

# MEXICAN KINSHIP TERMS

BY

PAUL RADIN

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PUBLICATIONS IN AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY  
AND ETHNOLOGY

Volume 31, No. 1, pp. 1-14

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS  
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

1931

## ABBREVIATIONS USED

A	Anthropos.
l'A	L'Anthropologie.
AA	American Anthropologist.
AAA-M	American Anthropological Association, Memoirs.
ArA	Archiv für Anthropologie.
AES-P	American Ethnological Society, Publications.
AGW-M	Anthropologische Gesellschaft in Wien, Mitteilungen.
AJPA	American Journal of Physical Anthropology.
AMNH	American Museum of Natural History—
-AP	Anthropological Papers.
-B	Bulletin.
-M	Memoirs.
-MA	Memoirs, Anthropological Series.
-MJ	Memoirs, Jesup Expedition.
BAE	Bureau of American Ethnology—
-B	Bulletins.
-R	(Annual) Reports.
CNAE	Contributions to North American Ethnology.
CU-CA	Columbia University, Contributions to Anthropology.
FL	Folk-Lore.
FMNH	Field Museum of Natural History—
-M	Memoirs.
-PAS	Publications, Anthropological Series.
IAE	Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie.
ICA	International Congress of Americanists (Comptes Rendus, Proceedings).
IJAL	International Journal of American Linguistics.
JAFL	Journal of American Folk-Lore.
JRAI	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute.
MAIHF	Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation—
-C	Contributions.
-IN	Indian Notes.
-INM	Indian Notes and Monographs.
PM	Peabody Museum (of Harvard University)—
-M	Memoirs.
-P	Papers.
-R	Reports.
PMM-B	Public Museum (of the City) of Milwaukee, Bulletin.
SAP-J	Société des Américanistes de Paris, Journal.
SI	Smithsonian Institution—
-AR	Annual Reports.
-CK	Contributions to Knowledge.
-MC	Miscellaneous Collections.
UC-PAAE	University of California, Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology.
UPM-AP	University of Pennsylvania (University) Museum, Anthropological Publications.
USNM	United States National Museum—
-R	Reports.
-P	Proceedings.
UW-PA	University of Washington, Publications in Anthropology.
ZE	Zeitschrift für Ethnologie.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
LONDON, ENGLAND

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## INTRODUCTION

The following kinship systems were all extracted from old dictionaries and *confesionarios*. In spite of the fact that the authors of these works were priests who had no interest whatsoever in the strange customs of the people they were converting, great care was generally taken in obtaining as complete a list of kinship terms as possible in order to prevent the natives from marrying within the forbidden degrees of marriage as laid down by the Catholic church. These lists are, on the whole, fairly complete and adequate, i.e., they give us enough data to determine the type of kinship systems used by the Indians described.

It is naturally difficult to study kinship systems apart from social organization, and we know wretchedly little about the social organization of the Indians of either ancient or modern Mexico. Of the tribes discussed in this paper we know fairly definitely that the Opata, Tepehuano, Tarahumare, Cora, and Otomi did not have a clan organization and we also know that their social organization was simple. For the other tribes our specific knowledge about social organization is not always much better, but we do know a good deal about their culture in general. For the Totonaca we have the data given by the older Spanish sources, particularly Sahagun and Torquemada.<sup>1</sup> There seems to be no adequate reason, on the basis of the facts they give, to assume that the Totonac either had a clan organization or a marked development of social classes. That their culture was quite complex, however, admits of no doubt. It seems to have been closely related to that of the Huastec. Among the Huastec there appears to have been a fairly well developed "caste" system, but there are no indications of clans. It is only when we come to the Mixtec and Zapotec

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<sup>1</sup> This has been excellently summarized by W. Krickeberg, *Die Totonaken*, *Baessler Archiv*, vols. 7 and 9.

