

A new take on the Guaicuruan—Mataguayan hypothesis

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América del Sur

Mapa físico



Mataguayan

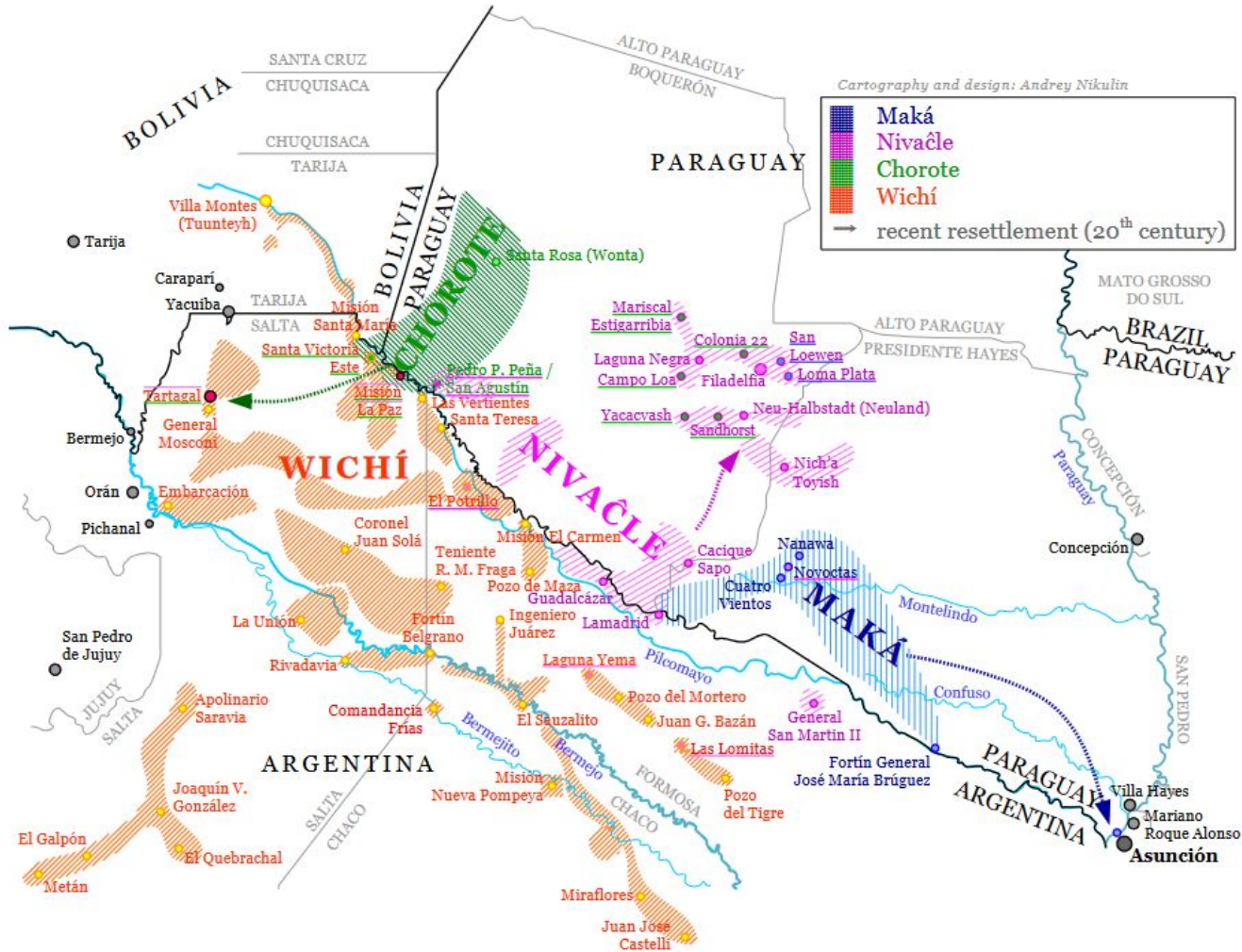
- A small family of the Chaco region (Paraguay, Argentina, Bolivia), spoken along the Pilcomayo and Bermejo rivers). Also called *Matacoan* by English-speaking authors
- At least 4 languages or dialect clusters:
 - **Maká**
 - **Nivaçle** (two dialects)
 - **Chorote** (maybe two languages)
 - **Wichí** (considerable dialectal diversity, maybe two languages)
- Detailed reconstruction available (Nikulín & Carol forthc.), superseding earlier proposals (Najlis 1984; Viegas Barros 1993, 2002; Gutiérrez & Nercesian 2021)

