



# Modeling convergence: Towards a reconstruction of the history of Quechuan–Aymaran interaction<sup>☆</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The structural and lexical similarities that unite the Aymaran and Quechuan language families of the Andean region today are generally attributed to convergence. The Aymaran and Quechuan proto-languages arose from an initial formative phase in this process of convergence, following the first contact between the two linguistic lineages. After this formative period, presumably characterized by widespread multilingualism, the two lineages separated again and began their own histories of diversification as language families. Nevertheless, the speakers of the languages belonging to both families remained closely connected by kinship ties and social organization, which may have allowed them to conquer and occupy extensive new territories in a concerted way. Such a joint enterprise must have taken place in a multilingual setting as can still be observed in outlying areas where Aymaran and Quechuan languages coexist within communities.

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## 1. Introduction

*Quechuan* and *Aymaran*, the two main surviving indigenous language families of the Middle Andean region,<sup>1</sup> show an impressive amount of detailed similarities at the phonological and structural levels, as well as in their lexicon. These similarities have the character of near coincidences and are not systematically shared with any of the other languages attested in the same region. By contrast, the highly distinctive phonotactics of Aymaran and the fact that, apart from a substantial amount of shared lexicon, the lexical inventories of the two language families are radically different, suggest that Quechuan and Aymaran are by no means closely related from a genetic point of view, if they should be related at all. This apparently contradictory situation of similarity and difference points to a unique type of historical interaction undergone by the two language families in question, which calls for a detailed investigation.

Although both language groups, Quechuan in particular, are often referred to as single languages (*Quechua*, *Aymara*), it is more appropriate to treat them as language families. Hence our use of the ending *-an*, customary in historical linguistics.<sup>2</sup> The Quechuan family is subdivided into a large number of dialects, which are often mutually unintelligible (cf. Torero Fernández de Córdova, 1974). The relations that exist between these dialects partly exhibit the characteristics of a

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<sup>1</sup> The Middle Andean region as defined here roughly coincides with the empire of the Incas at its greatest expansion, before the Spanish conquest, which occurred in 1532–1534.

<sup>2</sup> Except when referring to individual varieties or to the (pre-)proto-languages, where we prefer standardized expressions such as Proto-Quechua and Pre-Proto-Quechua, and by extension also Proto-Aymara and Pre-Proto-Aymara.

genealogical tree structure and partly those of a dialect chain, as defined by Kaufman (1990:69–70). The Aymaran family<sup>3</sup> consists of Aymara and its sister language Jaqaru–Kawki,<sup>4</sup> as well as a number of barely attested extinct varieties.

The historical relationship between Quechuan and Aymaran has engaged the attention of missionaries, linguists and other scholarly observers since the 17th century (*inter alii*, Cobo [1653] 1956 (Volume II, Book XI, Chapter IX, 29, cited in Cerrón-Palomino, 2008:25); Uhle [1910] 1969:45–50; Campbell, 1995; for an overview see Cerrón-Palomino, 2008:25–26). The discussion has often been narrowed down to one central question: Are Quechuan and Aymaran genetically related or not? Even until recent times, scholars of Andean languages have been divided into two camps, those who support the idea of a common origin for the two language groups and those who reject such a hypothesis in favor of a process of convergence through intensive borrowing and contact. However, the exclusive choice between the options of *genetic relationship* and *convergence* has proven to be unproductive. All sorts of available evidence are indicative of a process of convergence that permeates the history and defines the mutual relationship of the Quechuan and Aymaran families in many respects. There is a growing consensus that the shared elements uniting the two language families can be explained through convergence by contact, rather than through straightforward genetic relatedness (Adelaar, 1986; Cerrón-Palomino, 1987:351–375; Torero Fernández de Córdova, 1998; Adelaar and Muysken, 2004:34–36). The intensity and the longevity of the bilateral diffusion that characterizes the relationship between Quechuan and Aymaran lie at the basis of one of the most consequential instances of language contact in the history of the world's languages. At the same time, one has to acknowledge that the possibility of a remote common source for Quechuan and Aymaran cannot be discarded entirely. However, such a putative relationship turns out hard to prove with the present state of our knowledge, and it would probably involve a number of other Amerindian language families as well.<sup>5</sup>

A reconstruction of Quechuan–Aymaran contact history must be based on linguistic evidence. Observations in historical documents are taken into consideration as long as they do not contradict the linguistic facts established by the investigation of spoken or documented language varieties. The same restriction holds, a fortiori, for the results of archaeological research. Only when the potential of linguistic research has been exploited to its full extent, should the outcome of it be matched with results provided by other disciplines.