that we find a highly definite caste system<sup>2</sup> and probably a clan organization. For the Zapotec there seems to be little doubt that a clan organization once existed.<sup>3</sup> The evidence for the Mixtec is not so good, although it seems reasonable to assume that owing to the extreme similarity of the two cultures in social organization, what holds for the Zapotec would also hold for the Mixtec. The Mixe and Zoque do not seem to have had any distinction of classes. Whether they had a clan organization it is hard to say, but the presumption has always been that they did.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the kinship systems of Mexico is that, with exception of the Maya and Tarascan,<sup>4</sup> we find no example of the classificatory type and even the two mentioned are only classificatory in part. In the main the Mexican systems can be grouped into three types, the Opata, Tepehuano, Tarahumare, Cora, and Huastec constituting the first, the Totonac, Otomi, Mixtec, Zapotec, Mixe, and Zoque, the second, and the Tarascan and Maya, the third.<sup>5</sup> The first group approximates most closely to Spier's<sup>6</sup> type V (Yuman) and the second to his type IV (Acoma).

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<sup>2</sup> This is even definitely expressed in the language where a special set of personal pronouns exist only used when addressing one's superiors.

<sup>3</sup> The evidence is to be found partly in Burgoa, but particularly in Santamaria y Canseco, *Papeles de Nueva España, Relacion de Mitla, etc.* (1580).

<sup>4</sup> Paul Radin, *Maya, Nahuatl and Tarascan Kinship Terms*, AA, n.s., v. 27, no. 1.

<sup>5</sup> The Aztec belongs to neither group. In the scheme outlined by Spier it would have to be placed in his type III (Salish).

<sup>6</sup> Leslie Spier, *The Distribution of Kinship Systems in North America*, UW-PA, vol. 1, no. 2.

OPATA RELATIONSHIP TERMS<sup>7</sup>*Parent-Child Group*

Father, mas  
 Mother, degua  
 Son, no  
 Daughter, mara

*Grandparent-Grandchild Group*

Grandfather, pao  
 Grandmother, su  
 Grandson, paomari  
 Granddaughter, paom

*Sibling Group*

Older brother, baa  
 Younger brother, boo  
 Older sister, coo  
 Younger sister, bii

*Uncle-Nephew Group*

Father's older brother, cuh  
 Father's younger brother, bebir  
 Mother's older brother, soro  
 Mother's younger brother, dechim  
 Father's older sister, babo  
 Father's younger sister, der  
 Mother's older sister, teppo  
 Mother's younger sister, der  
 Nephew, taim  
 Niece, taimari

TEPEHUANO RELATIONSHIP TERMS<sup>8</sup>*Parent-Child Group*

Father, oja, avuscia, mama  
 Mother, dadda  
 Child (father speaking), tututo, alidaga  
 Child (mother speaking), mamata, alidaga

<sup>7</sup> Extracted from P. Balcastro, *Vocabulario de la Lengua Opata*. I am quoting from the manuscript copy of A. Pinart in the Bancroft Library.

<sup>8</sup> Extracted from Benito Rinaldini, *Arte de la Lengua Tepeguana*, 1743.

*Grandparent-Grandchild Group*

Paternal grandfather, boscica  
 Maternal grandfather, babba  
 Paternal grandmother, casuli  
 Maternal grandmother, uli  
 Great grandparents, visuli, vippizare  
 Child of son (man speaking), bossimata  
 Child of daughter (man speaking), bamata  
 Child of son (woman speaking), casci, camata  
 Child of daughter (woman speaking), bamata

*Sibling Group*

Older sibling to older and younger sibling, succuli, supidi  
 Younger sibling to older sibling, scisci

*Uncle-Nephew Group*

Father's older brother, cumuli  
 Father's younger brother, aquita  
 Mother's older brother, cusci  
 Mother's younger brother, tatali  
 Mother's and father's older sister, dusuli  
 Mother's and father's younger sister, discica  
 Children of older brother (man speaking), aquimata  
 Children of younger brother (man speaking), cumuli  
 Children of older sister (man speaking), tatali  
 Children of younger sister (man speaking), cuscimata  
 Children of older brother (woman speaking), boboyta  
 Children of younger brother (woman speaking), dusuli, mamasuli  
 Children of older sister (woman speaking), discica  
 Children of younger sister (woman speaking), dusuli

