

## **Uchumataqu: Research in Progress on the Bolivian Altiplano**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper the current linguistic situation of the Uru, who live near Lake Titicaca (Bolivia) is discussed. An overview is given of earlier studies of the language, in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Then I focus on possible causes of the decline of the language of the Uru, Uchumataqu: persistent droughts in the 1930s, intermarriage with the surrounding Aymara and ethnic reorientation. In addition to losing ground to Aymara and Spanish, Uchumataqu has undergone considerable Aymara structural influence. Subsequently, I summarise my own research on the language, and the possibilities of linguistic studies serving community goals. Finally, the chances for survival are discussed, which depend in part on large-scale developments, or the absence thereof, in the Bolivian economy and society.

### **0. Introduction**

0.1. In this paper I describe and comment on the linguistic situation of the Uru of Iru-Itu (hispanicised as Irohito), a small ethnic group on the borders of Lake Titicaca, in the highlands of Bolivia. The colonial denomination for this group is Juchusuma or Ochosuma, which may be the basis for *Uchuma*, the first part of the compound *Uchuma-taqu* (*taqo* or *taqu* means “language”), the name of the group for their language, often also called Uru. Local sources suggest that Juchusuma is the traditional name for the Río Desaguadero, and thus Uchumataqu

would mean “language of the Desaguadero river (people)”.

0.2. I have carried out linguistic research with the Uru on three successive visits in 2001 and 2002, and have been exploring ways, together with the community leaders, to preserve the language, which has almost been lost. The history and prospects of Uchumataqu cannot be seen separately from the development of the indigenous peoples of Bolivia and surrounding countries.

0.3. I mentioned that the Uru live on the borders of Lake Titicaca, but this is slightly inaccurate. Properly speaking, they live on the banks of the Río Desaguadero, the river through which the excess water from Lake Titicaca flows towards Lake Poopo and then onwards to the salty marshes of the southern Altiplano. The Uru are surrounded by Aymara-speaking *campesinos* (peasant farmers). There were Uru communities on Lake Titicaca proper as well, but these communities have now become Aymara-speaking.<sup>1</sup>

0.4. On Lake Poopo there are several Murato communities, ethnically related to the Uru. However, the Murato no longer speak a separate language, but have adopted Aymara, preserving a number of original words from an Uru-like language. In the Murato oral testimonies published in Miranda Mamani et al. (1992) a number of these words appear.

0.5. Finally, south-west of Lake Poopo on the salty marshes near Lake Coipasa there is another group related to the Uru, the Chipaya. They live in one community, Santa Ana de Chipaya, and number about 1,500. Their language has been preserved. It has been documented by Olson (e.g. 1967) and Porterie-Gutierrez (1990), and is currently being studied by Rodolfo Cerrón Palomino (Pontífica Universidad Católica Peruana, Lima). Apaza Apaza (2000), in a Aymara dialect study of the region between the *salares* (salt lake basins), of Uyuni and Coipasa, suggests that there may be lexical traces of Uru there as well, but the lexical evidence he adduces does not yet match the Uchumataqu data I have collected. Most of the non-Aymara words he found are actually Quechua, rather than Uru-like.

0.6. There has been considerable confusion about the genetic affiliation and identity of the

three original Uru languages: Uchuma-taqu, Murato or *Chholo* (Miranda Mamani et al. 1992, 171), and Chipaya or *Chipaj tago* (Porterie-Gutierrez 1990, 160). In some colonial sources mention is made of the Puquina living along the shores of Lake Titicaca. The Puquina language is now extinct, but it was once important enough to receive the status of *lengua general* (general language), along with Quechua and Aymara, in the early years of the Spanish occupation.<sup>2</sup> Puquina has been tentatively classified as Arawakan. Since they were spoken in roughly the same area, Uru and Puquina have been subsequently confused as being the same language. This mistaken assumption was reinforced by Créqui-Montford and Rivet (1925–27), and since then many publications and museum displays link Uru to Puquina and the Arawakan language family. However, linguistically, this link is unmotivated. The grammar of the Uru languages does not resemble that of Arawakan. There is no trace of this in the Uru languages. Furthermore, what we know of the Puquina lexicon is completely unlike that of the Uru languages.<sup>3</sup>

0.7. Until we know more of all the languages of Amazonian northern Bolivia, with which there are some lexical resemblances (Fabre 1995), it is best to treat the Uru languages as a separate group. Earlier attempts by Olson (1964, 1965) to link the Uru languages to Mayan have been shown to be without foundation.

