

ON THE HISTORICAL POSITION OF WAIKURI<sup>1</sup>

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1. History of the problem
2. Waikuri compared with Hokan languages
3. Interpretation

1. Very little has been saved of the languages of the original inhabitants of Lower California south of 26°N. The Lord's Prayer, the Twelve Articles of the Creed, a verb paradigm, and a few additional words in the Waikuri tongue is all that is now available of these languages, and it is not probable that any additional materials will ever pop up.

The said fragments of the Waikuri language were recorded by a German missionary, Father Johann Jakob Baegert, S.J., who had spent 17 years at the mission of San Louis Gonzaga in Lower California. In 1771 he published them in his anonymous book, *Nachrichten von der Amerikanischen Halbinsel Californien*.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the scantiness of the available data it is difficult to determine the genetic relationships of the Waikuri language. Thus it is not astonishing, that this subject has been highly controversial. The first to examine the problem was the great Americanist Johann Carl Eduard Buschmann. He made a thorough analysis of Baegert's materials and then reached the conclusion that

Cochimi and Laymon, but also unrelated to all other languages: "Sie ist auch, soweit man nach allgemeinem Eindruck und Erinnerung, ohne eine Masse von Sprachen selbst darauf geprüft zu haben — auf welcher vagen Grundlage ja gewöhnlich solche Ausprüche beruhen — urtheilen kann, von allen übrigen Sprachen verschieden."<sup>3</sup> Eight years later R. G. Latham regarded all languages of Baja California as Yuman.<sup>4</sup> By a comparison with the Cora language, Pimentel tried to prove a relationship between Waikuri and the Sonoran and Aztec languages,<sup>5</sup> and later he included it in his grupo opata-mexicano, comprising Uto-Aztec, Yuman, Keres, Zuni, Tanoan, and Coahuiltecan languages.<sup>6</sup> Buschmann's disciple Albert Samuel Gatschet stated in 1877 that Latham's inclusion of Waikuri in the Yuman family was probably justified: "Dr. R. G. Latham schloss indess schon vor bald 20 Jahren aus diesem spärlichem Sprachstoffe, dass die ganze Halbinsel dem Yuma-Sprachgebiet zugetheilt werden müsse. Was das Cochimi und Laymonische betrifft, hat er unbedingt das Richtige getroffen, und dass auch das Waikuru eine Yuma-Sprache sei, hat wenigstens grosse Wahrscheinlichkeit für sich, obwohl bis jetzt

vorenthalten bleibt."<sup>7</sup> But in later years he showed considerable confusion concerning the languages of Lower California. In 1892 he gave a list of Cochimi rancherías as Waikuri words.<sup>8</sup> In 1900 he treated Laymon as a Waikuri division. He concludes that their language differs entirely in phonology, words, and grammar from Yuman, and has to be set down as a family by itself.<sup>9</sup> Brinton joined Latham's view and included Waikuri in the Yuman family.<sup>10</sup> Henshaw held that, as far as could be judged from the meager linguistic evidence, they belonged to another linguistic family.<sup>11</sup> One year later Thomas and Swanton wrote that "Brinton attempted to find resemblances between this and Yuman, but the futility of this attempt has been demonstrated by Mr. J. N. B. Hewitt, and there can be no question of the independent position of the two languages."<sup>12</sup> A. L. Kroeber was more cautious: "The few words contained in this (i.e. Baegert's *Nachrichten* . . .) do not look like Yuman or even Hokan, but they are too few and too specialized to allow any very certain conclusions. Unless new records from Lower California can be discovered, a final judgment as to the position of Waikuri will not be possible until the comparative analysis of the Hokan languages has progressed so far that they can be successfully measured against the fragments of this obscure tongue. Pending this decision, Waikuri must be regarded as of unproved affinities and therefore held tentatively distinct."<sup>13</sup> This view has been joined by

Paul Rivet, G. Stresser-Péan, and Č. Loukotka.<sup>14</sup> In the last years Waikuri has often been regarded as independent from Yuman on the family level, but as related to it on the level of the Hokan stock. This was the opinion of Mason and Johnson,<sup>15</sup> Swanton,<sup>16</sup> and McQuown.<sup>17</sup> But Bright warned in 1956 that the shortage of data had not permitted more than an intuitional classification of Waikuri.<sup>18</sup>

2. As the question of the identity of the original inhabitants of the southern part of Lower California is of considerable importance for the ethnologist, I have made a comparison of Waikuri with some Hokan languages. In the course of this comparison I noticed a number of obviously similar forms. These possible cognates are listed below:<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *cf.* A. Meillet and Marcel Cohen, *Les langues du monde*. Paris 1922, p. 398.

<sup>15</sup> J. A. Mason, *The native languages of Middle America*. In *The Mayas and their neighbours* (Tozzer volume), New York 1940, pp. 52-57.

<sup>16</sup> John R. Swanton, *Indian tribes of North America*. BAE-B 145, 1952, p. 612 and 640.