Proto-Mataguayan

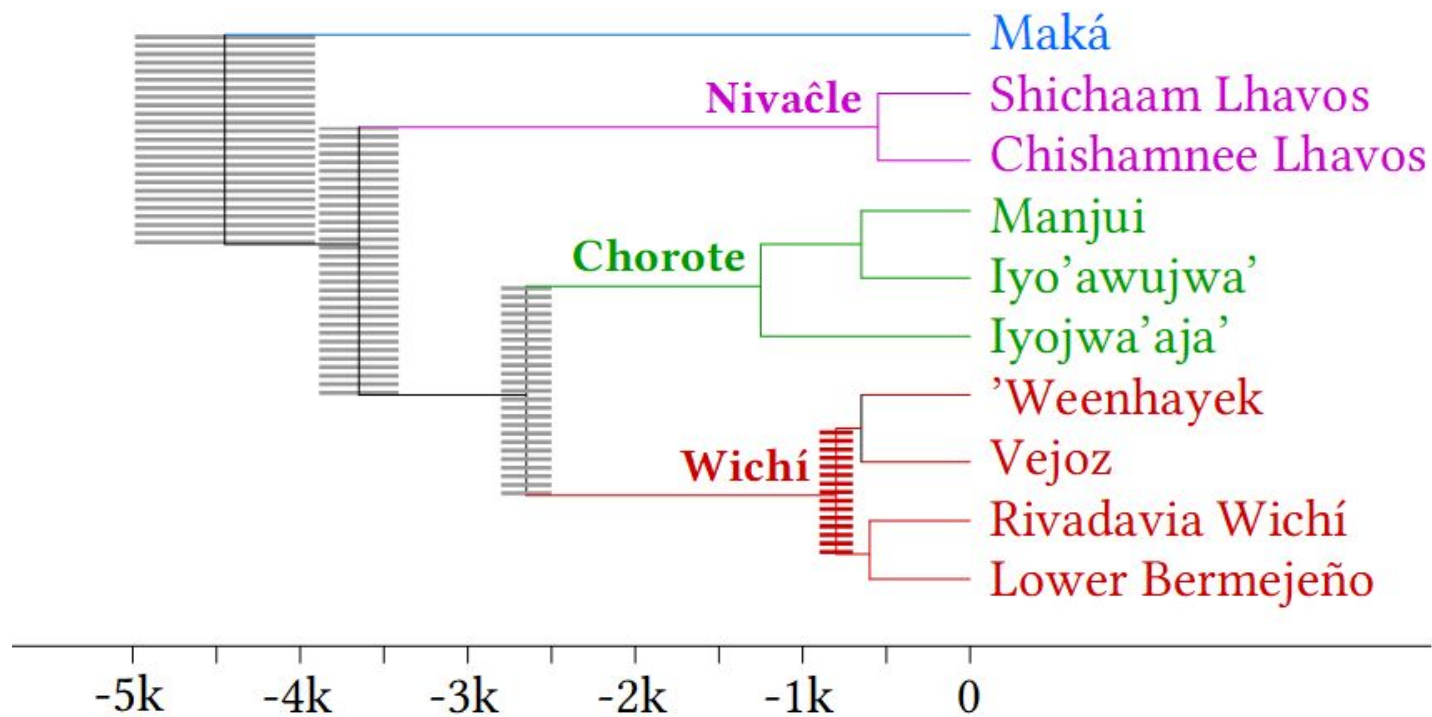
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stops	*p *p'	*t *t'	*ts *ts'	*k *k'	*q *q'	*ʔ
fricatives	*ɸ *ɸ'	*ɬ (*ɬ')	*s *s'	*x	*χ	*h
approximants	*w *ʷ	*l *ʷl		*j *ʷj		
nasals	*m *ʷm	*n *ʷn				

Vowels: */i e ä a å o u/

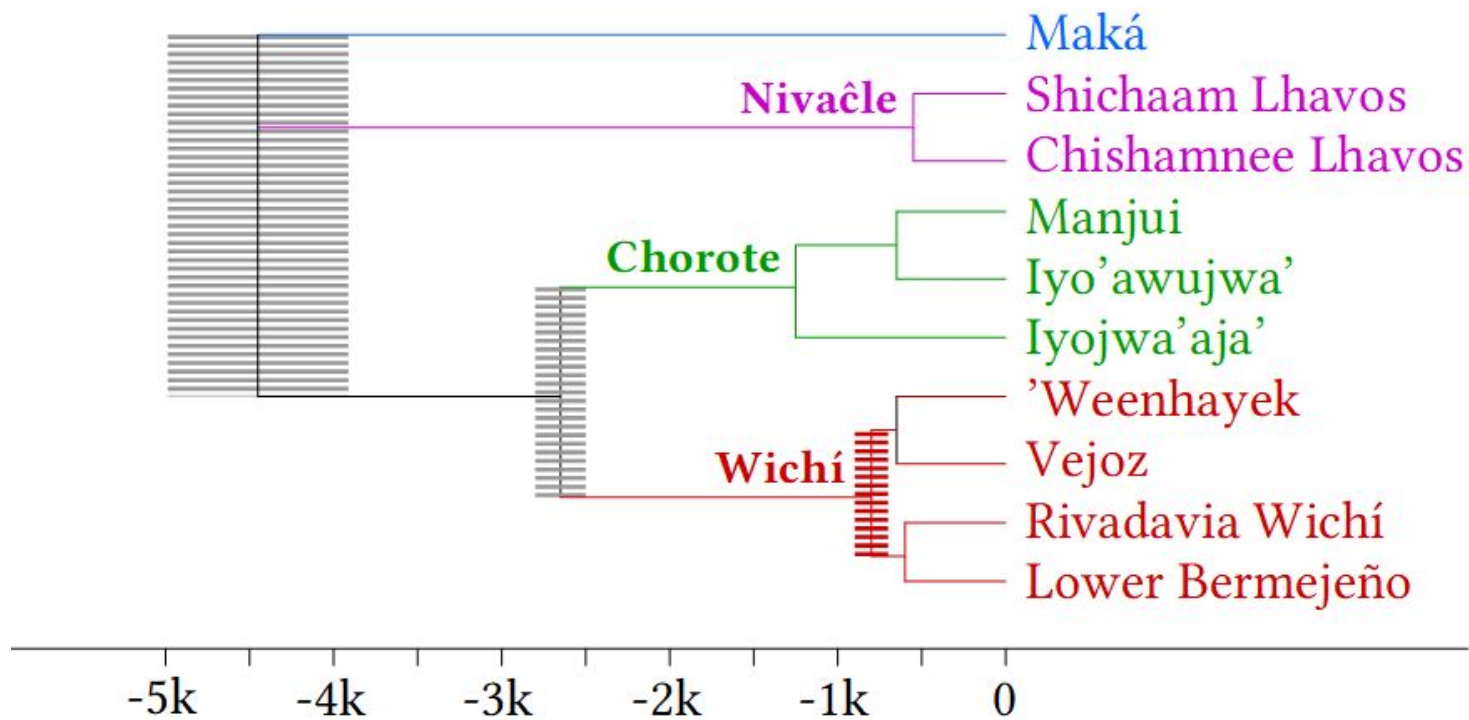
Morphemes may have an underlying accent or be unaccented