0.8. The well-known French ethnohistorian Nathan Wachtel has written a detailed “regressive” history (i.e. going back in time) of the Uru peoples (1990). He shows that at the time of the conquest by the Spaniards of the area now called Bolivia, the Uru peoples occupied a large territory from the Pacific coast in Chile through the Bolivian altiplano to the borders of Lake Titicaca. Progressively, they lost ground and many of their communities underwent ethnic restructuring. Ticona and Albó (1997) have published an absorbing account of the recent history of the Jesús de Machaca region, the larger area that the Uru community of Irohito forms part of. They document the resurgence of the Uru of Irohito from a marginalised and dispirited small band in the 1940s to a highly self-confident and progressive group at present (see also below).

## 1. Earlier Research

1.1. There are several early-twentieth-century sources for the Uru languages. These include Polo (1901), a general description of the Uru people with a vocabulary (full of inaccuracies, unfortunately); Bacarreza (1910), a general description of the Chipaya; Posnansky (1915), a preliminary description of the language of the Chipaya; Créqui-Montford and Rivet (1925–27), who visited Irohito in the early 1920s; Métraux, with both linguistic and ethnographic observations (1935). However, the richest early material, largely unpublished, is probably that gathered by the German ethnographer and archaeologist Max Uhle on two successive visits in 1894 and 1896 (Uhle 1894–96). Together with the Uchumataqu material gathered by his student Walter Lehmann in 1928, it is deposited in the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin (Lehmann 1928). The material contains word lists, a sketch for a grammar, comparative studies and ethnographic notes.

1.2. However, probably the most important source on Uchumataqu is the intensive and detailed work of the French doctor Jehan Vellard, who visited the Uru on numerous occasions in 1938, the 1940s and early 1950s and left a very rich set of source materials, including detailed vocabulary lists, short phrases, stories (1949, 1950, 1951, 1967), and a French monograph, dramatically titled *Gods and Pariahs of the Andes. The Uru, those who do not want to be men* (1954).

1.3. His central thesis is that a great drought occurring between 1939 and 1948 destroyed the fluvial ecosystem on which the Uru depended, and spelt the end of them. “But the people of the lake have been struck dead. The last group of Uru will not reform itself” (1954, 12).<sup>4</sup> The loss of the language has been interpreted in magical terms, according to Vellard (1954, 103): “They always consider their forgetting the mother tongue as a punishment accompanied by the loss of the gifts of magic and of prophesy. By having allied themselves with men, the last Uru have lost their language and are no longer respected.”<sup>5</sup>

1.4. In more recent times, a team organised and financed by UNICEF visited the community

in 1995, involving the French linguist Colette Grinevald (Grinevald et al. 1995). This team collected vocabulary, worked with the community on an orthography, and generally rekindled enthusiasm for reviving the language among the Uru.

1.5. In 1985 Lorenzo Inda, the most interested community leader, published a history of the Uru, including much detail about cultural practices and Uchumataqu vocabulary.

1.6. Crucially, only a small fraction of the research on Uchumataqu is available to the Bolivian people, let alone to the speakers themselves. It is either unpublished, published in obscure sources, or transcribed in notations based on German and French pronunciations, and the translations given are often in German or French.

## **2. Causes of the Decay of the Language**

2.1. The dramatic and gloomy predictions of Vellard did not come true. The Uru are there and continue to form a distinct group, as noted in the previous section, but they certainly do not differentiate themselves as much as they once did from the surrounding Aymara. One of the manifestations of this is that the Uru no longer speak their own language, but most of the time Aymara, in addition to some Spanish.

2.2. Vellard was right in that the shift from Uchumataqu to Aymara as the daily language of the people took place before 1950, but the language did not disappear altogether. One clear cause of language loss is that after the drought the reduced size of the group remaining in the community forced marriages with Aymara from neighbouring villages. In 1942 only six men and a few women, all elderly, were left in the community. As Vellard puts it (1954, 93): “Fifteen years ago, more than fifty persons spoke Uru fluently. With the dispersion, mixed marriages have accelerated the decay of the language. The Aymara women married to Uru refuse to speak the language of their husbands: the children, Aymaras through their mothers, do not want to be taken for Uru by speaking a despised language.”<sup>6</sup>

2.3. In addition, as population size increased again after the 1950s, many Uru were forced to seek work outside the community, and lost contact with potential speakers of Uchumataqu. They functioned in Spanish, Aymara, and for those who migrated to the Cochabamba area, Quechua.