<sup>17</sup> Norman McQuown, *Indigenous languages of Latin America*. AA 57-501-70, 1955.

<sup>18</sup> William Bright, *A bibliography of the Coahuiltecan languages*. IJAL 21, 275-85, 1955, p. 281.

<sup>19</sup> For this comparison I have made use of the following sources: de Angulo and L. S. Freeland: *The Chontal language*. *Anthropos* 20:1032-52, 1925. William Bright: *The Karok language*. UCPL 13:1-457, 1957. M. R. Haas, *Shasta and Proto-Hokan*. *Lg* 32:40-59, 1955. A. S. Gatschet, *Der Yuma-Sprachstamm*. *YFD* 0:241-50, 202-216 (1877).

ABOVE, SKY *aéna* // Sal na<sup>o</sup> *sun*, S C Chum -*anum sun*, *nawoni sky*, Moh *anya-sun*, Coa *a'nua month*, Com *ya-unak above*  
 AGAIN *tshetschu* ~ [tʃeʃu] // Coa *ca*  
 ALIVE *tipe* // Yum *\*ipay to be alive*, Coa *-tpa-yam live*  
 ALL *pu* // Yan *buija- all*, Moh *paya many*, Jic *put*, pona *all*, Sub *ba-na all*, baa *enough*  
 ALONE (and, as Buschmann suggested, probably also ONE) *ibe* // Yan *bai-one*, *alone*, Chim *pola alone*; Ess *pek*, Proto-Chum *pak*, Coa *pil*, Jic *pani*, Sub *imba one*; PH *\*ipa-one, alone* (Sapir)  
 ALWAYS *déi* // Coch *deegy*  
 ARCHED, CURVED *tekeréká* (tekerékádatembá *arched earth*) // Yav *tekerakwa* (háka *tekerákwa arched or curved lake*, Corbusier in Gatschet 1892, p. 4)  
 AS, LIKE *páe* // San Xavier Coch *pagkajim*, Chon *api*  
 ABLE *pudué* (puduéne *being able to*) // Coch *duu*  
 BEAT *tshipake* ~ [tʃipake], *tshipit-schürre* ~ [tʃipitʃürre] *a beaten one*, *kutipait several beaten ones* // Yan *baa*, Ton *tiposi*  
 BELOW *bunju* ~ [bunju] // Coch *yo*  
 CHAT, TALK *jake* ~ [yake], *several chat kuake* // Yan *ga*, *gayna*, Chim *ko*, M Sal *hek'a' speak*, Coa *ka say, utter*  
 COME *ku* // Yan *ki-hither*, Dieg *kiyu*, Coch *guxkwim guligwa*, Coa *kál*, Com *kio go*, Kar *gas*, Sub *ku'i*, Chon *kway*, Jic *kwasi*, Seri *kaip*, PH *\*kwali > \*k(w)*  
 DANCE *agénari a dance* // Sub *gaña to dance*

*has died* // Coch *ibi*, epi, Yum *apuy die*, Mar *epuik*, Wal *apige*, Yav *pi*, Ton *bi*, Jic *nipi die*, Chon *pil-kill*  
 DO *-tujaké* ~ [tuyake] (kepetujake *they do us evil*) // A. Sal *iauk*  
 DWELLING, HOUSE, also WEEK *ambúja* ~ [ambuya] // L P Chum *mama*, Sal *-a'm*, Sha *amma*, PH *\*ama house* (Sapir)  
 EARTH *-atembá* // Ka *am* (submorphemic element), Chim *ama*, Pomo *ma*, *amma*, *ama*, Esselen *maksala*, *matra earth*; Sal *uma place*; Yum *\*amat*, Moh *amaʔa*, Yav *amat*, Mar *mat*, Wal *mat*, Dieg *mat*, Com *emat*, Bor *ama*, *aba*, Ser *\*amt*, Chon *amae'*, Jic *amara*, Sub *urmba*, PH *\*amwa* (Sapir)  
 FATHER (man speaking) *-are* // Dieg *nile my father*, Sub *ana*  
 FATHER (woman speaking) *-cuc* ~ [kue] or *-éuc* ~ [ekue] // Ka *\*akah*, S Y Chum *qoqo*, S Bu Chum *koko*  
 FIGHT *piabake* // Com *payiwak beat*, *peywak fight*, wak *fight*  
 FORGIVE *kuitscharaké* ~ [kuiʃarake] // Coa *k'a-cum*  
 FOREHEAD *-apá* // Yan *p'ugil*, S Ba Chum *peksi*, Ton *pola forehead*, Dieg *wa face*, Com *pex forehead*, apel *face*, Chon *pa head*  
 FUTURE *-me* // Ats *min future*, Chon *-m'a*, *-m'*, *-m'e incomplete, present future*  
 GIVE *kén* // Ka *\*akih*, Tonk *\*eke*, Chon *kay*  
 GOOD *ataca* ~ [atakala], *atukia* // Jic *uk*  
 GREAT, BIG *apánne* // Coa (ap) *nan*, *Pajalate apanan big*, Com *pakna high*, Jic *nenne big*

