlan petitions share this system with central Mexican documents; however, while use of the prefixes and the plural suffixes is identical, there are a number of deviations with singular possessed nouns, which in some cases retain

would be expected. (Personal communication of Jim Lockhart.) This would seem especially possible in the case of verbs in central Mexican Class 3, in which a c appears where one might have expected glottal stop.

the absolutive ending, something which in a central Mexican text would be one of the most basic grammatical errors possible and was associated with Spaniards using Nahuatl.

*Cueitl,* “skirt,” appears only once in the corpus and is written “yqueytl.” “her skirt” (31r). The possessive prefix -i (here -y), as well as the context of the sentence, clearly indicate that the intention is “her skirt.” Normally the absolutive suffix -tl would drop off, as well as the final i of the stem with this class of noun.

*Eztli,* “blood,” comes up twice in the petitions. Once it follows central Mexican standards; as “noesyo” “my blood” (18), it bears the possessive prefix no-, “my,” the -yo suffix of inalienable possession which is used for human body parts, and has lost its absolutive suffix. However, another example, “yyezti” “its blood” (17), has the possessive prefix -y while retaining the absolutive suffix -t[1].

The possessive form of *altepetl* (state, pueblo) shows up ten times in five of the petitions. In central Mexican Nahuatl, as a vowel stem, it takes the -uh suffix, but this only occurs once in the petitions: “toaltepeuh,” “our settlement” (10v). The other nine attestations retain the -tl absolutive suffix, as in “toaltepetl,” with the same meaning (2).

There is a category of nouns fashioned from verbs, ending in *-liztli*, which refers to the act of doing something. For example, *ciahui,* “to tire,” forms *ciahuiliztli,* “fatigue, or the act of becoming tired, or the result of fatiguing effort.” On eight occasions in the petitions, the possessive form of such words follows the central Mexican rule of dropping the absolutive -tl suffix, as in “toçiauiliz,” “our expended effort” (2v). But in four cases, all involving long compounded variants of the word *netlatlauhtilitztl,* “petition,” the absolutive suffix is retained: for example, “nomacevalnetoliniliztatauhtilitzti,” “my humble petition about affliction” (17v). The distinguishing factor here seems to be word length rather than any special propensity of *-liztli* nouns.

Something of the same tendency affects preterit agentive nouns in the petitions. *Teopixqui,* “priest,” is an agentive noun originally formed from the preterit tense of a class 2 verb *teopia,* preterit *teopix,* “to have custody of a divinity.” To form the agentive an obsolete preterit suffix -qui is added. In central Mexican Nahuatl, when nouns of this type receive a possessive prefix, the -qui suffix is replaced by an even older suffix -ca, which acts as a ligature to which a possessive suffix is added, as in “toteopixcauh,” “our priest” (26). There are 20 instances of this standard form in the petitions; however, in one case, “tomaui-steopixqui,” “our revered priest” (3), the non-possessive agentive ending is retained.13

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13A somewhat dubious case appears in the 1611 text, in which the possessed form of *tlatoani,* “ruler,” being -tlatoiocahu, appears in the standard fashion twice, but the third manifestation is “tohuyetlatoca,” “he is our great ruler” (p. 172), which has the -ca-“ligature” but lacks the -uh suffix. This instance could be interpreted as relating to the phenomenon of retaining absolutive markings in the possessed form, or it could be a simple error of omission, of which there are many in these texts, or it could be the result of a phonological development. In texts of central Mexico, by Stage 3 unvoiced syllable-final [w] had become so weak that any representation of it was often omitted in [cont’d]
**Grammatical number.** The petitions seem to show some deviations in the marking of number from central Mexican usage as described in grammars. If we take the common word *tlacatl*, “person,” we find that here as there it can function as a counter, so that when it is preceded by a number or a quantifier it retains the singular form. When it shows a plural, it can appear as *tlaca* (with an unwritten glottal stop), the central Mexican standard, as in “yehuantin mizquitic tlaca,” “those people of Mezquitic” (p. 166). But the word can also take a -me plural, as in “tiuhueintlacame” “we elders” (26).