### 3. Present Project

3.1. The primary aim of my own project is to document the language as well as possible, with the community itself as the primary beneficiary in mind, and the wider public, including the linguistic research community, as the secondary beneficiary. However, even this modest initial aim turned out to imply much more, because documenting a language in this stage of decay requires wide community support and interest in the language.

3.2. The 1992 census, analysed by Albó (1995), revealed that over half of the community in residence in Irohito, eighty-seven persons, claimed to speak Uchumataqu. This finding contrasts sharply with what I found in April 2001, when in fact no single person spoke the language well enough to do fairly simple vocabulary work with me.<sup>7</sup>

3.3. However, it does point to a self-perception on the part of the community as linked to Uchumataqu. When I contacted the community to do fieldwork, their enthusiasm for the language and its preservation gained the upper hand over their distrust of foreigners, particularly foreigners without lots of aid funds and connections with aid agencies. After lengthy meetings a contract was drawn up with the following main clauses:

(a) I am not to get involved with Uru women.<sup>8</sup>

(b) The authorship of the resulting publication lies with the community; my name appears as *asesor lingüista* (linguist advisor).

(c) I am to leave US\$500 as a guarantee that I will return with a draft vocabulary on 1 August 2001.

(d) The community provides a team of consultants every night at seven to work on the language with me. They are compensated for their time with US\$1 per person per hour.

3.4. On the basis of this contract we worked for a few weeks, using all the words in the Vellard material as an initial stimulus. I left with about 800 recognised words, organised in twenty-five themes (semantic fields), ranging from “the family” to “existence and possession”. I also asked children in the local school (twenty-seven pupils) to make drawings with black felt-tipped pens.

3.5. On 1 August I returned with several copies of the draft version of the vocabulary, which also includes the phrases and expressions I had gathered, illustrated with the children’s drawings. Reception was good, although the community leaders probably thought the drawings awkward and childish. A new series of evening sessions started, this time with the oldest and most knowledgeable of the April consultants, Teodora Vila, and his elder sister who had just arrived from La Paz, Julia Vila. Indeed, she may be described as the only reasonably fluent speaker of the language, having been brought up in it by her grandmother. The group of speakers that Colette Grinevald had worked with had all died. Julia Vila was able to correct the pronunciation of many words I had elicited earlier, provide the Uchumatau word for many items for which we had only the Aymara equivalent so far, and give full clauses.

3.6. Currently, I am reworking all this material and attempting to write an accessible introduction to the language which takes the concrete themes as its point of departure (Muysken 2000, 2001; Distrito Nacionalidad Indígena Urus de Irohito 2002). I returned to Irohito in early 2002 to present the new version to the community. This version also includes songs written in Uchumataqu by Lorenzo Inda, and a transcribed story told by Julia Vila.

3.7. The question remains, however, whether this effort will contribute to the revitalisation of the language, and how this may be achieved. On the negative side, I must mention the fact that it is extremely hard for the Bolivian highland communities to survive at all, let alone preserve their language. Bolivia as a whole remains an economic black hole, far away from any growth poles.

It borders on two poor countries, Paraguay and Peru, and on three less poor countries, Argentina, Brazil and Chile. However, the regions of these countries bordering on Bolivia are all underdeveloped. While Bolivia as a whole has zero or negative economic growth at present, in fact all new economic activity (cattle, oil, gas, tropical agriculture) is concentrated in the lowlands, and the highlands economically slowly starve to death. This leads to tremendous labour migration, and much political unrest. There is a complex system of *cargos* (annually rotating ritual obligations) operating in the highland communities, forcing a number of adult males to stay in the community and occupy a political function (president, vice-president, secretary, head of school committee) by rotation for one calendar year.<sup>9</sup> Apart from a small group of committed adult males, the only people permanently present are women, children and older people. However, many women, like Julia Vila, have also migrated and only come back occasionally. All adolescents are elsewhere as well, in school or working.

3.8. On the positive side, a number of factors may be mentioned. First, even after fifty years of disuse the language has not yet disappeared. The eighty-seven members of the community who claim to speak Uchumataqu all know a number of set phrases and most of the vocabulary related to boating, fishing and hunting of waterfowl. In fact, the Uru (in Uchumataqu *qot suñi* – “people of the lake”) use their original language most when they are on the water.

3.9. Second, there is a clear interest in the language. Some years ago, the community went to the expense of paying for the time and travel costs of a Chipaya to come and teach them his language. The travel time is about a day and a half. It did not work out well, because there are a number of differences between Chipaya and Uchumataqu (roughly as between Italian and French), and perhaps also because the Chipaya involved had no experience in language teaching. The episode does illustrate the seriousness of the desire to recuperate the original language.