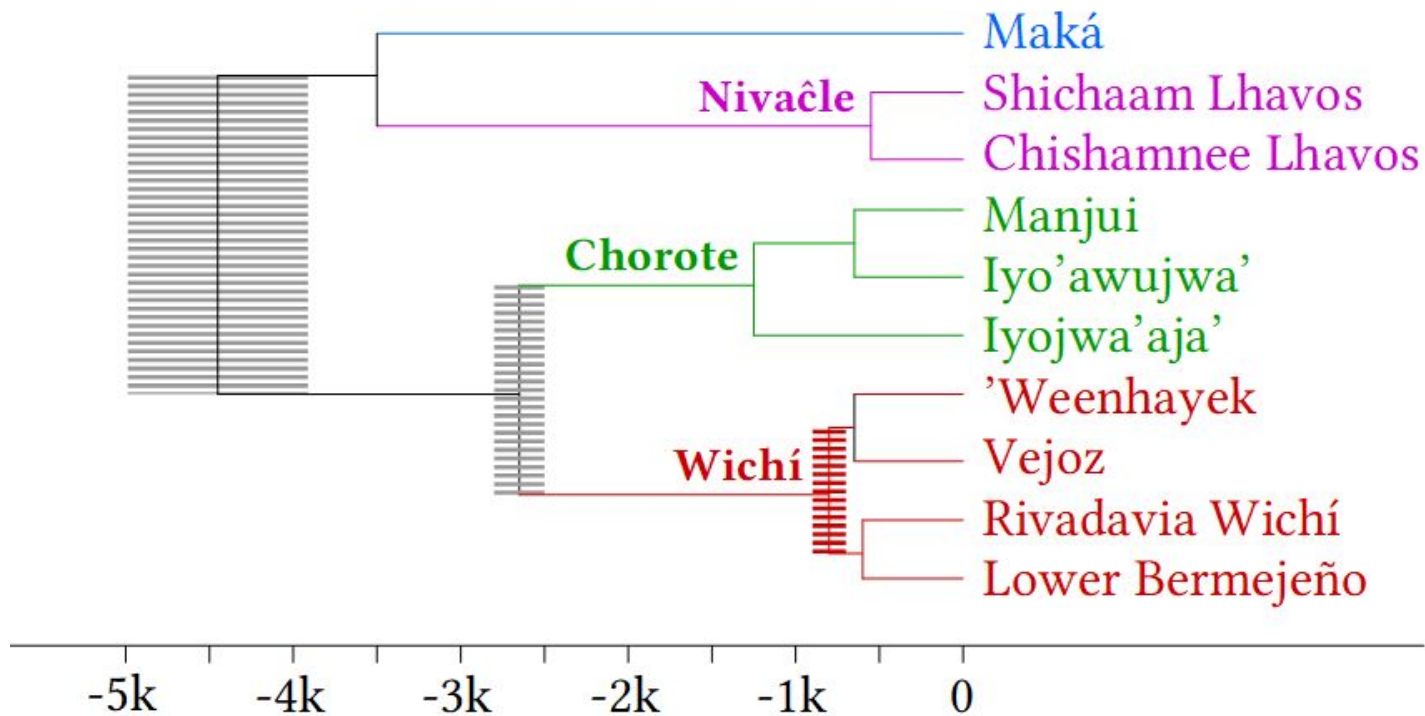
Mataguayan



Mataguayan



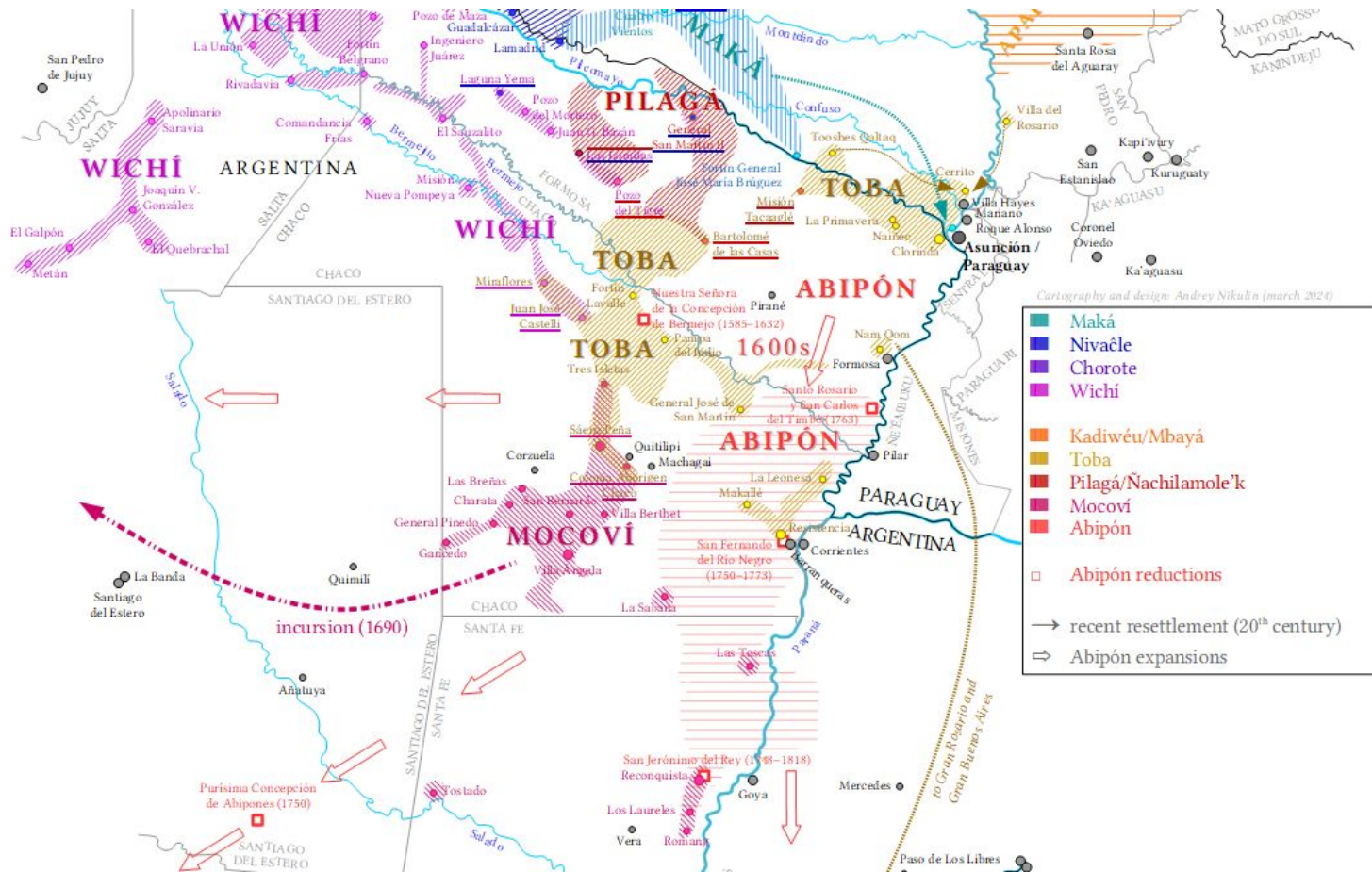
Mataguayan



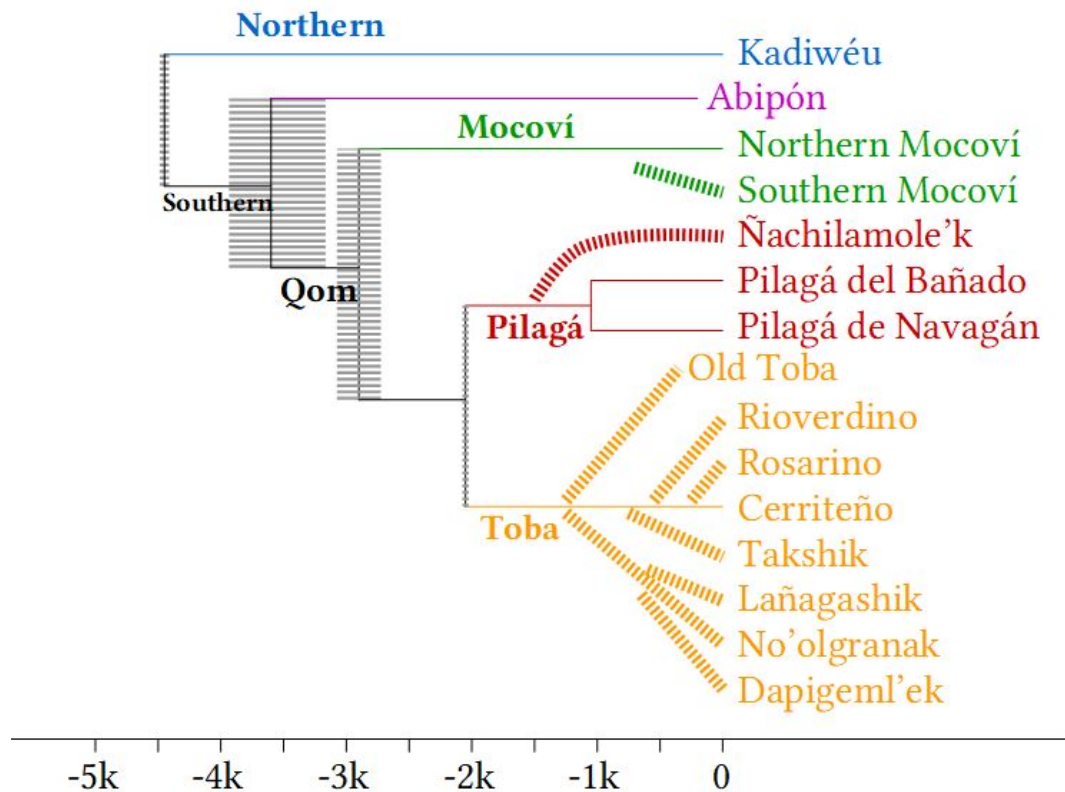
Guaicuruan

- A small family of the Chaco region (Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil, (?) Bolivia), to the east of the Mataguayan-speaking area (partially overlapping)
- At least 5 languages or dialect clusters:
 - **Kadiwéu** (and some extinct co-dialects)
 - **Abipón** (extinct, described in 18th century)
 - **Mocoví** (two dialects)
 - **Pilagá** (two closely related dialects and one divergent dialect)
 - **Toba/Qom** (considerable dialectal diversity, two clearly distinct dialect clusters + a divergent extinct 16th-century lect)
- Detailed reconstruction available (Viegas Barros 2013b), superseding earlier proposals (Ceria & Sandalo 1995)

Guaicuruan



Guaicuruan



Guaicuruan–Mataguayan proposal

- Structural similarities in different areas of grammar are obvious, including general word structure, person morphology, applicative suffixes, plural suffixes, causative morphology, instrumental nominalizers
- Many authors have attributed that to language contact (Lafone Quevedo 1896; Tovar 1951, Messineo et al. 2015, among others)
- Mason (1950) and Greenberg (1987) assume common origin, but these studies don't rely on the comparative method (Mason doesn't even discuss actual linguistic data)

Guaicuruan–Mataguayan proposal

- Viegas Barros (2013a) is the first systematic attempt at comparing Proto-Guaicuruan to Proto-Mataguayan
- Main findings:
 - lexical similarities are mostly found in the basic vocabulary, and are rare in the cultural vocabulary
 - most inflectional and some derivational affixes are comparable across Guaicuruan and Mataguayan