By the standards of central Mexican grammars, *tlacatl* as a counter should govern a verb in the singular. A phrase from Doc. 4 in fact has both noun and verb in the singular, “yey tacat amo moyolcuiti,” “three people did not confess” (13v). But number correspondence between subject and verb is not the rule in sentences containing *tlacatl* as counter, as can be seen in “nagui tlacatl omomi-quilique” “four people died” (2v), where the preterit verb is plural. In the great majority of cases where *tlacatl* is preceded by a quantifier such as *mochi*, “all,” both the quantifier and the noun are in the singular, as standard in central Mexico. But once the quantifier is marked plural while the noun remains singular: “titimochintin [sic] tiuhueultlacatl,” “all we elders” (31).

This lack of number agreement is not confined to sentences containing *tlacatl*. A clause in Doc. 10 reads, “yuquac amo pania ticmacalo masehualtin para yas ychan señoratlatequipanos[ue] . . .,” “when we do not quickly provide him commoners in order to go to the Spanish woman’s home to work . . .” (32). Here, the plural “masehualtin” is the subject of two future tense verbs, of which “yas” is grammatically singular and “tlatequipanos[ue]” is grammatically plural.

At times, as in the following example from Doc. 1, standard and deviant usage coexists within a single utterance: “miequenti maçegualtin quitequipaniluis yguan mie[c] s[i]uame quitexilis,” “many commoners serve her and many women grind [maize] for her” (2v). In the first section of this sentence, while the plural subject “maçegualtin” and its quantifier “miequenti” are in grammatical number agreement, the corresponding future tense verb “quitequipaniluis” lacks the plural suffix. In the second section, the plural subject “s[i]uame” is paired with a quantifier “mie[c]” and a verb “quitexilis” which are both grammatically singular.

Exceptions to what would be considered normal central Mexican number agreement as described in grammars extend even to relational words and verbal object prefixes. Nahuatl relational words correspond to English prepositions: however, grammatically they are like nouns in bearing a possessive prefix which should be in grammatical agreement with their object. A portion of Doc. 13 reads, “yuqui amo titlacaame ypan techmati tichichime,” “he considers us as though we are not humans but dogs” (84v). Here, the relational word -pan ("on," but in this case with the idiomatic meaning "as") has a first person plural object, but its possessive prefix - is - corresponds to the third person singular.

The third person singular -qui and third person plural -quim/-quin object prefixes in Nahuatl are easily confused in texts because the final m or n of the writing (see for example Lockhart 1991, pp. 125–26), and the same could have happened here, though admittedly the Jalostotitlan texts show no particular tendency to omit -uh.
plural form often disappears. Even eliminating these doubtful cases, there are many instances in the petitions where an object prefix does not agree with its corresponding object.

Thus there is no doubt that number usage in the petitions varies considerably from its description in such grammars as those of Carochi and Andrews. The problem is that actual texts from central Mexico sometimes manifest the same tendencies, the same type of inconsistency. One is left with the impression that the deviances are overall greater in the Jalostotitlan petitions than in the generality of central Mexican texts. Texts from smaller settlements and writers with less elaborate training may look more like the Jalostotitlan texts in this respect (as in some others), so more than macroregional variants of Nahuatl may be involved. A thorough study of the use of number in central Mexican texts will be required before the question can be settled.

Vocabulary. The bulk of the vocabulary in the Jalostotitlan corpus is immediately recognizable coming from central Mexican Nahuatl, but some items do stand out as distinct, sometimes to the point of making comprehension difficult. A difference that leaps to the eye for one accustomed to central Mexican texts is the use of the relational words -tech and -nahuac.

Nahuatl relational words correspond in function to English prepositions. Grammatically they are like nouns in that they bear possessive prefixes crossreferring with their objects. I had read that the use of -tech, central Mexican Nahuatl’s most general connector,\(^\text{14}\) was greatly reduced in many older or peripheral forms of the language, in favor of another relational word, -nahuac.\(^\text{15}\) The basic meaning of -tech seems to be “attached to,” hence “on, next to,” and many other meanings, so that in central Mexican Nahuatl when an idiomatic phrase needed a relational word as a connector, -tech was often the solution. The basic meaning of -nahuac seems to be “close to,” but it also shades into “next to,” so that -tech and -nahuac were closely related in meaning from the beginning.