3.10. Third, it should be mentioned that Irohito is exceptional within its region. Far from being the destitute and down-trodden group evoked by Vellard (1954), they are now the most advanced community in the region, looked upon with some jealousy and respect by their Aymara neighbours, and not without political influence. This was the first community in the region (and

the only one so far) to hoist the white flag of 100 per cent literacy (in Aymara, ironically), due to the enthusiasm of young community members who attended a secondary school nearby and returned home to carry out an alphabetisation campaign. Also, it is the only community with a number of solar panels. They applied for, and received, a computer and printer, and recently a generator was installed. A few younger members of the community have developed basic computer skills.

3.11. A fourth factor is the political constellation of the indigenous groups in Bolivia, which itself is a reflection of continent-wide, or even global, developments. While the 1952 revolution had emphasised class status (miner, peasant, etc.), in the mid-1990s a strong political movement stressing ethnic pluralism came to the fore, which in the area of education was a champion of bilingual schools. A number of special programmes were made available particularly earmarked for small groups with a separate status. This makes it advantageous for ethnic groups to strengthen their distinct character. The Banzer-Quiroga government (1998–2002) only paid lip-service to this policy, without actually discontinuing it. From 2000 onwards, however, the nationalist mobilisation of particularly the Aymara leading to much political unrest is highlighting ethnicity in politics again, and it is very possible that the outcome of the 2002 elections will be that pluralism is once again high on the political agenda. I return to this below.

3.12. A fifth factor is the growth of small-scale ethnotourism in Bolivia. Several ethnic groups are experimenting with tours visiting their communities as a way of generating extra income. The Uru are currently debating this as an option, and already have a small museum with a reed boat, fishing nets, etc.<sup>10</sup> Even though most tourists would hardly hear the difference between rural Spanish and Aymara, let alone between Aymara and Uchumataqu, it is clear that the Uchumataqu heritage will be one of the assets of Irohito. This holds a fortiori if the ethnotourism also involves secondary school and institutional outings from nearby La Paz, since most Paceños do know some Aymara and would be curious to learn about Uchumataqu. Note that I am not claiming that the presence of occasional tourists, “ethno” or otherwise, would itself induce the Uru to speak Uchuamataqu in their daily lives, but rather that tourism would turn the language into an asset and could constitute a base, also financial, for teaching facilities and materials in

the language.

3.13. These five factors conjointly could play a role in the revival of Uchumataqu. It would not be a purely automatic and unconscious reversal of a process of language shift, of course. That shift took place much too long ago for that, and the language is too far gone. It would be a conscious effort to give the language its place alongside, not in place of, Aymara and Spanish. It would involve the activities of a small group of cultural brokers, community leaders, and be linked to processes such as folklorisation and musealisation of Uru culture. It would also need to be a modern development, relying on literacy and possibly even on modern media.

3.14. For some, this makes the possible revitalisation of Uru unreal, artificial or suspect. However, it may be the way in which many such revitalisation processes take place in different parts of the world. Situations such as that of the Uru and the Uchumataqu language cast doubt on traditional notions of authenticity and spontaneity, and show that even rural communities are capable of “language planning”.

#### **4. Changes in the Language: Aymarisation and Simplification**

4.1. One aspect not discussed so far concerns the linguistic features of the Uchumataqu that have survived. It is fairly clear, when comparing the pronunciation recorded in Vellard’s materials with that of younger speakers, that Uchumataqu has undergone quite a few changes in the course of time, in part perhaps under the influence of Aymara. Such changes come as no surprise, given the recent history of the language and the extensive bilingualism with Aymara (and, for many, Spanish).

4.2. The changes are clearest in the pronunciation of the language. Modern speakers have a tendency to reduce the five-vowel system of the language to a three-vowel system. Uchumataqu *e* merges with *i*, and *o* merges with *u*. However, the exact phonological environments favouring this merger have not yet been determined. Given that five-vowel systems of the Uchumataqu

type *a, e, i, o, u* are not marked and the presence of the Aymara three-vowel system *a, i, u*, it is likely that the mergers are triggered by Aymara. Notice that Spanish also has a five-vowel system of the original Uchumataqu type; it could not have triggered the merger.

