ISSN 2054-9725 (Print) ISSN 2054-9733 (Online)

Huitzilopochtlia

March 2017

Published by David Hunt, Milborne Port, UK ISSN 2054-9725

For practical reasons I limited the last instalment of 'Huitz' to 16 pages but with so many images of the 'hahniana' group from my Mexican excursion with Ulises Guzmán to demonstrate its natural variability in the habitats, there was not room to include what we saw in the last two days of the trip. In this issue I am including a few landscapes to give an impression of the scenery in the municipio of Atarjea, including the 'near vertical' cliff that is the type locality of M. marcosii, the species Ulises and I believe is a re-description of M. multihamata. Alas, without climbing equipment I was unable to obtain good photos at that very challenging site, but on re-examining and enlarging one of them recently, I exclaimed ' eureka!' . I leave it to you to agree or disagree with me about what I think it shows!

From my Mexican Notebooks (*continued from page 96)*

4 July 2013

Having spent the night at Concá (*below*) we took the road to Xichú. Rocky outcrops in mixed woodland before and after La Florida (21.25N/99.44W) [1400–1500 m] gave us the bewildering demonstration of natural variation I have tried to cover with the miscellany of images that follows on pages 98–100.


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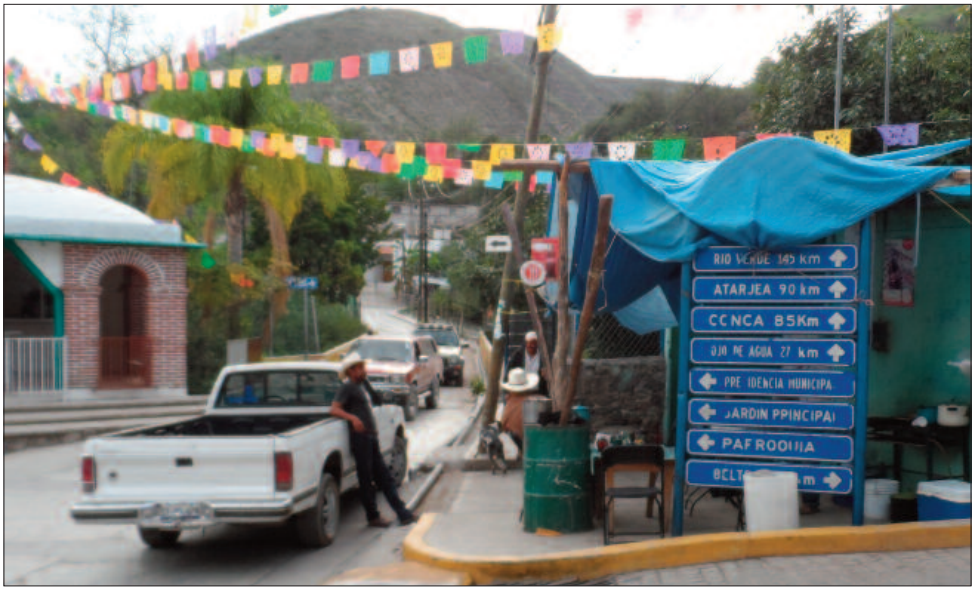
Further on at c. 1950 m and now in Guanajuato, mpio. Atarjea, in the mixed pine-oak woodland, the Leucocephalae were joined by *M. vetula* (21.22N/99:48). In this form, at least, the younger growth had golden yellow spines, later fading to white. In this zone (actually above c. 1200 m) epiphytes on the larger trees included *Aporocactus flagelliformis (see next page)* and a few mammilarias.

The road to Xichú eventually zig-zags down 1000 m through photogenic *Bursera* forest *(see next page)* to cross tributaries of the Río Santa Maria. On the way down Ulises stopped to show me *M. parkinsonii* (21.22N/99.55W).

Just discernible to the right of centre is the bridge where roads from Concá and Atarjea *(left)*, Xichú *(upper right)* and Guamúchil *(lower right)* cross the Río Salto and other tributaries of the Río Santa Maria near Noria del Maltrato (c. 940 m).

Between Noria del Matrato and Xichú (1650 m) the road climbs in the barranca of the Río Xichú, with *M. hahniana* frequent on the roadside rocks.



5 July

From Xichú we returned to the Guamúchil–Atarjea road and drove SE to the 'near-vertical portions of brown volcanic rock' at c. 1400 m (21.18N/99.55W) that are the type locality of *Mammillaria marcosii* Fitz M. & Glass 1997. This locality, as Ulises affirmed, must have long been known to plant collectors and was probably the source of *M. multihamata,* based by Boedeker (1915) on a plant imported by De Laet from 'Guanajuato'. When I suggested (Hunt, Mamm. Postscr. 6: 20. 1997) that *M. marcosii* might be a redescription of *M. multihamata* the Fitz Maurices reacted swiftly to say "we do not find Hunt's speculation supportable" (J. Mamm. Soc. 37(4): 51–52. 1997; but see also Hunt l.c. 8: 10–12. 1999). I think the circumstantial locality evidence provided by Ulíses strengthens the case for regarding them as the same.

Whatever the truth of this, I admit, having seen the species 'in the flesh' and also the possible new and related species discovered by Ulises, that I think I was mistaken in referring it to the *M. wildii* group (series Stylothelae) rather than the Lasiacanthae (formerly Bombycinae). This involves a broader change in my ideas on classification needing further discussion and explanation elsewhere.

Sadly, Ulises told me, latter-day collectors have dug out all but the more inaccessible clumps of *M. marcosii* since it was described. My poor photos (next page) show that a few of both the red- and yellow-spined clumps had at least survived to 2013 on the cliff, along with many more of *M. hahniana*, these being visible as little white dots on my photo of another part of the cliff, shown below.

Distant shots of red- and yellow-spined clumps of *M. marcosii* (~ *M. multihamata*), the yellow one flowering, at the type locality in SE Guanajuato, in close company with *M. hahniana,* and more of the latter, bravely cliff-hanging.

At some personal risk, I eventually got close to a small clump of *M. marcosii (top)*. But it was not until I reviewed my photos for this article and enlarged one of those little white dots (see p. 105) that I realised what it was! A true ha.. ha.. hahniana?!

A view from the cliff (the dominant cereoid is *Stenocereus dumortieri*) and, below, more of the cliff, its rich succulent flora including *Agave xylonacantha, Astrophytum ornatum* and *Ferocactus echidne.*

Movng on, as we wanted to reach Cadereyta before night-fall, I caught sight of a large plant of *M. gigantea* and, with it, one of its children (perhaps) (21.18N/99.54W). [c. 1500 m].

Further on and somewhat higher (c. 1850 m) we encountered a fine population of *M. hahniana* on rocky limestone above the road, some plants more spiny than the others. I particularly enjoyed the sight of the couple below.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Finally, for this trip, an old friend at 1400 m, 21.16N/99.48W, *M. elongata* ssp. *echinaria*

6 July
We duly stayed the night at Cadereyta and drove to Mexico City this morning for Ulíses to return our hired *camioneta* by lunchtime.