## 2. The nature of the similarities

Before proceeding to a global reconstructive overview of Quechuan–Aymaran convergence, it is necessary to draw an inventory of the main similarities that link the two language groups, along with the differences that separate them. For a detailed account of the numerous structural parallelisms that can be observed between the two language groups we refer to Cerrón-Palomino (2008). Both the Quechuan and Aymaran families consist of languages that are predominantly SOV with a nominative-accusative alignment and a transparent, highly regular morphological structure based on agglutinative suffixation. Apart from suffixation and, at least in Quechuan, some root reduplication, vowel modifications such as lengthening play a role in morphology as well, but not in all varieties of the two language families. Whereas Aymaran verbal morphology codifies a larger amount of categories than Quechuan verbal morphology does, there is a great deal of detailed semantic and pragmatic coincidence in the area of morphosyntax. By contrast, systematic formal coincidences between Quechuan and Aymaran grammatical morphemes are scarce.

There are also some significant morphosyntactic differences. Quechuan has a well developed switch-reference system in subordinate clauses, whereas the Aymara switch-reference system is incomplete. Of the two Aymaran languages only Jaqaru uses a switch-reference paradigm with a full set of cross-referential person markers (Hardman, 2000:71–75). Quechuan has more case markers and more nominalizing affixes than Aymaran. The combination of nominalization and case accounts for a larger number of complex sentence types in Quechuan. In verbal morphology, the situation is the opposite. Quechuan has fewer verbal affixes than Aymaran, and these are often multifunctional. Aymaran verbal morphology is particularly rich in the expression of spatial categories. Verbalizing processes ('to be', 'to be at', 'to belong to') play a role in Aymaran inflectional morphology, but not in Quechuan, which uses constructions containing the verb *ka-* 'to be'. However, as has been proposed by Cerrón-Palomino (2008:200–201), the verbalizing processes of Aymaran may have been derived from a lexically independent verb, possibly *ka-* as in Quechua. Last but not least, evidentiality is codified in the Aymara verb (Hardman et al., 1988:155–158), whereas Quechuan evidential categories are indicated by clitics.<sup>6</sup> A less tangible difference between the two language groups manifests itself in the codification of personal reference. The so-called 'transitional' endings, which specify the grammatical person of both a subject and an object, provided that the latter is a speech-act participant, are more synthetic in composition in Aymaran than in Quechuan. The Aymaran endings appear to be relatively old, whereas Quechuan uses a hybrid system that employs combinations of elements in derived functions and seems to be of a relatively recent coinage (Adelaar, 2009). In most varieties of Quechuan, transitional endings can also occur in nominalized verbs, which is not possible in Aymaran. A four-person system consisting of 1st, 2nd, 3rd person and an inclusive 1st person plural is shared by the two families, but Aymaran has unequivocal morphemes to express the inclusive category, whereas Quechuan relies on

<sup>3</sup> The Aymaran family is also known as *Aru* (Torero Fernández de Córdova, 1972, 2002) or *Jaqi* (Hardman, 1978). For arguments in support of our preference for the term *Aymaran* see Adelaar and Muysken (2004:170).

<sup>4</sup> Jaqaru and Kawki are treated as separate languages by Hardman (1978). More recent research suggests that they do not differ beyond the dialect level (Cerrón-Palomino, 2000:63–65).

<sup>5</sup> Campbell (1995) is one of the rare (inconclusive) attempts to discover such a relationship without resorting to obvious cases of borrowing.

<sup>6</sup> The Jaqaru–Kawki language seems to follow the Quechuan practice, so this may not be a distinctive criterion.

elements that appear to have a composite origin (in particular, the inclusive 1st person subject and possessor marker *-ñčik*).<sup>7</sup> It suggests that Quechuan may have adopted an Aymaran model by reassigning elements from its own original morphemic inventory to borrowed functions.

From a phonological point of view, Quechuan and Aymaran are remarkably similar, a fact that is best appreciated when comparing the reconstructed phoneme systems of the two language groups (for Aymaran see Cerrón-Palomino, 2000:118; for Quechuan see Adelaar and Muysken, 2004:196). When looking back at the stage of the proto-languages, the phoneme inventories of the two language groups appear to coincide in most respects, including in such highly marked features as a three-vowel system, a contrast of velar and uvular stops, and a contrast of retroflex and palatal affricates. The main difference between the reconstructed sound systems of Proto-Quechua and Proto-Aymara consists in the existence of glottalized and aspirated consonants in the latter. The use of glottalized and aspirated consonants has spread into the native inherited root lexicon of Quechuan varieties whose linguistic areas are contingent with the territory of the present-day Aymara language (Torero Fernández de Córdova, 1974:35; Cerrón-Palomino, 1987:119; Mannheim, 1991:53–58, 177–180). They include Cuzco and Puno Quechua, as well as the Bolivian dialects of Quechuan.<sup>8</sup> The geographical distribution of glottalization and aspiration within the Quechuan root inventory is not always consistent.<sup>9</sup> Glottalization, and to a lesser extent, aspiration appear to represent areal features that are also found in a number of other languages of the south-central Andes, such as Atacameño, Callahuaya, Leco and Uru-Chipaya, which are now partly extinct.<sup>10</sup>