4.3. Another change involves the nature of the consonants but is harder to define exactly. Vellard (1994, 100–1) writes: “The language strikes one at first sight by its sweetness, in contrast with the harder Quechua, richer in gutturals (there are four different forms of *k* in Quechua) and even more with Aymara. It is a whispering language, with countless sibilants and hissing sounds, *tch, ch, sh, ts*, etc.”<sup>11</sup> The lexical data I gathered in April 2001, however, did not contrast significantly with Aymara words in their pronunciation. The full range of gutturals (presumably velars and uvulars) was present, and the number of sibilants is only slightly larger than in Aymara. A more detailed analysis of the precise phonetic form of the words in Vellard’s transcription in contrast with the present form of these words can resolve this issue.

4.4. Another complicated phonological problem concerns glottalisation. Uchumataqu shares with Aymara the series of simple and aspirated stops:

|                |                |                 |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| p              | t              | ch              | k              | q              |
| p <sup>h</sup> | t <sup>h</sup> | ch <sup>h</sup> | k <sup>h</sup> | q <sup>h</sup> |

However, the glottalised equivalents do not match entirely:

|             |    |    |     |    |    |
|-------------|----|----|-----|----|----|
| Aymara:     | p' | t' | ch' | k' | q' |
| Uchumataqu: | ?  | ?  | ch' | k' | q' |

4.5. The question mark indicates the one or two words with this pronunciation in Uchumataqu that have a marginal status. This gives rise to the hypothesis, no more than that at present, that glottalisation in Uchumataqu was borrowed from Aymara. Further research, involving a detailed comparison with Chipaya (which is also in close contact with Aymara, however), analysis of the earlier sources for Uru, and a reconstruction of the proto-phonology of the Uru language family, will need to clarify this issue.

4.6. A fourth change in the pronunciation of Uchumataqu concerns the structure of the syllable. A few examples of the contrast between the words gathered in April 2001 and the pronunciation of these same words by Julia Vila in August 2001 will suffice:

| <b>April</b>    | <b>August</b>    | <b>gloss</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| sikuru-<br>chay | sqknu-chay       | “tie up”     |
| tars-chay       | chatsna-<br>chay | “shake<br>”  |
| tik-chay        | t’oxsna-chay     | “cover”      |

It is not so much that the sound inventory has been reduced as that complex syllable clusters and word forms have been simplified, and some substitutions made.<sup>12</sup>

4.7. For morphology and syntax, things are less clear. In the realm of morphology, it is difficult, even in the recorded speech of Julia Vila, to discover all the suffixes mentioned in Vellard’s work. As for word order, Vellard writes (1954, 102): “In the construction of phrases, the determining complement is placed before the noun. Without this being an absolute rule, the verb is ordinarily relegated to the end of the clauses. These are very short and all discourses are composed of little, very simple clauses.”<sup>13</sup> The pattern described by Vellard coincides typologically with that of Aymara, i.e. head final. Consistent with this is the presence of postpositions and possessor-possessed constructions. If there has been Aymara influence in the realm of word order, it must surely predate the 1950s. Other aspects of Uchumataqu syntax have not yet been sufficiently studied .

4.8. In any case, it may well be that if Uru is revitalised, it will be a simplified form of the language that survives as a second language, as it has survived these last fifty years.

## 5. Can we Look Ahead?: Grass-Roots and Government Support

5.1. Now that the first steps towards documenting what survives of Uchumataqu have been taken, it is time to plan ahead. In addition to the thematically organised word list mentioned above, it will be worthwhile publishing whatever traditional texts have survived in an accessible orthography, so that reading material becomes available. Vellard (1949) contains half a dozen recorded texts, mostly descriptions of fishing and hunting practices, and a few accounts of recorded recent history. A third step would be the establishment of a programme of regular meetings about the language and courses for younger people.

5.2. Whether these efforts will eventually lead to the revival of the language depends on the economic survival of Irohito as a viable community and on the politics of ethnicity in the region and in Bolivia as a whole. These questions are shrouded in uncertainty.

5.3. In 2001 the Nación Originaria Uru (NOU) was formed in Oruro, a city in the centre of the Altiplano south of Irohito, representing six groups. In the spelling of the foundation document these are:

Chipaya

Murato

Iruhito

Koro (= San Juan de Coripata, Carangas Prov., Bolivia)

Isluka (= Isluga, near Chipaya, but in northern Chile)

Uroz (= Urus of the “floating islands” on Lake Titicaca near Puno, Peru).