I decided to see for myself about the situation with these two relational words in a corpus of peripheral Nahuatl, comparing and contrasting their use in the petitions. I initiated the analysis by isolating the 13 phrases in the corpus containing -tech and the 48 containing -nahuac. Even this preliminary result was significant. In central Mexican texts, though -nahuac is a common word, -tech is far more so, found usually several times on a page; thus in the petitions the frequency of the two is reversed from the central Mexican situation. I then organized the phrases into three categories, taking into account whether certain verbs appeared only with -tech, only with -nahuac, or with both words.

I observed that -nahuac had not taken over all the central Mexican functions of -tech. In “oquilpic ytech uiga,” “he tied him to a beam” (2v), -tech retains its most basic sense. It also appears in two very well established central Mexican idioms in the function of general connector, in “totech monequi,” “to us it is necessary,” i.e., “we need it” (51), and in “san ytech motamia neyulcuitisti,” “he just blames it on [having to go to hear] confession” (84v). A more general sense

\(^{14}\)Lockhart in Carochi 2001, p. 85, n. 4.

\(^{15}\)Lockhart 2001, p. 23.
of connection, not part of any fully set idiom but still very much like central Mexican usage, is seen in “huel huei tescomonion ytech onca ynin altepetl,” “there is a very big excommunication on this town” (27). Also the use of -tech is close to the central Mexican norm in “ini yspochti ytechna ynin altepetl,” “this young woman is afraid of him” (26). In all these expressions -tech alone is used in the petitions.

In some cases both -tech and -nahuac are used with the same verb and with apparently the same sense. With qualani, “to become angry,” we see “oqualani ynahuac diego martín,” “he became angry with or at Diego Martín” (31v) as well as “vqualanic ytech don p9,” “he became angry with or at don Pedro” (98). The following expression also appears with both words: “ytech quinequi quichihuas-techtlacoli,” “he wants to do [commit] sin with her” (27v); and “quinequi ynahuac ten quichihuas-nequi” “he wants to do something with her” (84). It is hard to say just how these expressions would look in central Mexican vernacular; with qualani, I would have expected -ca rather than -tech. I am not entirely sure that -tech would have been fully idiomatic in the second set of phrases either. We can at least say that in these expressions speakers of Jalostotitlan felt some sort of equivalence between the two relational words and were using both as general connectors.

In a larger set of expressions the Jalostotitlan corpus uses -nahuac alone, excluding -tech. A good many of these examples would have been idiomatic in central Mexico as well. Molina defines -nahuac as “close to, next to, or with.” Very often in the petitions -nahuac translates as “with,” most often in the sense of accompanying, being together with, etc., which is also the sense Molina intended. Being or staying with someone is shown in the corpus in “omocahua ynahuac yseñora,” “he stayed with his Spanish woman” (26), and “yquac miyec yzpanyol ynavac,” “when many Spaniards [are] with him” (133). Activity in proximity to someone or at someone’s place is illustrated in “amo yca inin bara timosinis nonahuac,” “you are not to show off around me with this staff” (32), “nicmatiti ca ypampa nimopizcaltia ynahuac,” “I am aware of it because I was fiscal [church steward] around him” (133), and “ypampa ydequiuh ompa yeztlancia ynavac cenyora,” “because of the work there at his estancia (farm, ranch) around the Spanish woman” (6). Consider also “ynaguac cocochi,” “he repeatedly sleeps with her” (2). In several of these examples -nahuac is a quite close equivalent of French chez. In others the use of the word is reminiscent of Spanish con, as in “amo paqui ynahuac nopilguan,” “he is not happy with my children” (99), or “acmo guinegui ynaquac moyolcuitiz,” “they no longer want to make confession with him” (13v), or “quinequi momictiz ynavac [c] prayi p0,” “he wants to fight with fray Pedro” (17). Some of the examples indicating proximity might have been the same in central Mexico, but some would probably have made use of other relational words such as -huan, “with, in the company of,” or -tlan, “under, next to, (as a dependent) in the household of.” In Stage 3 -ca became an equivalent of Spanish con in the central region; in view of the precocious language contact phenomena of which we will speak more later, one can imagine that something similar was in progress here with -nahuac.