A very conspicuous difference between Quechuan and Aymaran resides in the highly unusual phonotactics and morphophonemic behaviour of the latter language group. Aymaran noun roots must end in a vowel, so roots borrowed from other languages are augmented with a final vowel if they do not already have one. Within Aymaran roots open syllables are dominant,<sup>11</sup> but the vowels of roots and affixes are subject to suppression rules that appear to be arbitrary in that they lack a synchronic phonological motivation. As a result, Aymaran word forms may contain clusters of as many as six consonants. These features are found with considerable variation in both Aymaran languages but are absent from Quechuan, although a watered-down version of the suppression rules accompanying borrowed verbal affixes is found in dialects heavily influenced by Aymara, such as Puno Quechua (Adelaar, 1987).

At the lexical level, Quechuan and Aymaran share a substantial amount of vocabulary that harks back to the stage of the proto-languages, in addition to numerous loans that can be attributed to later stages of contact. Approximately 20% of the lexical items that can be reconstructed for both language groups are identical or nearly identical in form. This shared lexicon includes items pertaining to basic vocabulary, such as *nina* 'fire', *warmi* 'woman' and *apa-* 'to carry'. However, the number of shared items is not noticeably higher in basic than in non-basic vocabulary, as might be expected to be the case if the languages were genetically related (Cerrón-Palomino, 1987:373, 2000:313; Heggarty, 2005:31–37).

### 3. Modeling the concept of convergence

On first thoughts, it may appear attractive to view convergence as the opposite of *divergence*, the process of differentiation that affects two entities evolving from a common source after an initial separation. Languages that develop from a common source, viz. a proto-language, tend to diverge gradually and systematically over time, a process that can be deduced from predominantly regular sound correspondences that exist between the resulting daughter languages. By contrast, convergence stands for the abstraction of an articulated process that need not be gradual and systematic at all. Episodes of contact-induced change can be followed by periods of immobility or renewed separation. A process of convergence may be interrupted by periods of divergence. Distinct languages are not automatically drawn into convergence as soon as they get into contact with each other. A wide array of external factors, which may be demographical, political, sociolinguistic, etc., play a role in the way languages influence or replace each other. In the case of the earliest recoverable representatives of the Quechuan and Aymaran lineages, *Proto-Quechua* and *Proto-Aymara*, these external factors remain largely unknown.

Any attempt to analyze convergence in relation to the history of Quechuan and Aymaran will eventually require a reconstruction of the process of convergence in all its articulated stages. This is necessary for a proper understanding of the way in which the two language groups have influenced each other in the past. The stages and events that together make up the Quechuan–Aymaran convergence will have to be linked to specific locations in time and space. A peculiarity of Quechuan–Aymaran contact history is that convergence occurred again and again. There was convergence at the stage of the formation of the proto-languages but also between branches or dialects of the two language groups that happened to share a particular geographical space at a particular point of time. We shall refer to these cases of incidental convergence as *local convergence*. As we saw before, documented cases of local convergence include the spread of glottalized and aspirated obstruents and the introduction of Aymara verbal affixes with their adherent vowel-suppression rules into specific varieties of Quechuan that are adjacent to Aymara-speaking areas. Such cases of local diffusion and substrate influence are merely

<sup>7</sup> The same observation may hold for the Quechuan second person ending *-yki* /*-nki*.

<sup>8</sup> The presence of aspirated stops and reflexes of aspirated stops in Quechuan varieties of highland Ecuador may be due to a southern Peruvian superstrate introduced by the Inca occupation (Torero Fernández de Córdova, 1984:385–386; Cerrón-Palomino, 1987:186–187).

<sup>9</sup> Mannheim and Newfield (1982) point at the iconicity of the use of glottalized and aspirated stops and affricates in Quechuan. It may very well be that similar mechanisms are at work in Aymaran.

<sup>10</sup> The case of Jaqaru–Kawki in Central Peru (Yauyos) is exceptional in that it features glottalization and aspiration, although it is surrounded by Quechuan dialects ignoring these types of articulation.

<sup>11</sup> This preference for open syllables is less visible in Jaqaru, so it is doubtful if this feature can be attributed to Aymaran as a whole.

remote reflections of the convergence that occurred at the initial stage of contact between what were to become the Quechuan and Aymaran proto-languages. For that foundational stage of the convergence we shall reserve the term *initial convergence*.