5.4. Not much is known about the possible survival of Uru languages with the last three of these groups. Most probably the situation is as with the Murato: general use of Aymara, Quechua or Spanish, and knowledge of individual words with Uru etymologies. None the less, politically the formation of a larger ethnic unit in the form of NOU is important, for two reasons. First of all, it can give small groups more self-confidence and channel the exchange of expertise in revitalisation efforts (high on the NOU agenda).

5.5. Second, it may stimulate the Bolivian Government to start educational programmes specifically aimed at the Uru cultures and languages. In the mid-1990s the Reforma Educativa (Educational Reform) was launched to introduce the three major indigenous languages, Quechua, Aymara and Guaraní, into the curriculum. While preliminary research on the indigenous Amazonian and Chaco languages was carried out, establishing alphabets and studying educational needs, no programmes were set up in this area. The Uru languages, the only small highland languages that survive, were completely left out of consideration. One of the arguments was that these languages are spoken by too few people to warrant serious teaching efforts. The NOU initiative may help to draw the attention of the planners at the Section of Curriculum Development at the Ministry of Education to the Uru languages and communities.

5.6. Currently, the community itself is engaged in organizing one hour of Uru teaching a week for the children in the school, using the materials we have prepared over the last two years. In a teacher-training institution 14 km away, some students are interested in spending a semester in Irohito as a part of their final practice period, developing teaching materials.

5.7. Bolivia is culturally and linguistically an extremely rich country. Many of the Amazonian languages in the country are linguistic isolates or belong to extremely small local language families. It is likely that the ethnolinguistic situation in Bolivia and the adjacent Brazilian state of Rondônia directly reflects a very old stage in the language development of the continent. Thus understanding the languages and cultures of Bolivia offers a key to the early history of the continent as a whole.

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## Notes

1. Furthermore, preliminary results from an Aymara lexicographic dialect-survey of the people living on the banks of the Desaguadero between Lake Titicaca and Lake Poopo (Filomena Miranda, Universidad Mayor de San Andres, La Paz, personal communication) have uncovered a number of non-Aymara words in this area. These suggest that there once was an Uru-speaking population all along the Desaguadero.
2. This meant that the language could and should be used as a missionary language, even with speakers of smaller languages.
3. Torero (1987) has shown that some Puquina lexicon survives in Callahuaya, a ritual healing language from the Charazani region north of La Paz (cf. e.g. Muysken 1996; Adelaar and Muysken in prep.).
4. “Mais le peuple du lac a été frappé à mort. Le dernier groupe ourou ne se reformera plus.”
5. “Elles considèrent toujours l’oubli de la langue maternelle comme un châtimeut accompagné de la privation du secours magique et du don de la prophétie. Pour s’être alliés aux hommes, les derniers Ourous ont perdu leur langue et ne sont plus respectés.”
6. “Il y a quinze ans, plus de cinquante personnes parlaient couramment l’ourou. La dispersion venue, les mariages mixtes ont accéléré la ruine du langage. Les femmes aymaras mariées aux

Ourous refusent de parler la langue de leurs maris; les enfants, étant aymaras du fait de leurs mères, ne veulent pas être pris pour des Ourous en parlant une langue méprisée.”

7. At that point women were not asked to participate in the fieldwork, unfortunately, by the village leaders, I suspect because they know more than the men.

8. Some Uru say that Jehan Vellard left the community with an Uru woman. This story of a romance finds some support in his field notes, e.g. when he exemplifies: *ampt'e wira k'ucha chuni pini pek'uchay* “toi, j’aime bien beaucoup, blanc” (1951, 21) [you, I love quite a bit, white man] (spelling adapted to modern Uchumataqu orthography as introduced in 1985).

9. Of course, they may refuse, but then they lose their status as community members.

10. The Uru are traditionally associated with the technique of reed boats made famous by Thor Heyerdahl, even if now most of these boats on Lake Titicaca are made by the Aymara, and most boats used by the Uru themselves are crafted from wood.

11. “La langue frappe au premier abord par sa douceur, en contraste avec le quichoua plus dur et riche en gutturales (il y a quatre formes différentes de *k* en quichoua) et plus encore avec l’aymara. C’est une langue chuchotante, avec d’innombrables sifflantes et chuintantes, des *tch*, *ch*, *sh*, *ts*, etc.”

12. Notice also that there is a possible case of re-etymologisation in the case of *sikuru-chay*. It looks suspiciously like Spanish *asegurar* (secure).

13. “Dans la construction des phrases, le complément déterminatif se place avant le substantif. Sans être une règle absolue, le verbe est d’ordinaire rejeté à la fin des phrases. Celles-ci sont très courtes et tout le discours est composé de petites phrases fort simples.”

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