- Viegas Barros (2004) also identifies lexical and morphological similarities with Guachí and Payaguá, two extinct languages that are possibly related to Guaicuruan and Mataguayan (Macro-Guaicuruan family)

Obstacles

- There was no detailed reconstruction of Proto-Mataguayan available at the time of Viegas Barros' (2013a) study
- Many Proto-Guaicuruan reconstructions are problematic due to irregular or imperfect correspondences between Kadiwéu and Southern Guaicuruan (this is expected, as Kadiwéu shares only 24–25% cognates with Southern Guaicuruan on the 110-word Swadesh list → 4400–4500 years of independent evolution)
- Many instances of binary branching → unclear what to project to the protolanguage
- Semantic discrepancies in Viegas Barros (2013a) → not ideal for proving a long-range link (examples: 'to kill' / 'to extinguish', 'bald' / 'smooth', 'to hunt' / 'to look for', 'twins' / 'two')

Our take

- Based on our own lexical reconstruction of Proto-Mataguayan, we have looked for words with **identical meanings** in individual Guaicuruan languages.
- We have also compiled a reconstructed 110-word Swadesh list for PM, with a special attention to the tree topology (Chorote–Wichí, Nivaêcle–Chorote–Wichí branches) and to the language contact patterns (Maka–Nivaêcle, Chorote–Nivaêcle). Technical synonyms were allowed. This was compared to words with **identical meanings** in individual Guaicuruan languages
- Whenever we came across a probable match, we analyzed the Guaicuruan side of the etymology in greater detail (Viegas Barros 2013b) and in some cases concluded that the Guaicuruan etymology can be amended

Results

- Most correspondences are recurrent and unproblematic.