The distinction between an early formative convergence of the Quechuan and Aymaran proto-languages and different types of incidental convergence occurring at more recent stages was first recognized and discussed at the beginning of the twentieth century by Max Uhle. Uhle also emphasizes that during the initial convergence the remodeling influence of Aymaran upon Quechuan must have been more important than the other way around (Uhle, 1969:48). His perspicacious views on this matter have not lost their validity.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. Before the initial convergence: the pre-proto-languages

The fact that most of the similarities between the Quechuan and Aymaran proto-languages are due to the initial convergence obliges us to define an earlier stage of development for both the Quechuan and the Aymaran lineage, a stage in which no convergence had yet occurred. Since the predecessor languages of Proto-Quechua and Proto-Aymara probably did not have a common origin and acquired most of their structural similarities during the initial convergence, there seems to be no compelling reason to assume that they had similar typological profiles. For instance, although it is a matter of speculation, the possibility that one of the two predecessor languages had prefixes or a vowel system consisting of more than three vowels cannot be excluded.<sup>13</sup> We will follow the practice of referring to the predecessor language of Proto-Quechua as *Pre-Proto-Quechua*. This term has been defined as referring to a language stage that can be recovered by internal reconstruction from Proto-Quechua, whereas Proto-Quechua itself can be reconstructed by the comparative method on the basis of its daughter languages (Weber, 1987:35; cf. also Beresford-Jones and Heggarty, 2011).<sup>14</sup> A parallel term may be coined for the pre-convergence stage of the Aymaran lineage: *Pre-Proto-Aymara*.

In the context of the historical convergence of the Quechuan and Aymaran linguistic lineages, the distinction between pre-proto-languages, proto-languages and present-day varieties is a methodological necessity. It does not mean, however, that the differences that separate Pre-Proto-Quechua from Proto-Quechua, on one hand, and Pre-Proto-Aymara from Proto-Aymara, on the other, would necessarily have been of equal importance. If a pre-proto-language A were structurally remodeled under the influence of another pre-proto-language B, the changes undergone by A would have been more radical than those suffered by B. Furthermore, the changes may not have been of the same kind in both cases. For example, one of the two pre-proto-languages may have provided more lexicon, whereas the other one could have provided structure and phonological characteristics. This is exactly what appears to have been the case in the contact situation underlying the proto-languages of Quechuan and Aymaran. The archaic features of present-day Aymaran (see section 2) suggest that it provided much of the common structural properties, whereas at least part of the shared lexicon in the proto-languages can be assigned to the Quechuan lineage on phonotactic grounds, such as the frequent use of medial consonant clusters in roots of Quechuan origin and the presence of epenthetic final vowels in borrowed Aymaran roots (cf. Adelaar, 1986:384, 391–392). If we accept the view that Pre-Proto-Quechua structure was most affected by the process of remodeling caused by the initial convergence, the difference between Pre-Proto-Quechua and Proto-Quechua must have been considerably greater than that between Pre-Proto-Aymara and Proto-Aymara.

Finally, we have to consider the possibility that the pre-proto-languages may have had daughter languages that kept aloof from the initial convergence. There appears to be no such evidence in the case of the Quechuan lineage. By contrast, colonial historical documents from the second half of the 16th century, such as the ones brought together in the *Relaciones geográficas de Indias* (Jiménez de la Espada, 1965), mention languages with Aymaran traits which were not identified as Aymaran by contemporaneous observers. They include the so-called *hahuasimi* ('outer languages') of the southern part of the department of Ayacucho and the *Chumbivilcas* language of southwestern Cuzco. An overview of the language varieties mentioned in these 16th century sources, including arguments for their identification as Aymaran, can be found in Torero Fernández de Córdova (1972:64–76) and Mannheim (1991:43–47); see also Cerrón-Palomino (2000:296). One may speculate that labels such as *hahuasimi* and *Chumbivilcas* could have represented languages of the Aymaran lineage unaffected by the initial convergence. However, the possibility that they were slightly divergent Aymara varieties or, in some cases, non-Aymaran languages cannot be ruled out either.

#### 5. Imagining the initial convergence

The initial convergence must be conceived as a process of intensive contact between two languages that started out with different origins and possibly also different typological profiles. These different origins presuppose a spatial separation

<sup>12</sup> I am indebted to Rodolfo Cerrón-Palomino for calling my attention to Uhle's groundbreaking work.

<sup>13</sup> This would be in agreement with a suggestion by Torero Fernández de Córdova (2002:160) in which the Cholón language of the Huallaga river valley is referred to as 'un quechua por armar' ('a Quechua to be put together'). At difference with Quechuan, Cholón had both prefixes and suffixes. For a grammatical description of this language see Alexander-Bakkerus (2005).

<sup>14</sup> Torero Fernández de Córdova (2002:44–45) uses the term *Palaeo-Quechua* in connection with the language of the pre-formative city of Caral (3rd millennium B.C., in the coastal valley of Supe), which would have played a key role during the beginnings of Andean civilization. Considering the time gap of about two millennia that separates Caral from the genesis of Proto-Quechua, the idea that its language belonged to the Quechuan lineage at all remains a matter of speculation.