Sometimes -nahuac is used to indicate motion toward—a sense one would
not find in central Mexico, which would use -huic or -pa—as in “sa nonavac vmuquebpac,” “he just turned toward me” (17r). With the verbs cahua, “to leave or deliver,” huica, “to take,” çaca, “to transport,” and titlani, “to send,” the sense of movement to is retained, but -nahuac is virtually used to indicate an indirect object: for example, “mochi vmpa guivica ynavac ymecauh,” he takes everything to his concubine” (106v). In the last sentence central Mexican Nahuatl would probably have used a directional and an applicative in the verb complex and done without any relational word. In the petitions -nahuac sometimes seems to have the specific sense of going to or appealing to authority: “ayaxquia ynahuac seño obis- po,” “you should go to the lord bishop” (p. 168), or “axcan nimoteilvia ynavac tatuque,” “now I make a complaint to the rulers” (24). In one instance -nahuac is apparently used to indicate agency or instrumentality: “huel cenca timotolinilo ynahuac ynin toteopixcauh,” “we are extremely afflicted by this priest of ours” (26).16 None of the last three uses would be normal in central Mexican Nahuatl; in the last case, agency is not expressed at all with a passive.

After the above is it is easy to see why it is so hard to give concise definitions of relational words in Nahuatl. It is also very hard to define the relationship of central Mexican -tech to -nahuac as used in the petitions (and one’s impression is that it is similar in texts of at least some other peripheral regions). The original impression that -nahuac replaces central Mexican -tech turns out not to be true in the sense of -nahuac massively replacing -tech in set idiomatic expressions. That does occur but accounts for only a small percent of the phenomenon. Mainly we see -nahuac used in a series of ways building on its core meaning but going beyond central Mexican usage. Some of its use seems to relate to a disinclination in the petitions to employ the verbal applicative as much as happens in central Mexico. It remains true that -nahuac in the petitions is like -tech in central Mexican texts in being in some sense the dominant relational word, taking up much of the slack in the language.

The Jalostotitlan petitions have one example of a word not seen in central Mexican texts at all, at least not in the same meaning and in the same grammatical class. Paina, “to run fast,” is a rarely used intransitive verb in central Mexican Nahuatl. It shows up five times in the Jalostotitlan petitions, but functions as an adverb meaning “quickly,” which in central Mexico is iciuhca. It appears in the normal position for a particle, in front of the main verb, and like iciuhca it is often negated to give “not quickly,” in effect “slowly.” Typical instances are “amo pãyna moquecha,” “he does not get up quickly” (93), and “amo payana guichiva missa” “he doesn’t quickly [begin to] say mass, he is slow in saying mass” (105v). If there is any remaining doubt that in these cases paina is not a verb on which the second verb depends, as in pehua quichihua, “he begins to do it,” that doubt is removed by the lack of person agreement in the one case where the second verb is not in the third person: “yquac amo pania ticmacalo masehualtin,” “when we don’t quickly provide him commoners” (32). Further research may

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16The following example may also indicate agency, but perhaps it is open to other interpretations: “ypanpa niguelnamiqui aso teno ynahuac” (31), which I read as “in order that I might remember something with her [help].”
reveal more such idiosyncratic vocabulary in the petitions, but I believe that in most cases it will prove to involve a different sense rather than an entirely different word.\footnote{A case possibly somewhat like paina differs in that it is a technical item of lexicon not affecting the language as much as a common particle, and also in that it is thrown somewhat in doubt by a strange spelling. In Molina, turpentine is ocotzotl, literally “pine sweat,” but in Doc. 7 I ran across two almost contiguous instances of a word “osutsumuqui” (22), rendered in the accompanying translation as turpentine. The second element of the word can be identified as a preterit agentive tzomongui from the verb tzomoni, “to be broken or scraped,” thus “something broken or scraped.” If we take the first element, “oso-,” to be equivalent to oco-, “pine,” then turpentine could reasonably be seen as the result of scraping pine. To find s instead of the expected c two times straight, however, casts the identification with ocol somewhat in doubt. Nevertheless, it is not hard to imagine such a thing happening in these texts, where c and s representing [s] are frequently exchanged; this would be the only case where they are switched when the sound is [k].}