*Affinities*

Father-in-law (man speaking), tud ba  
 Father-in-law (woman speaking), mat boscidi  
 Mother-in-law (man speaking), tud mu  
 Mother-in-law (woman speaking), mat casuli  
 Son-in-law (man speaking), bamatoga  
 Son-in-law (woman speaking), uli ogade  
 Daughter-in-law (man speaking), bassimata dud  
 Daughter-in-law (woman speaking), casci du  
 Brother-in-law (older brother speaking), cuali  
 Brother-in-law (younger brother(?) speaking), mayoga  
 Brother-in-law (woman speaking), oteyseci  
 Sister-in-law, inscisci jonigade<sup>9</sup>  
 Children's spouses' parents, tasci

<sup>9</sup> Literally, wife of my brother.



TARAHUMARE RELATIONSHIP TERMS<sup>10</sup>*Parent-Child Group*

Father, onó  
 Mother, eyé, yeyé  
 Child, ranara, mara; qui

*Grandparent-Grandchild Group*

Paternal grandfather, achícarí  
 Maternal grandfather, aparóchi  
 Paternal grandmother, acáchuri  
 Maternal grandmother, ushú  
 Great-grandfather, great-grandchild, omúri  
 Grandchild, usú

*Sibling Group*

Brother, rejimára  
 Older brother, bachirá, bachi  
 Younger brother, bonirá, boni  
 Sister, retéima  
 Older sister, cochirá, cochi  
 Younger sister, huayé, huai, huaira

*Uncle-Nephew Group*

Uncle, aunt, raté  
 Nephew, niece, raté

*Cousin Group*

(Cousins are grouped with siblings.)

*Affinities*

Father-in-law, siá  
 Mother-in-law, siarúame  
 Son-in-law, moné  
 Daughter-in-law, monéra  
 Brother-in-law, repó, huága  
 Sister-in-law, cheé, huága

<sup>10</sup> Extracted from Jose Ferrero, *Pequeña Gramática y Diccionario de la Lengua Tarahumara*, 1920.

CORA RELATIONSHIP TERMS<sup>11</sup>*Parent-Child Group*

Father, tiyaóppa  
 Mother, tite  
 Child (man speaking), tiperie  
 Child (woman speaking), tiyaoh

*Grandparent-Grandchild Group*

Grandfather, tiyaxu  
 Grandmother, tiyacuari  
 Grandchild (man speaking), tiyaxu  
 Grandchild (woman speaking), tiyacuari

*Sibling Group*

Older brother, tihátzi  
 Younger brother, tihutzi  
 Older sister, ticutzi  
 Younger sister, tihutzi

*Uncle-Nephew Group*

Uncle, tinaozi  
 Aunt, titata  
 Nephew, tinaozi  
 Niece, titata

*Cousin Group*

(Cousin group same as sibling.)

*Affinities*

Man's brother-in-law, tiyaoberi  
 Woman's brother-in-law, tihuitari  
 Sister-in-law, tihuitari  
 Parent-in-law, timúni  
 Child-in-law, timúni

<sup>11</sup> Extracted from Nicolas Carlos de Cervantes, Vocabulario en Lengua Castellana y Cora, 1732.

HUAXTEC RELATIONSHIP TERMS<sup>12</sup>*Parent-Child Group*

Father (man speaking), paylom  
 Father (woman speaking), pap  
 Mother, mim  
 Child (man speaking), atic  
 Child (woman speaking), tam

*Grandparent-Grandchild Group*

Grandfather, mam  
 Grandmother, ach  
 Grandchild (man speaking), momob  
 Grandchild (woman speaking), yyib

*Sibling Group*

Older brother (man speaking), at mim  
 Brother (woman speaking), xibam  
 Younger brother, atatal  
 Sister (man speaking), ixam  
 Older sister (woman speaking), bayil  
 Younger sister (woman speaking), acab

*Uncle-Nephew Group*

Father's older brother (man speaking), yelam paylom  
 Father's younger brother (man speaking), tzutz paylom  
 Father's older brother (woman speaking), yelam pap  
 Father's younger brother (woman speaking), tzutz pap  
 Aunt, tzanub  
 Children of sister (man speaking), itzac  
 Children of brother (woman speaking), yyac

*Cousin Group*

(They are all merged with siblings.)