between the two speaker groups before the convergence occurred, although there is no need to assume that the distance separating them was necessarily substantial. Considering the rather spectacular linguistic outcome of the convergence, the first contact between Pre-Proto-Quechua and Pre-Proto-Aymara may have been the result of a clash, in which one of the two language-bearing peoples, viz. the speakers of Pre-Proto-Quechua, invaded the territory of the other people, viz. the speakers of Pre-Proto-Aymara. Consequently, the invading people came to share a large part of the invaded territory with the autochthonous group, and a situation of intense social interaction and widespread multilingualism arose. After some time, Proto-Quechua emerged as the sole descendant of Pre-Proto-Quechua, heavily transformed by language contact with Pre-Proto-Aymara. It became the dominant language in part of what used to be Pre-Proto-Aymara territory. In the remainder of that territory, the Aymaran lineage prevailed in the form of Proto-Aymara, a descendant of Pre-Proto-Aymara, which also had been influenced by Pre-Proto-Quechua to some extent. Possibly, some pockets of Pre-Proto-Aymara speakers not having undergone such influence remained, but this is a supposition that cannot be proven at the present stage (see section 4).

The initial linguistic convergence probably occurred in a time when the speakers of Pre-Proto-Quechua occupied most of the original Pre-Proto-Aymara territory and multilingualism was widespread. In areas where the invading population was dense, Pre-Proto-Aymara speakers would have learned the language of the occupants, which then became structurally transformed and remodeled in the process. As the invaded adopted the language of the invaders, they unconsciously introduced elements of structure and pronunciation into it. In areas where the invading population was less dominant, the Aymaran lineage may have prevailed, albeit influenced by the invading Pre-Proto-Quechua language. As we noted before, such influence would have been predominantly lexical.<sup>15</sup>

At the beginning of this period of transformation and ethnic fusion the relations between the two groups involved were probably characterized by hostility and the use, respectively, the acceptance of force. However, as the process of merger advanced, new forms of kinship, social interaction and ritual co-operation were forged, which were to become characteristic of the relations between descendants of these early Quechuan and Aymaran speaking groups until present. Particular forms of labor division, for instance between farmers and agro-pastoralists, emerged and may have been linked to language use and linguistic identity. In warfare and military expansion, the newly formed nations of Proto-Quechua and Proto-Aymara speakers may henceforth have operated in concert as they had become united by kinship relations, and because they now saw each other as allies against the outside world.

## 6. Geographical considerations

Historical and linguistic evidence indicate that Central Peru encompassed the territory where the initial convergence between the Quechuan and Aymaran lineages occurred. Due to the presence until colonial times of competing languages (Culli, Quingnam, etc.), the northern boundary of the convergence area may have been situated in the highlands of northern Ancash. Its southern extension is more difficult to determine. It probably included most of the highlands of the department of Ayacucho and, possibly, territories further south. Although the coastal valleys of Central and Central-Southern Peru were probably situated in the area of convergence as well, there is no proof that the coast itself was also part of it.

The hypothesis of a Pre-Proto-Quechua invasion as outlined above implies that the Proto-Quechua homeland was at least partly coincidental with the Pre-Proto-Aymara territory such as it was before the initial convergence. In other words, Proto-Quechua is not conceivable without an underlying Pre-Proto-Aymara substrate. It explains why there is a clear presence of Aymaran influence even in the most thoroughly Quechuan-speaking areas, such as the northern part of the Quechua I area in Central Peru, where Quechuan pre-dates Inca and colonial expansion and where there is no documentary evidence of any Aymaran-speaking groups in historical times (Cerrón-Palomino, 1987:333, 2000:292–293).

A striking feature is the southward oriented bias of the Aymaran-speaking peoples. In historical times, they mostly occupied areas on the southern fringes of the area of convergence or beyond its boundaries. Furthermore, their expansion went southward, until most of the Bolivian highlands became occupied by speakers of the Aymara language, as can be deduced from a document of about 1600 A.D. that was published by Bouysse-Cassagne (1975). By contrast, the expansion of Quechuan does not show any particular restriction on its directionality. This situation suggests that the Pre-Proto-Quechua invasion came from the north. How far to the north is not possible to determine at present. By all means, the Quechuization of Pre-Proto-Aymara people appears to have been more successful in the central and northern sections of Central Peru, than in areas further south.

## 7. What happened next? Quechuan and Aymaran became language families

Once concluded the stage of initial convergence, the Quechuan and Aymaran lineages followed a development such as can be expected from any other language family. Apparently, a separation occurred between the speakers of the two proto-languages, which allowed them to regain a renewed linguistic identity. Although multilingualism persisted in some regions (in the area of Yauyos, for instance), it is not unlikely that fixed linguistic boundaries, like the ones that exist today in countries such as Belgium or Switzerland, eventually arose between Quechuan and Aymaran speaking areas as well.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The effects of linguistic convergence that can be observed in the Middle Andean region resemble the situation found in other parts of the world that underwent an invasion by foreign populations; see, for instance, Emeneau (1956) on the history of Indo-Aryan-Dravidian interaction in India.

<sup>16</sup> There are well-known cases of linguistic boundaries in the Middle Andes today, for instance, the boundary between Quechua I and Quechua II, which roughly coincides with the departmental division of Junín and Huancavelica in Peru.