Another type of variation from central Mexico seen in the petitions is a different form of a familiar root. An example that has come to my attention is that the central Mexican verb imacaci, “to fear, respect, or be in awe of something,” appears as macaci in the Jalostotitlan corpus. The verb is attested three times. In the first instance, “amo quimacaci,” “he does not fear him,” the difference is not apparent, since the construction can be interpreted as qu-imacaci as it would be in central Mexico. But the word appears twice in Doc. 19 in a form unambiguously betraying a different root, both times in the imperfect tense, “nicmacacia, “I feared or was afraid of him” (133). Central Mexican Nahuatl would have written niquimacacia, conserving the initial i of the verb. The lack of the initial i is notable because the vowel is long, and long vowels tend to show great stability in Nahuatl. On the other hand, it was easy for an initial [i] to become confused with the same vowel at the end of the verbal prefixes and thus for an [i] to be either lost from or added to a verbal root, as is known to have happened with some central Mexican verbs. It is entirely possible that the form without the initial vowel is older.

Another type of vocabulary difference occurs at the level of morphological constituents. In central Mexican Nahuatl the first person reflexive prefixes of verbs are no and to. In the great majority of cases the writers of the Jalostotitlan corpus use a universal mo reflexive, something they have in common with Nahuatl speakers in many places outside the Valley of Mexico and even as close as the Valley of Toluca. The universal mo seems to be the older arrangement and the central Mexican version an innovation. Nevertheless, a certain number of central Mexican-style first person reflexive prefixes do surface in the corpus.

\textbf{Phonetic aspects.} The orthographic system used in the petitions is basically the same as seen in central Mexico, with an archaic touch or two, such as the use at times of v rather than hu for prevocalic [w] and sometimes also for [o]. Of considerable interest is the free alternation of some letters in syllable-final position, apparently indicating the merging of affricates and related sibilants, which happens also in central Mexican texts, but it seems to go further here. The one alternation not much found in central Mexico is of tl and t, both before and after a
vowel. It is possible that at least some of the writers used only [t] in speech and never [tl], for we find examples of tl in loanwords, as in “hastla” and “eztlancia,” where there can be little doubt that it is a hypercorrection and was not pronounced [tl]. If so, that would put Jalostotitlan on one side and central Mexico on the other side of a major division in the isogloss map.

**Language contact phenomena**

The kinds of variation between central Mexican Nahuatl and western Nahuatl as embodied in the Jalostotitlan petitions do not strike one as new. Rather it often seems that the western versions are archaic. But if the west was more conservative than the center in terms of native language elements and their evolution across the centuries, it was entirely up to date in its reaction to Spanish, or even in some respects ahead. In Nahuatl overall, with central Mexico the most closely studied part of it, a Stage 2, involving massive borrowing of Spanish nouns and little other influence (Spanish sounds were not yet acquired), gave way around 1640–50, with some isolated forerunners, to a Stage 3 in which, among other things, Spanish verbs and some crucial particles were borrowed, idiom was affected, and new sounds were acquired.18 The year 1618, time of the composition of the Jalostotitlan petitions, falls in late Stage 2 by central Mexican standards.

If we look at contact phenomena in the petitions with this chronology in mind, we first find that the situation as to loan nouns is very close to what might be expected. A total of 102 Spanish loan nouns appear a total of 490 times; they cover the same range of animals, officers, material objects, and concepts or procedures that one would find in Stage 2 texts of central Mexico. A few loan nouns stand out not as ahead of their time but as unusual for any time, such as “pelome,” “dogs” (13v), from *perro*, whereas most Nahuatl texts of all times and places retain the native words. The spelling of these loans often betrays Stage 2-style sound substitutions.

The marking of plurals on loan nouns, however, can be seen as somewhat precocious. In central Mexico it was not until Stage 3 that plurals marked only by the Spanish -(e)s became predominant, and even then many double plurals, with a native suffix in addition to -s, remained. But of the many loan nouns marked plural in the petitions, only four have anything other than simple Spanish -s, two bearing native suffixes alone and two double plurals.

Perhaps the most decisive diagnostic characteristic of Stage 3 is the presence of loan verbs using the convention of infinitive plus -oa. None appear in the petitions, which have only a Stage 2 strategy for finding an equivalent for a Spanish verb by using a Spanish noun plus -tia, as in *mofirmatia*, literally “to provide a signature for oneself,” i.e., “to sign.” This very verb, the most common of the type in central Mexican texts, is found in the petitions: “timofirmatia,” “we sign” (93).