MAKE *uretí* // A Sal *eta'*, Com *ite*  
 MAN *ete*; *ti people* (cp. PRONOUN : 3.p. sg.) // Coch *temme people*, Kar *tešoyu man*  
 MESCAL *pui* (in *Californian* = Waikuri ?) // Com *epie-u*  
 NOSE *-namá* // E Po *laba*, SE Po *la*, S Po *hílam*, SW Po *\*ila*, Proto-Pomo *\*ilaʔa*, PH *\*rama* (Haas)  
 NOT *-ra*; *vára*, *buara nothing* // Sal *keraʔ*, *karaʔ*, Yum *kwarra no* (Gatschet)  
 PLAY *amukiri* // Moh *imuk dance*  
 PLURAL, MANY *ku*, *k-* // Coch *kæe much*, Bor *kai much*, Po *k plural*  
 PRONOUN : 1. pers. sg. *be*, *m-* // Ess *mexpele*, S L O Chum *mitá*, Coch *bu I*, Tonk *magi we*, Com *ment our*  
 PRONOUN : 3. pers. sg. *ti his*, *man people*, *tutáu he*, *tucúva they*, *táupe this* // Ats *tehe 3. pers. sg. act.*, S Ba Chum *iti he*, Kar *tal this, he*, Coa *tu that*, Ser *tix he*, *taX they*, Chon *tige he*, *tixne they*, *Pii- that*  
 PRONOUN : 1. pers. pl. *caté* ~ [kate] *we, us*, *kepe- our* // Yan *-ni-gi*, *ka ki-n-we-him*, Po *ke my, we*, Sal *ke? I*, M Sal *ka we*, Chum *k-I*, *ki- we, our*, Chon *ki we, our*, Sub *iku I*, Jic *ku-p I*  
 PRONOUN : 2. pers. pl. *peté* // S Y Chum *pi you, your*, S Ba, S Bu, S L O Chum *p-you, your*  
 SICK *atembátié to be sick*, literally : *to lie on the earth*, *-tié to lie* // Yan *di-a long object lies*, Coch *betel to be sick*  
 SIT *peneká he sits* // Yan *pee- to lie*, E Po *pid to lie, pl.*, Chon *pang to sit*

*\*ambi who?*, Chim *\*awilla who?*, Coa *-p-subordinating prefix*, Bor *-p-who* (relative), Jic *pak who?*, PH *\*api* (Swadesh)  
 WISH *cuvu* ~ [kuvu] // Coa *ka-wa to wish, love*  
 WOMAN *anaí* // S Y Chum *eneq*, L P Chum *neq*, S Ba Chum *enak woman*, Hav *ane-e wife*, Cot *nan female*, Kar *nen female*  
 YEAR, also PITAHAYÁ *ambia* // Coch *mejibó*, Laymon *amayben*, Chon *amae' year*

3. I found close Hokan parallels for more than half of the Waikuri forms, and my comparison was rather incomplete for most languages. Of course, a great part of these similarities may be due to chance. But the percentages of resemblant forms are so high that chance surely cannot account for all of them. Some parallels may be due to diffusion, but this explanation is improbable in the case of Yana, Karok, Coahuilteco, Chontal and Jicaque, and other Hokan languages far away from Lower California. Thus genetic relationship is the most probable explanation. Further evidence can be seen in the fact that of the eight Proto-Hokan reconstructions used in this comparison, five are by far more similar to the Waikuri forms than most forms of the Hokan daughter languages (ALONE, COME, EARTH, NOSE, WHO?).

Of course, a genetic relationship cannot be proved with so fragmentary data. But as we probably shall never have additional materials for the languages of Lower Cali-

members: Karok, Chimariko, Shastan, Palaihnihan, Yana, Pomo, Washo, Esselen, Salinan, Yuman, Chumash, Coahuiltec, Cotoname, Comecrudo, Karankawa, Seri, Chontal, Subtiaba-Tlappanee, Jicaque,<sup>20</sup> Borrado (Quinigua),<sup>21</sup> and Waikuri. There may have been other members in northern Mexico, as possibly Pericu, Uchiti-Cora, Perie and Aripe in Lower California, and

Guachichil and Pelones in north-eastern Mexico. But of the other languages of Lower California we have no linguistic materials at all, of the Guachichil language only two words and of the Pelones language only some 15 words which do not permit a classification with any degree of confidence.<sup>22</sup> Thus we probably never shall know whether or not these languages were also Hokan.

<sup>20</sup> J. Greenberg and M. Swadesh, Jicaque as a Hokan language. *LJAL* 19:216-222, 1953

<sup>21</sup> K. H. Gursky, The linguistic position of the Quinigua Indians. *LJAL* 30:325-327, 1964

<sup>22</sup> K. H. Gursky, Die Stellung der Sprachen von Nordost-Mexiko und Süd-Texas. *Abhandlungen der Völkerkundlichen Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, Bd 4, Nortorf (Germany), 1963