Subsequently, the Quechuan group split up into two main dialect branches, the Quechua B/A division, first proposed by Parker (1963), and in a more refined version, as Quechua I/II with subgroups IIA, IIB, IIC, by Torero Fernández de Córdova (1964). Although these classifications are in debate (Landerman, 1991; Heggarty, 2005:37–47), the existence of a Quechua I (or B) branch in Central Peru is supported by a number of specific phonological and morphological innovations proper to that group.

Later on, a division occurred between two sub-branches of Quechua II that are referred to in Torero Fernández de Córdova's (1964) classification as Quechua IIB (comprising the 16th century dialect of the Peruvian central coast, the varieties of Ecuador, Colombia and the Peruvian Amazon, and the dialect group of Chachapoyas and Lamas in northern Peru) and Quechua IIC (comprising the varieties of Argentina and Bolivia, and the dialects spoken in the departments of Apurímac, Arequipa, Ayacucho, Cuzco, Moquegua and Puno in southern Peru). This division is less old and less outspoken than the one underlying the Quechua I and II branches but nevertheless based on sound phonological and lexical criteria (Adelaar, 1994:146–150). By contrast, the existence of a Quechua IIA sub-branch comprising the Cajamarca and Ferreñafe dialects (in northern Peru) and the dialects of Laraos, Lincha and Pacaraos (on the Pacific slopes of Central Peru) has been repeatedly challenged (Taylor, 1979; Landerman, 1991; Heggarty, 2005; Adelaar, 2012 in press). These dialects probably represent separate branches within Quechua II (Cajamarca, Laraos, Lincha), a mixed dialect of Cajamarca and Quechua I (Ferreñafe), and an early split-off from Quechua I (Pacaraos, cf. Adelaar, 1984).

The southward expansion of Quechua IIC seems to have had its point of departure in the area of Ayacucho (the northern highland section of the department of the same name) and in neighboring Huancavelica. The dialect spoken there represents the most conservative known variety of Quechua IIC,<sup>17</sup> which is closest to the Proto-Quechua prototype and from which the other Quechua IIC varieties (Cuzco Quechua, Bolivian Quechua, Argentinian Quechua) can be derived by assuming a series of phonological and morphological innovations.<sup>18</sup> Ayacucho Quechua also retains a great deal of similarity with conservative representatives of the Quechua I branch (especially, the varieties spoken in the department of Pasco, and in the northern districts of the departments of Junín and Lima), notwithstanding the fact that the defining phonological and morphological features of each of the two main Quechuan branches are clearly reflected in the conservative varieties belonging to these branches. It is conceivable that the Ayacucho area became the southernmost stronghold of the Quechuan language group after the split of the Quechuan proto-language into Quechua I and II. The driving force behind the expansion of Quechua II into the southern Peruvian highlands may very well have been the state of *Huari*.<sup>19</sup>

Traditionally, the Ayacucho region, seat of the presumed state of *Huari* (500–900 A.D.), has been assigned to an area of interaction with a predominantly Aymaran signature that also included the coastal culture of Nazca (Torero Fernández de Córdova, 1972; cf. also Cerrón-Palomino, 2000:291–297). Ethnohistorical sources from the colonial epoch point to generalized multilingualism in the Ayacucho region in the 16th century (Torero Fernández de Córdova, 1972:84; Mannheim, 1991:45–46). As we have argued, however, from a strictly linguistic point of view an early variety of Ayacucho Quechua holds the best papers for being the matrix language from which all the southern Quechuan dialects could have developed. Therefore, one may assume that the *Huari* domain was inhabited by a mixture of Quechuan and Aymaran-speaking groups, whereas its political rulers favored the use and expansion of a particular variety of Quechuan that coincided with Proto-Quechua II.

As an alternative to the previous scenario, a widespread view favors the coastal port of Chíncha as the driving force behind the Quechuization of southern Peru, a hypothesis which receives support from colonial documentary evidence. In 1590, the chronicler Murúa reports that the Inca emperor Huayna Capac substituted a Quechuan variety, called the language of Chínchay Suyu, for Aymara as the official language of the Inca state because his mother was a native of Chíncha, thus confirming a dominant position of Quechuan that was already in place (Murúa, 1962–1964 [1611], cited in Cerrón-Palomino, 1987:328). Torero Fernández de Córdova (1998:612, 2002:132) discusses some of the rare data on the language of Chíncha that can be gleaned from Cristóbal Castro and Diego de Ortega y Mortejón's *Relación de Chíncha* of 1558 (edited by Crespo, 1974). The type of Quechuan represented in that document belongs to an innovative variety that cannot possibly be the language underlying the modern southern Peruvian dialects.<sup>20</sup> It is very well possible that the Quechua of Chíncha became the official language of the Inca empire, but it is also clear that another, more conservative variety of Quechuan, closely akin to present-day Ayacucho Quechua, had already penetrated the southern highlands to a large extent and at an earlier stage. It is this variety that would eventually prevail without adopting the innovative features characteristic of the Chíncha variety, with which it may have co-existed, particularly in the Inca administrative centers. Furthermore, as a coastal nation, the people of Chíncha were not in a good position to impose their language on the population of a rugged Andean hinterland (cf. Beresford-Jones and Heggarty, 2011). From a demographic and numerical point of view, their influence would have been limited. Finally, we have to observe that the date of the decree attributed to the emperor Huayna Capac (c. 1500 A.D.) does not leave enough time for such a complex process as the Quechuization of the southern Peruvian highlands to occur. No more