But if Stage 3 verbs are lacking, some loan particles often considered to be a no less important characteristic of Stage 3 are present in force. Until recently the first known attestations of particle incorporation, and specifically of the two most common such words, *hasta* and *para*, were in documents from the early

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18See Lockhart 1992, ch. 7. Other statements made about central Mexico in the following can be confirmed in the same place.
1650s.\textsuperscript{19} The Jalostotitlan corpus of 1618 contains both words.\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Hasta} is fully incorporated; it appears four times meaning “until”; for instance, “guel oquixipeguac hasta ya miquisquia,” “he flayed him until he was at the point of dying” (2v). It also occurs meaning “even,” in “oqualani ynahuac diego martín hastla oquimici,” “he became angry with Diego Martín. He even beat him” (31v). The word \textit{para} shows up once in Doc. 10 introducing a phrase and meaning “in order to:” “yquac amo pania ticmacalo masehualtin para yas ychan señora tlatequipanosque . . .”, “when we don’t quickly provide him with commoners in order to go to the Spanish woman’s house to work . . .” (32). The usage of both words is exactly the same as in central Mexican Stage 3 texts. The adversative conjunction \textit{mas}, rare in central Mexico even in Stage 3, is used once in the petitions: “yntla san içel guel ticmacasque ytaqual mas amo gueli yxquichtin tiquintlaqualtisque,” “if it were only him, we could give him food, but we are unable to feed them all” (2v).

Two more Spanish particles seem to appear in the petitions, but actually they are involved in a typical Stage 2 facet of borrowing nouns and place names caused by the difficulty Nahuatl speakers had in recognizing the form of these words in Spanish sentences. In Nahuatl, expressions of direction are in the verb; thus a preposition plus a noun in a Spanish utterance would be mistaken for a noun alone. In central Mexico \textit{huerta}, “orchard, etc.”, was often taken into Nahuatl as \textit{alahuerta}, “to the orchard.” The same thing happens in the petitions, as in “san oyaque a la villa,” “they just went to La Villa” (31v). Something similar occurs with the preposition \textit{de}, “of.” Because of the lack of prepositions in Nahuatl, a Spanish phrase such as “pueblo de San Juan” was interpreted as consisting of \textit{pueblo} plus the indivisible locative word \textit{de San Juan}. Thus in the petitions we can find “altepetl de san ju” (26). The same treatment of \textit{de} is found in the Stage 2 Nahuatl of central Mexico.

Finally, an advanced manifestation of language contact appears once in Doc. 14, where the entire phrase \textit{los demás}, “the others, the rest,” figures in a Nahuatl sentence. Here we have not only a Spanish quantifying pronoun never definitely taken into the language, but even the Spanish article, in correct agreement by rules of Spanish. This instance resembles but goes far beyond certain phrases that quite early in Stage 2 came into the language as a unit, such as \textit{alguacil mayor}, “chief constable.” It smacks more of code switching: “los demás ayac vnca ocequi ynaguac paqui totepiscau tofenebiçiado” “none of the rest are happy with our priest, our curate” (99). Indeed, although it is hard to be sure, it is possible that much of the rest of the sentence has a Spanish base too, that we have here an example of the idiom translation and creation of equivalency relationships that were so characteristic of Stage 3 Nahuatl in central Mexico. We have seen earlier that the use of “ynaguac” in this connection would not have been normal in the center and reminds one of Spanish \textit{con}; “ayac . . . ynaguac paqui totepiscau” might be a translation of “no está contento con nuestro sacerdote.”

It may be that quite a few other idiom translations are hiding in the petitions.