PM	PG
*i	*i
*e	*e, *ja
*ä, *a	*a
*å, *o	*o
*u	*i

PM	PG
*p	*p:
*t	*t, *d-
*ts	*d:/*-t
*k	*ts/*-k
*q, *-q/*-k	*q:/*-q

PM	PG
*p'	*p:
*t'	*t:
*ts'	*d(:)
*k'	
*q'	
*ʔ	*ʔ, ∅

PM	PG
*ϕ	*w(:), *-p
*l	*l(:)
*s	
*x	*k:/*-k, *g:
h/-χ	*q
*-h	∅

PM	PG
*(?)w	*w(:)
*l	*l
*(?)j	*j(:)
*(?)m	*m(:)
*(?)n	*n

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- ‘to lick’
 - PM ***n-ap’u** ~ ***n-aϕ’u** (~ ***-á-** ~ ***-ú**)
 - PG ***[n]ap:i**
- ‘flower’
 - PM ***-áwǎ(?)**
 - PG ***-awo-qo** ‘flower’, ***[d]awo** ‘to bloom’
- ‘fruit’
 - PM ***-á?**, 3 ***l-á?**
 - PG ***-a**, 3 ***l-a**

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- ‘tooth’
 - PM ***-áφe(?)**
 - PG ***-owe**
- ‘to go (away)’
 - PM ***[j]ik**
 - PG ***ik (N) ~ *ek (S)**
- ‘to return’
 - PM ***[t]píl ‘to return hither’, *[w]ápil ‘to return thither’**
 - PG ***[d]op:il (N) ~ *[d]ap:il (S) ‘to return hither’, *op:il ‘to return thither’**

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- ‘to be fat’
 - PM *[j]áte(?)χ
 - PG *[j]otjaq
- ‘to put’
 - PM *[j]ãn
 - PG *[j]an
- ‘wing’
 - PM *-äϕ (pl. *-ϕã-ts)
 - PG *-aw:á

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- ‘thorn’
 - PM *-e, 3 *l-e
 - PG *<ʳl>e
- ‘to bite’
 - PM *[j]ékφaʔx
 - PG *[i]wak
- ‘right’
 - PM *-φájiʔx
 - PG *-ojK (Southern only, maybe the PG form was *-wojK?)

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- ‘firewood’ / ‘fire’ (non-identical semantics)
 - PM ***(-)lé(?)t**
 - PG ***-ól:et**
- ‘to fly’
 - Maká **n-a?ja?** (< PM ***-ä?jä**); other Mataguayan languages: ***ϕä?jä**
 - PG ***[w]áj:o**
- ‘vulture’ — borrowing as per VB (2013a), but could be cognate
 - Maká **opowi** (< PM ***opowe**); other Mataguayan languages: ***jit’å?**
 - PG ***op:owé**

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- ‘ashes’
 - PM ***(-)lo(?) ~ *(-)ló(?)**
 - PG ***álo**
- ‘to go (2nd person suppletive form)’
 - PM ***máh** ‘go away!’
 - PG ***mo**
- ‘cover, lid’
 - PM ***(-)p’o’t**
 - PG ***-ap:ot** (Qom only)

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- ‘burrow, hole’
 - PM *-wãʔx ‘burrow, anus’
 - PG *-w:e:g: (N) ~ *-aw(:)ag: (S)
- ‘skin, bark’
 - PM *-ʔãx
 - PG *-ʔoK (Southern only)
- ‘parrot’ — borrowing as per VB (2013a), but could be cognate
 - PM *ʔéle(?)
 - PG *ʔe:le? (Qom only)

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- ‘to dry out (of water)’
 - PM *ʔ[j]im
 - PG *ʔim (Qom only)
- ‘to be extinguished’
 - PM *ʔ[j]om, caus. *ʔ[j]om-hat
 - PG *ʔom (Qom only), caus. *[i]ʔom-aqat (Qom only)
- ‘smell’
 - PM *-njiʔx
 - PG *-n(:)ik

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- ‘to yawn’
 - PM ***[t]’at’o**
 - PG ***[w]at:o: (N) ~ *[d]at:o: (S)**
- ‘all’
 - PM ***wäk** ‘all, each other’
 - PG ***-wak** (Pilagá–Toba only, other languages show reflexes of ***-(t:)aw(:)ek:e ~ *-(t:)aok:e**, which is similar but hardly cognate)
- ‘to see’
 - PM ***[ji]’wän**
 - PG ***[i]win (N) ~ *[i]wan (S)**

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- ‘to walk’
 - PM *ʔwäleʔk
 - PG *[j]awalik ‘to walk’ (N) ~ *walek ‘to be dragged’ (S)
- ‘other’
 - PM *-ʔeɫ ~ *-ʔéɫ
 - Kadiwéu e:l:e < PG *e:l:e
- ‘tree (suffix)’
 - PM *-(j)uʔk
 - PG *-ik

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- ‘I’ / ‘you (sg.)’ / ‘s/he’
 - PM *j-ǎʔm / *∅-ʔǎʔm / *l-ǎʔm
 - PG *ǎj-em: / *∅-am: / *ǎl-am:
- possessive person markers:
 - PM 1 *j- / *ji-, 3 *l-, indefinite *n-, 1pl *qats=
 - PG 1 *(ǎ)j- / *ji-, 3 *(ǎ)l-, indefinite *(ǎ)n-, 1pl *qo(:)d-
- ‘this’
 - PM *n- (masculine *na)
 - PG *na