*Affinities*

Father-in-law (man speaking), yyam  
 Father-in-law (woman speaking), alib  
 Mother-in-law (man speaking), uxum iyam  
 Mother-in-law (woman speaking), uxum alib  
 Son-in-law, yyam  
 Daughter-in-law, alib  
 Brother-in-law (man speaking), bayl  
 Brother-in-law (woman speaking), atmul  
 Sister-in-law (man speaking), atmul  
 Sister-in-law (woman speaking), pahuan

<sup>12</sup> Extracted from Carlos de Tapia Zenteno, *Noticia de la Lengua Huasteca*, 1767.

TOTONACA RELATIONSHIP TERMS<sup>13</sup>*Parent-Child Group*

Father, tlat  
 Mother, tzit  
 Son, cam  
 Daughter, pozcayacam

*Grandparent-Grandchild Group*

Grandfather, papa  
 Grandmother, tago  
 Great-grandfather, xonapapa  
 Great-grandmother, xonatago  
 Grandson, tanat  
 Granddaughter, tanat

*Sibling Group*

Sibling, tala  
 Older brother (man to man), poxco  
 Older brother (woman to man), gag chin  
 Younger brother (man to man), taho  
 Older sister, pipi  
 Younger sister (man to woman), tahot  
 Younger sister (woman to woman), chahan

*Uncle-Nephew Group*

Uncle, coco  
 Aunt, napa  
 Cousin, puxnimit

*Cousin Group*

Cousin, tapuxnimit

*Affinities*

Father-in-law, son-in-law, pohuiti  
 Mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, pohuitit  
 Brother-in-law, hazta  
 Sister-in-law, haztat

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<sup>13</sup> Extracted from Domingo Pantaleon, *Arte de Lengua Totonaca*, 1752.

OTOMI RELATIONSHIP TERMS<sup>14</sup>*Parent-Child Group*

Father, na-ta  
 Mother, na-me  
 Daughter, xubahtzi  
 Son, bahtzi

*Grandparent-Grandchild Group*

Grandfather, xita  
 Grandmother, na-tzu  
 Great-grandfather, buexta  
 Great-grandmother, buetzu  
 Grandchild, xubehto

*Sibling Group*

Brother, chuada  
 Older brother (woman speaking), yda  
 Younger brother, tzichuada  
 Sister, machu  
 Older sister, na-thugue  
 Younger sister, tzichuh, cu

*Uncle-Nephew Group*

Uncle, ue  
 Mother's brother, na-gue  
 Father's brother, na-mo  
 Aunt, ttxitzy  
 Mother's sister, na-hi  
 Father's sister, ttzitzi  
 Nephew, na-bedatzy  
 Niece, na-begue

*Cousin Group*

(No cousin term was found. In all probability the sibling term was used.)

*Affinities*

Father-in-law (man speaking), dohioe  
 Father-in-law (woman speaking), tza  
 Mother-in-law (man speaking), na-to  
 Mother-in-law (woman speaking), na-ca  
 Son-in-law, tzi-gue  
 Daughter-in-law, behoe  
 Brother-in-law, na-co  
 Sister-in-law, ñamudu, behpo

<sup>14</sup> Extracted from *Luces del Otomi* (Eustaquio Buelna, editor). The vocabularies reprinted by Buelna date from the eighteenth century.