<sup>17</sup> Among the few innovations of Ayacucho Quechua in relation to the rest of Quechua IIC are the replacement of the first person plural exclusive subject ending *-yku* with *-niku* and the fricativization of the uvular stop *-q*.

<sup>18</sup> See Adelaar (1995) for a discussion of the morphological innovations that separate Southeastern Bolivian Quechua (Cochabamba) and Argentinian Quechua (Santiago del Estero) from the more conservative Ayacucho variety. As a matter of fact, the former two varieties also have morphological features connecting them to the northern Peruvian varieties of Cajamarca and Ferreñafe. This may be related to migratory movements of the colonial epoch.

<sup>19</sup> For the notion of *driving force* and its application to *Huari* see Beresford-Jones and Heggarty (2011).

<sup>20</sup> Among the characteristics of Chíncha Quechua are postnasal consonant voicing, the loss of final *q* and lateralization of *r*. None of these features is conspicuous in modern Southern Peruvian Quechua.

than thirty years later Quechua II, along with varieties of Aymaran, was already widely used in the southern Peruvian Andes. So this process must have started long before 1500.

The Aymaran language family consists of two living languages, Aymara and Jaqaru–Kawki, which are substantially different from each other.<sup>21</sup> There is some dialect diversity within the Aymara branch but not of the same richness and variety as that found in the branches of the Quechuan family. As we have seen before, several languages of presumable Aymaran affiliation are attested in historical documents from the early colonial period (second half of the 16th century). With the present state of our knowledge, it is not possible to say how genetically close these languages were to either one of the surviving Aymaran languages. [Torero Fernández de Córdova \(1998:609–611\)](#) pictures a detailed overview of the different subgroups that may have made up the Aymaran linguistic family and their geographical distribution. However attractive these proposals may be, they are based on limited evidence (see the discussion in [Cerrón-Palomino, 2000:295–297](#)).

## 8. Chronological considerations

Estimates concerning the time of separation of the main branches within the Quechuan family roughly vary between 200 B.C. and 900 A.D. An intermediate date (e.g. 400–450 A.D.) is most likely ([Torero Fernández de Córdova, 1984:390](#); cf. [Cerrón-Palomino, 1987:331–332](#)). For the separation of the Aymaran branches, [Cerrón-Palomino \(2000:291\)](#) posits a time frame extending from 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. Logically, the initial convergence that produced the Quechuan and Aymaran proto-languages must have preceded the moment of separation of the family-internal branches that grew out from these same proto-languages. Although little can be said about the exact time and duration of the initial convergence, we are entitled to assume that it may have had its roots in the period of upheaval and innovative change that marked the final centuries of the Early Horizon (800 B.C. to 200 A.D.). The separation between the two main Quechuan branches and that of the two main Aymaran branches could then have occurred in a gradual manner between 300 and 500 A.D.

In the present scenario, it stands to reason to assume that early Quechua II was associated with the Huari state (500–900 A.D.), of which it may have been the principal language or at least one of the main languages.<sup>22</sup> Huari may have been responsible for the spread of Quechua II towards Yauyos (Laraos and Lincha), towards Cajamarca (following the Andean cordilleran valleys), towards the Central Peruvian coast, where it developed into Quechua IIB before this group set out for its own expansion,<sup>23</sup> and towards the southern Peruvian Andes where it underlies the modern Quechua IIC dialects. Linguistic evidence suggests that these expansions did not occur all at the same time. The sequence of occurrence was probably, first, the separation of Yauyos and Cajamarca in separate movements around 800 A.D., then the separation of Quechua IIB around 900 or 1000 A.D. and, finally, the expansion of Quechua IIC, which started before the rise of Inca military power in the 15th century and continued well into colonial times. These proposed dates are of course tentative and, except for the last one, they have a relative, rather than an absolute character.

The expansion of Aymaran in the direction of the southern Peruvian Andes certainly pre-dated the expansion of Quechua IIC into that same area. However, the spread of the Aymara language itself may very well have been an exponent of the same expansionist movement that also carried Quechua II to Southern Peru and beyond. It is not unlikely that Quechuan and Aymaran speaking war bands were operating in a consensus when they set out to occupy the southern Andes. Due to age-old kinship bonds and patterns of labor division that hark back to the period of the initial convergence, it became possible to set up joint military operations on a considerable scale. It explains the hesitation of the Inca rulers in their choice of the right language of administration (first Aymara, then Quechua) and the fact that the Incas apparently never suppressed Aymara as they did other languages. Since the Quechuan and Aymaran speaking groups were in permanent, predominantly friendly contact, there was plenty of room for local convergence to occur on the linguistic level.