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- demonstrative plural:
 - PM ***-waʔ** (non-human)
 - PG ***-wa** (paucal or dual)
- nominal plurals:
 - PM ***-(í)ts / *-(é)l / *-(á)j^h** (lexical distribution)
 - PG ***-d(i), -(v)l:i,**
- verbalizer:
 - PM ***-n**
 - PG ***-én**

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- masculine:
 - PM $*-ʔk$ (not productive)
 - PG $*-(i)k$
- feminine:
 - PM $*-eʔ$ (not productive)
 - PG $*-é$

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- nominalizers:
 - PM ***-äk** (result), ***-haʔt** (instrument), ***-naʔχ** (typical agent), ***-tseχ** (notable quality)
 - PG ***-ek** (result), ***-qat** (instrument), ***-n(:)aq** (notable quality), ***-tʃ:aq** (notable quality)
- causatives:
 - PM ***-han** (indirect), ***-hat** (direct)
 - PG ***-qan** (S) ~ ***-qen** (S), ***-qatʔ**
- applicatives:
 - PM ***-(a)ʔm** ~ ***-(ä)ʔm** (benefactive), ***-xiʔ** (locative, ‘inside’)
 - PG ***-m** (benefactive), ***-g:i** (locative)

Confirmed etymologies from Viegas Barros (2013a)

- verbal person prefixes:
 - PM 1 act. irr. ***j(i)-**, 2 act. irr. ***ʔa-/*Ø-**, 3 act. ***j(i)-**, 1PL inact. ***qats=**
 - PG 1SG inact. ***i-**, 2 act. ***ʔa-**, 3 act. ***j(i)-**, 1PL inact. ***qod(:)-**
- verbal person/number suffixes:
 - Chorote 1PL active ***-ah / *-ak**, 2PL ***-aj**, 3PL ***-is**
 - PG 1PL ***-aq**, 2PL ***-°i**, 3PL ***-et ~ *-it**
- valence/voice:
 - PM middle, cislocative ***n(i)-**
 - PG middle ***n-**

New etymologies

- ‘food’
 - PM ***-ãq**
 - PG ***-oq** (Southern only)
- ‘domestic animal (possessive classifier)’
 - PM ***-lãʔ**
 - PG ***-lo** (Southern only)
- ‘head’
 - Maká **-xilaʔ** (< PM ***-xilãʔ** ~ ***-xilãʔ** ~ ***-xilãʔ**); other Mataguayan languages: ***-xãteʔk**
 - Kadiwéu **-ak:ilo** (< PG ***-ak:ilo**)

New etymologies

- ‘to light fire’
 - PM ***[ji]lán**
 - PG ***[j]elon** ‘to light fire’ (N) ~ ***[j]alon** ‘to stoke fire’ (S)
- ‘powder’
 - PM ***-máʔk**
 - PG ***-am:oq**
- ‘rope, cord’
 - PM ***(-)níjåk**
 - PG ***(-)aníq**

New etymologies

- ‘chin’
 - PM ***-ʔaqaʔt ~ *-ʔaqaʔt**
 - PG ***-aq:át**
- ‘to shuck’
 - PM ***-pát ~ *-pát**
 - PG ***[i]pot ~ *[j]ipot** ‘to touch’ (Southern only), Mocoví **potoyola** ‘to shuck’
- ‘trap’, verbal derivative ‘to fish with a hook’
 - PM ***[t]qánhan** ‘to fish with a hook’
 - Mocoví **[j]oqojn**, ANTP **[ɾ]oqojn-awan** ‘to trap, to fish with a hook’ (cognates: Pilagá **-qowin** ‘trap’, Qom **-qojna** ‘trap’, **[n]qoβin** ‘to trap’)

New etymologies

- ‘to cover’
 - PM *[ji]p'o(?) ~ *[ji]p'ó(?)
 - PG *[j]ap:o-
- ‘fence’
 - PM *-p'oʔk ~ *-ϕ'oʔk
 - Mocoví -apok (< PG *-ap(:)ok)
- ‘path, road’
 - PM *(-)ʔnájiʔx
 - Kadiwéu (-)naj:g:i or Proto-Qom *-n-ad:ik

New etymologies

- ‘to eat (tr.)’
 - PM ***tux** / ***-lux**
 - PG ***[j]el:ik** (N) ~ ***[j]al:ik** (S); ***[t]ik** (Toba ‘to eat’, Mocoví ‘to gnaw’)
- ‘to suck breast’
 - PM ***tiʔϕ** / ***-tiʔϕ**
 - PG ***l:ip**
- ‘to come’
 - PM ***n-äk**
 - PG ***anák**

New etymologies

- ‘juice, liquid’
 - PM *-ʔí
 - PG *-i[ʔ]i (Southern only)
- ‘belly’
 - PM *-w(t)s'é
 - Kadiwéu *-od(:)e < PG *-od(:)e
- ‘to burn’
 - Maká -wuxkiʔ ‘burn (noun)’ < *-wux-keʔ
 - PG *[j]awíK (Qom only)

New etymologies

- ‘day’
 - PM ***ʔnálu(h)** ‘day, world’
 - Pilagá **nolóʔ** ‘day’ (may be cognate with Toba **nalaʔ** ‘sun’; Viegas Barros 2013b reconstructs PG ***nalóʔ**)
- ‘to drink’
 - PM ***[ji]jáʔ**
 - Kadiwéu **nij:ɔɓodi** ‘water’ (an instrumental nominalization, < PG ***[n]j:ɔ-qot**), maybe Proto-Pilagá–Toba ***[n]jom** ‘to drink’ (with a fossilized applicative suffix?)