MIXTECO RELATIONSHIP TERMS<sup>15</sup>*Parent-Child Group*

Father, dzutu (A); yua (B)  
 Mother, dzehe (A); dihi (B)  
 Son, dzahya yi (A); dehe hy (B)  
 Daughter, dzahya dzihi (A); dehe dihi (B)

*Grandparent-Grandchild Group*

Grandfather, sij (A); xii (B)  
 Grandmother, sitna (A); xitna (B)  
 Grandchild, dzaya ñanindi (A)  
 Grandson, deheñani hii (B)  
 Granddaughter, deheñani ñihi (B)  
 Granddaughter, dzahya ñani dzihi (A)

*Sibling Group*

Brother, ñani (B)  
 Brother (man speaking) ñani (A)  
 Brother (woman speaking), cuhua (A)  
 Sister, quha (B)  
 Sister (man speaking), cuhua (A)  
 Sister (woman speaking), cuhui (A)

*Uncle-Nephew Group*

Uncle, dziso, dzito (A); dito (B)  
 Aunt, dzidzi (A); didi (B)  
 Nephew, dzasi, dzaxin (A); daxi (B)  
 Niece, dzieu (A); dieun (B)

*Cousin Group*

(The sibling terms were employed although at times descriptive terms were also applied.)

*Affinities*

Father-in-law, yua dido (B); yuva dzidzo (A)  
 Mother-in-law, dzihi dzidzo (A); dihi dido (B)  
 Son-in-law, dzahya cada (A); dehe cada (B)  
 Daughter-in-law, dzihi xanu (A); dehe sano (B)  
 Brother-in-law, dzidzo yi (A); dido hy (B)  
 Sister-in-law, dzidzo dzihi (A); dido dihi (B)

<sup>15</sup> There are two principal sources, an old grammar by Fray Antonio de los Reyes, *Arte en Lengua Mixteca*, 1593, and a modern *Catecismo en Lengua Mixteca* (Mixteca Baja), Puebla, 1837. The first represents the Upper or Mountain dialect (Mixteca Alta) and the second the Valley. The abbreviation A is for Alta, B for Baja.

ZAPOTEC RELATIONSHIP TERMS<sup>16</sup>*Parent-Child Group*

Father, bixoce  
 Mother, xiñaa-gacana, naaya  
 Child, xini

*Grandparent-Grandchild Group*

Grandfather, pixoze gola  
 Grandmother, xoce gola  
 Grandchild, xiagaya

*Sibling Group*

Brother (man speaking), beeche  
 Brother (woman speaking), zaana  
 Sister (man speaking), zaana  
 Sister (sister speaking), beelda, pela

*Uncle-Nephew Group*

Father's brother, pechetitia; pixioa  
 Mother's brother, pizaana naaya  
 Father's sister, pizaana titia; naaya  
 Mother's sister, pela naaya  
 Uncle, cdajiu (R)  
 Aunt, enanjiu (R)  
 Man's brother's son, xini pechoa  
 Man's sister's son, xini tazanaya  
 Man's brother's daughter, xini chapa pechoa  
 Woman's sister's son, xini bizaana  
 Woman's sister's daughter, xini chapa tazanaya; xiagoya  
 Sister's children, sa'a (R)<sup>17</sup>

*Cousin Group*

Man's male cousin, peche  
 Man's female cousin, pizaana  
 Woman's male cousin, pizaana  
 Woman's female cousin, pela

*Affinities*

Wife's father, pixoze gonna  
 Husband's father, pixoze niquiyoa  
 Wife's mother, xiñaa gonnaya  
 Husband's mother, xiñaani quijoa  
 Man's brother-in-law, xiniochia; pechoa  
 Woman's brother-in-law, chillonaya  
 Man's sister-in-law, chillonaya; xiñaa pechoa  
 Son-in-law, xiniochia  
 Daughter-in-law, xini hualijehia

<sup>16</sup> Extracted from Juan de Cordova, *Vocabulario en Lengua Zapoteca*, 1576, and my own notes. Terms obtained by me are marked (R).

<sup>17</sup> Sa'a means blood relative.