\textsuperscript{20}They and any other loan particles are lacking in the Jalostotitlan petition of 1611.
awaiting further research, but if so they are not the ones best known from central Mexico. One phrase, however, looks as if it is based on Spanish; surely it violates any Nahuatl precedent. The Nahuatl word *tocaitl* is a noun meaning “name,” and the normal way of saying “my name is Tomás, or I am named Tomás,” would be *(nehual) notoca Tomas,* in which *tocaitl* bears a possessive prefix. In Spanish one says *me llamo Tomás,* “I call myself Tomás.” At one point in the petitions we find “nimotoca thomas luiz”(26v), apparently based on the Spanish construction even though it involves turning the noun *tocaitl* into a reflexive verb. The transformation is so abrupt that one is tempted to think of some error, but there the phrase stands.21

From the above one can conclude that though the Nahuatl of the petitions is not yet in a full-fledged Stage 3 as it evolved in central Mexico post-1650, showing much evidence of Stage 2 pronunciation and no evidence of loan verbs and some other diagnostic characteristics, it is visibly further along in that direction overall than central Mexican documents of the same date.

**Conclusion**

I believe I have demonstrated that a significant number of language patterns can be recognized and documented even in so small a corpus as the Jalostotitlan petitions by systematic compilation combined with comparison with a control base, provided here by the language of central Mexico in the same time frame. One still needs a broader framework for orientation. Even when we have seen the attributes of the language of the Jalostotitlan petitions, we can still ask what this idiom really was. Was it something like a pidgin? In some related papers certain inhabitants of Jalostotitlan were called “fluent in Nahuatl” (“ladino en lengua mexicana”), as though not all the local people were, as though it were a second language for at least some of them.22 Could some of the oddities of the documents be the comical mistakes that some have taken them for? Though the topic is not well studied, there was a special variety of Nahuatl for non-ecclesiastical Spaniards speaking Nahuatl with indigenous people in everyday settings, and a hallmark of this style was the use of the absolutive suffix with possessed nouns.23

To get beyond such doubts and to begin to acquire that larger framework I have found help in some rather unlikely places. In my position at the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas I have occasion to meet modern-day Nahuatl speakers from the Huasteca, far, far to the east of Jalostotitlan and centuries later, but also on the Nahuatl periphery, and in their speech I have found some of the same phenomena that distinguish the Jalostotitlan papers from central Mexican Nahuatl. I discovered that these speakers often use the absolutive with a possessed noun, and specifically with the word *altepetl.* I found the same tendency to retain the absolutive in a possessed word of unusual complexity and length, as with “noma-

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21A form such as *ninotocayotia* or in the petitions more likely *nimotocayotia* would be grammatical in Nahuatl and something that under certain conditions was actually said, but in this context it would still leave one suspecting a Spanish model.


23Even Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz did this; see an edition of Sor Juana’s work published in 1975, p. 212. *Obras Completas,* ed. by Francisco Monterde, México: Porrúa.
cevalnetoliniztatauhtilztii” (17v) in the petitions. When I did some systematic elicitation, I found a mixed suffix use, sometimes a central-Mexican-style possessive ending and sometimes the absolutive with a possessed form, just as in the Jalostotitlan corpus. I even found the verb root *macaci* in use, as in the Jalostotitlan materials and in distinction to central Mexican *imacaci*. Thus I was strengthened in my belief that usage in the petitions corresponds to actual speech, and encouraged to believe that the corpus represents a genuine regional brand of Nahuatl rather than a pidgin or a collection of second-language speakers’ mistakes, and also that it was allied to other variants of the language all along the periphery of the Nahuatl area.

Another source of perspective on my materials was a grammar, specifically of western Nahuatl, done at the end of the seventeenth century in Guadalajara, by fray Juan Guerra, covering the region which includes the present-day states of Michoacán, Colima, Jalisco, Nayarit, Zacatecas, and Durango.24 I was delighted to find that, although his work is fragmentary and inconsistent, he mentions many of the same phenomena I found in the petitions. Thus I have every reason to believe that they were widespread in the western Nahuatl of that time.

Modern publications can also prove relevant. A survey of a Nahuatl dictionary compiled for modern Zacapoaxtla in the Sierra de Puebla shows that there are only two classes of preterit formation, one with unreduced vowel and -c suffix and the other, the central Mexican Class 3, with final vowel loss, the same picture as in the Jalostotitlan documents.25 The work of Karen Dakin and Una Canger on the historical linguistics of the periphery also offers comparative perspectives.26

Getting such extensive results from such a small corpus as a few petitions, having them confirmed at some centuries’ remove by native speakers and modern dictionaries, and seeing them confirmed again in a grammar of the time for the whole region, has made me begin to think of a broader project on western Nahuatl and perhaps the Nahuatl of the periphery in general. I hope to find more documents and make extensive comparisons with studies of surviving Nahuatl speakers of this area, particularly the Pochutec of Michoacán and the Mexicaneros of Durango.