## 9. Final remarks

The present exposition underscores the importance of the initial period of language contact that pre-dates the formation of the Quechuan and Aymaran proto-languages. Quechuan–Aymaran convergence is reanalyzed as an articulated process consisting of (a) an initial phase of intense and possibly violent contact, in which the principal characteristics of the two language families were shaped and (b) a gradual evolution of the two language families punctuated by moments of local convergence. The outcome of the initial convergence did not only determine the character of the daughter languages, but its long-term effects are also still visible in the sociolinguistic identity of modern Quechuan and Aymaran-speaking communities. Today, speakers of Quechuan and Aymaran may coexist in communities in which the distribution of the languages follows ecological patterns or patterns of labor division. Such situations of functional multilingualism are found in the Callahuaya area, north of Lake Titicaca ([Bastien, 1985:39](#)), and in the province of Charcas, in the northern part of the

<sup>21</sup> In spite of the geographical proximity and mutual intelligibility, the differences between Jaqaru and Kawki may be historically more significant than the dialect diversity that exists within the Aymara language ([Hardman, 1978](#)).

<sup>22</sup> In a position paper for the VII PUCP Archaeology Symposium organized in Lima in August 2009, [Beresford-Jones and Heggarty \(2011\)](#) advanced the hypothesis that the initial expansion of Quechua was driven by the power of Huari. Ours is a variant of this hypothesis in which Huari acted as the driving force behind Quechua II alone.

<sup>23</sup> After its separation from Quechua IIC, the Quechua IIB group lost the phonological contrast between velar *k* and uvular *q*. This may have occurred because it moved into a coastal area where it came into contact with a local language that ignored such a distinction (cf. [Cerrón-Palomino, 1990:359–362](#)).

department of Potosí, Bolivia (Howard, 2007:36–38). They may reproduce patterns of linguistic coexistence that were once found in the Peruvian heartland of Quechuan–Aymaran contact as well.

The sociolinguistic dimension is also of importance for a better understanding of the way in which Quechuan and Aymaran expanded, in particular, during the dark ages that separate the Middle Horizon (500–1000 A.D.) from the Late Horizon (1400–1532 A.D.). All too often, the expansion of the Quechuan and Aymaran languages is seen as the result of separate migrations of competing ethnic groups, or as migrations separated by time. It appears that this view may have to be revised. As far as the southern highlands of Peru are concerned, Quechuan and Aymaran-speaking ethnic groups may have been partners in conquest. It would explain the benevolence of the Inca rulers vis-à-vis the Aymara-speaking communities established on the Altiplano near Lake Titicaca. Furthermore, the ecological conditions on the Altiplano may have provided an indicated environment for the establishment of Aymara-speaking settlers following patterns that were already in existence before.

The present exposition is also relevant for the ongoing discussion about the location of the Quechuan and Aymaran homelands. In our perspective, the notion of separate homelands for Quechuan and Aymaran is problematic at the stage of the proto-languages. It seems that Pre-Proto-Aymara was spoken throughout the area of convergence. This area may have included Chavín de Huantar, considering that not even the northern Quechua I dialects have escaped the substrate influence of Pre-Proto-Aymara.<sup>24</sup> The Quechuan lineage probably had a homeland outside the area of convergence, but this was before the Quechuan languages acquired their present linguistic identity. An important conclusion is that there is no variety of Quechuan that has not assimilated Aymaran language traits at some point of its history. There is no need to assume specific migratory movements of Aymaran groups into Quechuan-speaking territory in order to explain such traits.

Our conclusions favor the Andean highlands of Central Peru as the location where the initial convergence occurred. There seems to be no place for a prominent role of the coastal region in the expansion of Quechuan, with the important exceptions of the Quechuization of Ecuador and Chachapoyas-Lamas in northern Peru. Quechua IIB may first have reached Ecuador from the Central Peruvian coast by a maritime route, as described by Torero Fernández de Córdova (1984). The Quechuization of Chachapoyas may have occurred in Inca and post-conquest times under conditions not yet known. It was probably initiated by Inca migratory policy, and coastal Quechuan speakers may have played a role in it. All other Quechuan expansions can be explained as the result of migratory movements confined to the highlands.

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<sup>24</sup> Quechua I dialects include a number of specific points of convergence with Aymaran that are not found in Quechua II, for instance, the fusion of aspect markers with markers of plurality, the loss of a glide (y) between like vowels, and a number of lexical items (*marka* ‘town’, *piqa* ‘head’, ‘brain’, *aywa-* ‘to go’, etc.).



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