MIXE RELATIONSHIP TERMS<sup>18</sup>*Parent-Child Group*

Father, teit  
 Mother, taac  
 Son, unc, manc  
 Daughter, nox

*Grandparent-Grandchild Group*

Grandfather, ap, apteit  
 Grandmother, oc, octaac  
 Gandson (man speaking), apunc  
 Grandson (woman speaking), ocunc, oemanc  
 Granddaughter (man speaking), apunc  
 Granddaughter (woman speaking), ocnox

*Sibling Group*

Older brother (man speaking), aich, motuucqueex  
 Older brother (woman speaking), ay  
 Younger brother (man speaking), vich, motuucquex  
 Younger brother (woman speaking), coyai  
 Older sister, tzoo, cotoix  
 Younger sister, vich, cotoix

*Uncle-Nephew Group*

Father's brother, tzucumteit  
 Mother's brother, haim  
 Father's sister, tzueuu  
 Mother's sister, tzucuutaac  
 Brother's son, tzoemanc  
 Sister's son, haim  
 Brother's daughter, tzocnox  
 Sister's daughter, haim

*Cousin Group*

Older male cousin, aich  
 Older male cousin (woman speaking), ay  
 Younger male cousin, vich  
 Younger male cousin (woman speaking), coyai  
 Older female cousin, tzoo  
 Younger female cousin, vich

<sup>18</sup> Extracted from Fray Augustin de Quintana, Confesionario en Lengua Mixe, 1733, and reprinted by the Comte de Charencey.



*Affinities*

Parent-in-law, moot  
 Mother-in-law (woman speaking), xoicx  
 Brother-in-law (man speaking), hoy  
 Brother-in-law (woman speaking), noih  
 Sister-in-law (man speaking), caip  
 Sister-in-law (woman speaking), noih  
 Son-in-law, moot  
 Daughter-in-law (man speaking), tzuu  
 Daughter-in-law (woman speaking), xoicx  
 Children's spouses' parents, comoot

*Ordinal Names*

First-born son or daughter, cob (rabbit)  
 Second-born son or daughter, puut (deer)  
 Third-born son and thereafter, oetz (lion)  
 Third-born daughter and thereafter, oie (armadillo)

ZOQUE RELATIONSHIP TERMS<sup>19</sup>*Parent-Child Group*

Father, haata  
 Mother, mama  
 Son, mana; unc  
 Daughter, han

*Grandparent-Grandchild Group*

Grandparent, aputa  
 Mother's grandparent, oco  
 Father's grandparent, tahuata  
 Paternal great-grandfather, tua-puta  
 Maternal great-grandfather, tuoco  
 Paternal great-grandmother, tuta-haata  
 Grandson, aputa unc; oco unc  
 Granddaughter, aputa han; oco han  
 Great-grandson, tua-puta; mana  
 Great-granddaughter, tuha-haata unc; tuha-haata han

<sup>19</sup> Extracted from Fray Luis Gonzales, *Arte Breve y Vocabulario de la Lengua Zoque*, 1672. Reprinted by Raoul de la Grasserie in *Bibliothèque Linguistique Américaine*, vol. 22. Care must be taken in the use of all of Grasserie's reprints. They are full of typographical errors.

*Sibling Group*

Older brother, hatsi  
 Younger brother, pootzo  
 Older sister, tza-tza  
 Younger sister, cose (I am assuming that Grasserie's designation of cose as *hermana mayor* is a typographical error)

*Uncle-Nephew Group*

Paternal uncle, tzeni  
 Paternal aunt, paapo  
 Maternal uncle, hamo  
 Maternal aunt, eme  
 Son of brother, itzeni-manac  
 Son of brother (sister speaking), poopomanac  
 Son of sister, apu-manac  
 Son of sister (sister speaking), eme-manac  
 Daughter of brother, tzeni-han  
 Daughter of sister, apu-han

*Cousin Group*

Cousins, tzeniteva  
 Children of brothers, poopotoeva  
 Children of sisters, eme-toeva

*Affinities*

Parents-in-law, muent  
 Son-in-law, muent  
 Brother-in-law, pissi  
 Sister-in-law (sister of wife), capay  
 Sister-in-law (sister of husband), hoya  
 Son of brother-in-law, tzuu-manac<sup>20</sup>  
 Son of sister-in-law, sep-manac  
 Daughter of sister-in-law, tzuu-han  
 Daughter of sister-in-law (woman speaking), sep-han  
 Wife of uncle, sep  
 Brother-in-law of mother, tzuu  
 Children's spouses' parents, tzanc

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<sup>20</sup> In this and the following term manifestly the son of husband's brother and the daughter of wife's sister are meant.

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