The result could be a view of geographical variation in Nahuatl, somewhat like the view of chronological variation in the language that emerged from *Nahuatl in the Middle Years*. And perhaps this linguistic variation too will prove to correspond to more general cultural phenomena, as it did in that case. Some of the analysis is very similar, finding patterns in systematic compilation of fragmentary data, but I am dealing much more with indigenous Nahuatl forms than with loan phenomena because that is where the variation is. In fact, Western Nahuatl seems very little different from the center in respect to contact phenomena; the dif-

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24Guerra 1692. A later grammar of western Nahuatl was written by Gerónimo Tomás de Aquino Cortés y Zedeño (1765). It describes many of the language characteristics of the Petitions, contains a lengthy vocabulary, and is more orthographically consistent than Guerra’s work.

25Key and Key 1953.

ferences are of a kind that imply that they were longstanding, from before contact with Europeans.\(^{27}\)

I have described my initial work in characterizing the language of the Jalostotitlan Petitions: the discovery of the corpus, the preparation of the text for analysis, the benefits of electronic manipulation, the elaboration of a minimal conceptual framework, and the identification and description of a number of language characteristics. In conclusion, I would like to discuss some of the ideas I have for continuing this project. They include the perspective of historical linguistics, the analysis of syntax, the consideration of contextual meaning, and corpus expansion.

Most of the language characteristics I have identified involve how the forms of words change in order to show subject, possession, tense or mode, and number in the Jalostotitlan Petitions as opposed to central Mexican Nahuatl. Now I would like to find out how and why these forms have developed in a different way, and this will require some reading in historical linguistics.

The only thing I examined regarding how words and phrases relate to each other was the issue of grammatical number disagreement. I would like to study the frequency and function of the principal Central Mexican subordinating particles, \textit{in} and \textit{ic/ica}, in the petitions. This focus, along with the identification of other elements of style, such as doublet phrases in the body of the documents, will permit me to further assess speech complexity.

I have done very little work on how fields of meaning are distributed among the words and phrases of the petitions. The section that compared and contrasted the relational words \textit{-tech} and \textit{-nahuac} was a start, but I would like to look at other sets of words which seem to overlap in the corpus, such as \textit{ic} and \textit{ica}. I explained how the \textit{-lo} present tense plural suffix worked. But the fact that the standard Central Mexican plural suffix is also present in the documents suggests that these two forms may have different meanings. I will have to look closely at the phrases in which these phenomena are contained in order to get at the contextual sense that will allow me to precisely distinguish their functions.

The Jalostotitlan petitions constitute a relatively small body of writing upon which to base a research project. At the very least, a study of its language needs to focus on an expanded corpus that includes other Nahuatl documents from Western Mexico. There is ample evidence that a ring of native and second language speakers of Nahuatl surrounded Central Mexico. Some of the language attributes I have been discussing are present in documents from other regions. Karen Dakin discusses the use of Nahuatl as a \textit{lingua franca}, identifying the alternate preterit forms and the retention of the absolutive suffix in possessive nouns in a set of petitions from Guatemala. Jeff Burnham comments on the use of the plural \textit{-lo} suffix in Michoacán, and his examples include instances of the reduplicated durative \textit{-ya} suffix. I have observed the use of the reduplicated durative \textit{-ya} suffix and the retention of the absolutive suffix in possessive nouns in the speech of modern-

\(^{27}\)With the further implication that if Nahuatl was a lingua franca it was one of long standing, for the language of the Jalostotitlan petitions is not something that friars could have brought with them from central Mexico.
day Huastecan Nahuas. Between 1676 and 1678, Tomás de Guadalajara wrote of his experiences as a missionary in Northern Mexico, and remarked that he encountered a Tarahumara Indian in the mountains who spoke to him in Nahuatl. A systematic study of documents from all areas of this ring may reveal that the language of the Jalostotitlan petitions does in fact correspond to a peripheral Nahuatl.

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