New etymologies

- ‘co-agent nominalizer’
 - PM ***-φah**
 - PG ***-wa**
- ‘greater plural’
 - PM ***-pu** (Chorote) or ***-pi** (Nivaçle) — human plural in demonstratives
 - PG ***-p:i** — collective plural
- ‘antipassive’
 - PM ***-han**
 - PG ***-qan**

New etymologies

- demonstrative ‘gone, moving away’
 - PM ***k-** (Proto-Chorote ***kå**)
 - PG ***tso**
- collective of plants
 - PM ***-kat**
 - PG ***-tsat**
- 3rd person subject
 - PM ***t-**
 - PG ***d-**

Dubious etymologies (borrowings?)

- ‘leech’
 - PM ***ϕiʼs**
 - PG ***pit** (Southern only)
- ‘charcoal’
 - PM ***ϕajXoʼ**
 - PG ***poqo** (Qom only)
- ‘root’
 - PM ***-ϕétäʼts**
 - PG ***-pat:at** ‘root (S) / trunk (N)’

Dubious etymologies (borrowings?)

- ‘chajá bird’ (onomatopoeic)
 - PM ***tsáháq**
 - PG ***t:aqaq**
- ‘creamy-bellied thrush (*Turdus amaurochalinus*)’
 - PM ***?mók**
 - Toba **mok** ‘*Podager facunda*; *Nyctibius griseus*; *Turdus amaurochalinus*’
- ‘feces’
 - PM ***-muk** (> Proto-Chorote–Wichí ***-<?já>muk**)
 - Toba **jamok**

Grammatical parallels: plural person indices

- Both families index possessors and subjects by means of prefixes, many of which are cognate
- One exception is that 2_{PL}, 3_{PL} and 1_{PL}.S_A/A require a suffix:
 - Proto-Chorote *ʔa-ʔwén-**ah** ‘we.EXCL see it’, *hʔ-ʔwén-**el** ‘you.PL see it’, *ʔi-ʔwén-**is** ‘they see it’
 - N. Mocoví s-aʔde:n-**aq** ‘we know it’, Ø-ʔdʒi:ŋ-**i** ‘you.PL know it’, j-aʔde:n-**eʔ** ‘they know it’
- However, 1_{PL}.S_P/P is prefixal in both families:
 - Proto-Chorote ***kas=ts-**ʔáhl-en ‘we die’, N. Mocoví **qa-re-lew** ‘we die’

Grammatical parallels: third-person subjects

- For the 3rd-person subject, both families have multiple prefixes in different verb classes, including:
 - PM ***j(i)-** ~ PG ***i-** (3.A/S_A)
 - PM ***t-** ~ PG ***d-** (3.S) — used in antipassives in both families
 - PM ***w(a)-** ~ PG ***w-** (3.S)
- Nivaçle **ji-kaku** ‘s/he doubts (vt.)’ → **t-kaku-xan** ‘she doubts.ANTP’
- N. Mocoví **j-alat** ‘s/he abandons (vt.)’ → **r-alat-axan** ‘she leaves.ANTP’
→ cognate antipassive morphology

Grammatical parallel: demonstratives

- In both families, demonstratives encode distance, presence/absence, movement, gender, number. Position (standing/sitting/lying) is encoded in all Guaicuruan languages and Wichí

Iyojwa'aja' < Chorote < Mataguayan

	M.SG	F.SG	PL.HUM	PL.NHUM
within reach	ʔna	hláʔa	ʔna-po	ʔni-wa, ʔnju-wa
nearby	na	ha-na	na-po	ni-wa, nju-wa
distant	s(i)e	ha-se	sja-po	sju-wa
going away	kja	ha-kja	kja-po	ki-wa, kju-wa
seen before	ha	hla-ha	ha-po	ha-wa
unknown	pa	ha-pa	pa-po	pu-wa

Takshik Toba < Qom < Southern Guaicuruan (González 2015)

	M.SG	F.SG	PL ¹	PL ²
standing	da	ha-da	da-ʔ	da-wa
sitting	ji	ha-ji	ji-ʔ	ji-wa
lying	ze	ha-ze	ze-ʔ	ze-wa
going away	so	ha-so	so-ʔ	so-wa
coming	na	ha-na	na-ʔ	na-wa
absent	ka	ha-ka	ka-ʔ	ka-wa

Consequences for comparative Guaicuruan studies

- Some of the etymologies in Viegas Barros (2013b) may need revision
- Often Mataguayan has an excellent match with Southern Guaicuruan but not with Northern Guaicuruan, yet VB (2013b) assumes the Northern Guaicuruan form is more conservative
- This is something expected in a family with an obvious binary branching

Consequences for comparative Guaicuruan studies

- E.g. PM ***-ʔáx** ‘skin, bark’ corresponds well to PSG ***-ʔok**, yet VB (2013b) derives the latter form from ***-ʔáko**:

650. ***-ʔáko** ‘cuero’, ‘piel’

GN: Ka **ewako•go** ‘couro’, Mb <**egua cogo**> ‘cuero...’.

GS: PGS ***-óʔog** > Ab **-ak**, Pi **-óʔok**, ToAnt <**-ohóc**> ‘cuero’, <**-ahóc**> ‘piel’, To **-ʔok**.

- PM ***ʔ[j]om** ‘to be extinguished’ matches well Proto-Qom ***ʔom**, but VB (2013b) reconstructs ***-ʔem** based on a Kadiwéu form meaning ‘to die’:

672. ***-ʔem** ‘apagarse’

GN: Ka (♀) **-e:m** ‘morrer’.

GS: PGS ***ʔom** > Ab **-aham-Raik** ‘muerto’, Mo **ʔo:m**, Pi **ʔo:m**, To **ʔo:m** ‘apagado’.

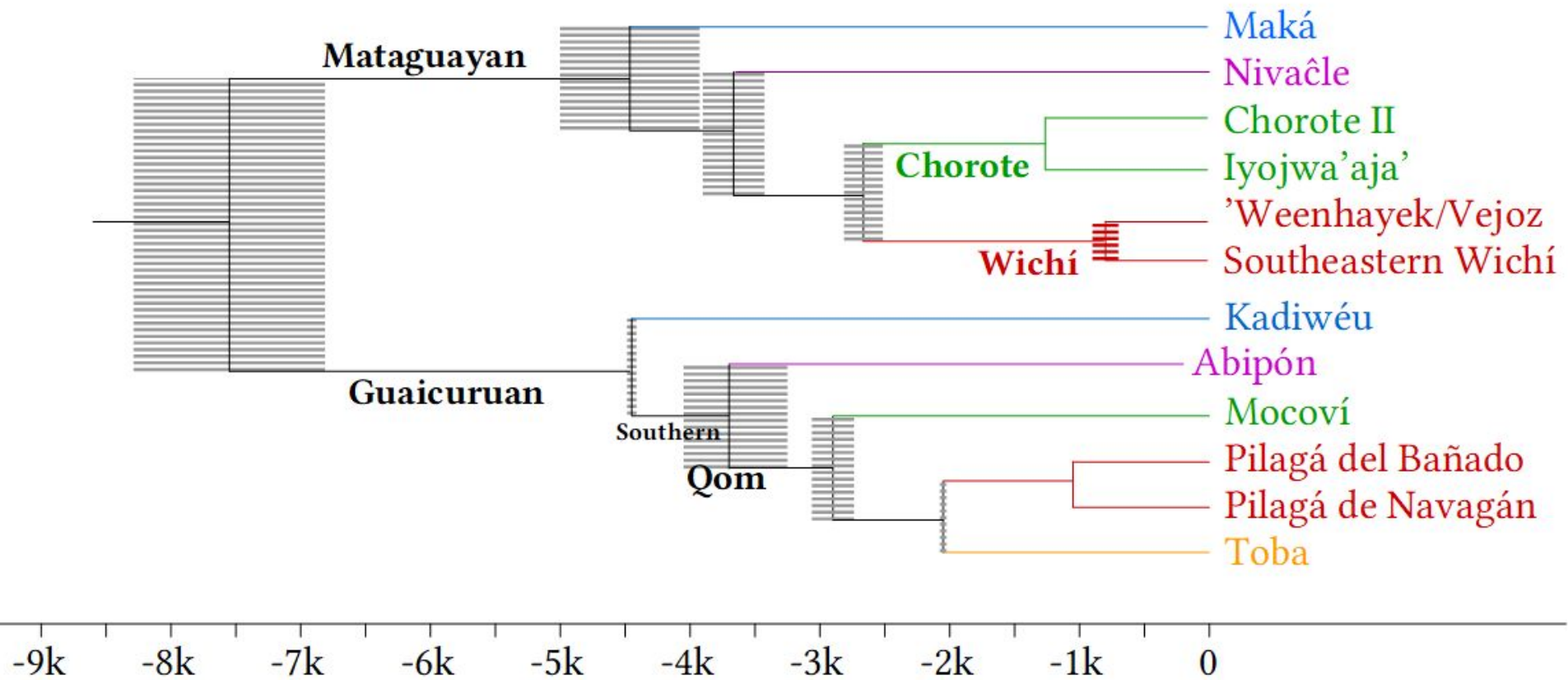
- → the Kadiwéu forms are probably non-cognate.

Consequences for comparative Mataguayan studies

- The evidence increasingly converges towards the hypothesis whereby Maká was the first language that split off PM (as opposed to forming a branch with Nivaçle)
- Exclusive Maká–Guaicuruan matches suggest retentions from PM:
 - Maká **-xila** ~ PG ***-ak:ila** (other Mataguayan ***-xãteʔk**) ‘head’
 - Maká **opowi** ~ PG ***op:owé** (other Mataguayan ***jitʔã?**) ‘vulture’
- Cases when the reconstruction is ambiguous may now be resolved:
 - PM ***n-apʔu** ~ ***n-aϕʔu** (~ ***-á-** ~ ***-ú**) → ***n-apʔu** (~ ***-á-** ~ ***-ú**)
 - PM ***-pʔoʔk** ~ ***-ϕʔoʔk** → ***-pʔoʔk**

Appraisal

- Guaicuruan and Mataguayan do indeed look as distantly related language families, the similarities are very different from those seen in situations of language contact (Viegas Barros 2013a))
- 21 matches on the 110-word Swadesh list between PG and PM:
 - ‘all’, ‘ashes’, ‘bark’, ‘to bite’, (?) ‘chest’, (?) ‘to burn’, ‘to come’, ‘to drink’, ‘to eat’, ‘fire’, ‘to fly’, ‘head’, ‘I’, ‘road’, ‘to see’, ‘skin’, ‘that’, ‘this’, ‘you’, ‘tooth’, ‘to go’
- Any pair of modern Guaicuruan and Mataguayan lects have 5.8% of matches on the average. We assume 6800–8300 years of independent development (Vasilyev & Saenko 2017)



Directions for future research

- Not all PM phonemes could be securely matched to PG phonemes — it is unclear, for instance, what corresponds to PM ***s**, the possibilities being (Proto-Qom) ***ʔ**, ***w**, zero, or even ***p**:
 - (?) PM ***-sáʔt** ‘vein, tendon’ ~ Proto-Qom ***-ʔota** ‘vein’
 - (?) PM ***-seʔ** ‘bodily hair’ ~ Proto-Qom ***-we** ‘hair, feather, leaf’
 - (?) Wichí ***[ʔi]sqat** ‘to steal’ ~ Proto-Qom ***[d]ekat-i** ~ **[d]okat-i** ‘to steal’
 - (?) PM ***-sáqʼál^h** ‘soul’ ~ Proto-Qom ***-pʼaqʼal**, Abipón **-wakal** ‘soul, shadow’ (unless PM ***(-)X₂₃pél** ‘shadow’ ~ Proto-Qom ***-pʼaqʼal**, Abipón **-wakal**)

Directions for future research

- In addition to Guachí and Payaguá (Viegas Barros 2004), there is evidence that the small Zamucoan language family of northern Paraguay, southeastern Bolivia, and southwestern Brazil could be distantly related
- Ciucci (2014) identifies some similarities, but assumes that they are due to contact, however they involve basic lexicon and core parts of grammar (person prefixes, shared suppletion patterns, applicatives)

References

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