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 Questionnaire 2
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1. Description

1.1 Society: Chaco, Language: Mocoví and Language family: Guaicuruan

1.2 ISO code: 639 (3)

1.3 Location: The Mocoví inhabit the southern portion of the Gran Chaco. They also reside in several localities within North Central Santo Fe provinces. (1)

1.4 Brief history: Early ancestors of the Mocoví tribe was situated along the middle of the Bermejo River but toward the end of the 17th century the migrated to the southeast plains between the lower Bermejo and Salado rivers. (2)

1.5 Influence of missionaries and governments: With the influence of Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries, thousands of Mocoví were established in Jesuit colonies and were provided necessities to change their equestrian, hunter gatherer culture into agriculturalists. The acculturation continues to today. The modern Mocoví possess contact with Western civilization whom of only half have retained their native idiom (1). Spaniards also influenced the Mocoví. They gained trapping techniques, ideas for horse saddles and bridles and they made wooden or horn imitations of the Spaniards' iron bits. (2)

1.6 Ecology: The Mocoví follow closely to the equestrian tribes of the Chaco such as the Abipon, Mhayd, and Payagud. Other Chaco tribes like the Mataco and Toha also share relations with their environment and culture. "In the first half of the 18th century, the Abipon, together with the Mocoví and the Toba, ranged over a vast area bounded on the north by the middle and lower course of the Bermejo River, on the east by the Parana River, on the south by the Spanish settlements of Santa Fe" (2).

1.7 Population size: 12,100 (3)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staples: The Mocoví gather many foods such as pod-bearing algarroba, mistol, and palmito. They boil palmito, hammer it into a powder and eat it as mush. They also like fruit kernels and usually eat them raw or roasted. The Mocoví also find the locusts an important food resource. They drive swarms of locust into large fires then scorch and collect them. They roast or smash them into a mortar, then boil it in water or fry it in fish oil. They make a mush with the locust eggs. When driven by hunger they will boil roots of the umba tree. (2)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: The Mocoví's main staple during 2 or 3 months of the year are fish from the Bermejo River. Hunting is another important economic recreation for the Mocoví. With the increase use of horses, hunting has become a valuable way to sustain their livelihood, except during the months of fishing. The the most desirable game is rheas, deer, and peccaries. (2)

2.3 Weapons/Tools: The Mocoví use nets to catch fish moving down stream. They also use harpoons with wooden or bone tips to spear the fish in the water. Caimans are also speared along the shoreline. None of the Chaco tribes use poison as a way to stupefy the fish. Men on horseback surround animals and hit them with clubs. They also use fire to burn down portions of the grasslands to scatter small game and then bludgeoning them with clubs. The lance shaft is also a main weapon used by equestrian Indians. The ancient Mocoví used dogs for hunting by smearing their nose with the preys blood in order for them to track further distances. Pellet haws are similar to modern sling shots and are used by young boys to practice shooting birds and small animals. The Mocoví have recently started using piranha teeth as knives and carving tools. They also scrape and polish wood with the sharp edge of broken shells. (2)

2.4 Food storage: The Mocoví preserve their food by baking or smoking it in an earth oven. (2)

2.5 Sexual division of production: Women gathered and prepared fruits and tubers. Women removed the thorns and dangerous fur from tunas and uproot caraguata leaves with forked sticks. Women also gather honey as well as the honey producing bees and wasps. During the move from camp, women pack and carry goods from one site to the other. Horses are used to carry items when available. Men hunt animals and catch fish. After moving to a new location men will ride on horseback and scan over the area for potential game. (2)

2.6 Ceramics: Chaco pottery lacks variety. The three main uses are cooking pots, water jugs with a spout and handle, and bowls. (2)

2.7 Specified sharing patterns: In many Chaco tribes the food is given to the man who gives the mortal blow but with the Mocoví the first portions are given to the man who takes the first hit at the animal. (2)

2.8 Food taboos: Rhea eggs are consumed but chicken eggs are not eaten. Milk is never consumed because it is believed that adverse traits from the animal are passed through it. Deer marrow is enjoyed by elderly Mocoví men but is forbidden to young warriors because of negative myths. (2)

2.9 Canoes/watercraft: The Mocoví make bullboats out of deer or cow hide to float elderly, infants, and goods along the river. Men guide their horses while dragging the bullboats along shallow water to transport belongs. (2)

3. Life History, mating, marriage

3.1 Marriage Social Structure: Members of the first class or higher class within the tribe intermarried to maintain blood purity. The lower class or commoners could marry wives from other bands. Men often took wives around 30 years old. If a man marries within his band then the wife will live with the husband's family. If the man marries outside his band however, the man has to move and live with the wife's family. (2)

3.2 Marriage Arrangements: Parents usually select a bride for their son's when they are both quite young. "A great deal of familiarity existed between betrothed children (2)."

3.3 Bride purchase: The prospective groom will present gifts to his future parents-in-laws such as horses, skins, honey, and game. A man that is interested in marrying obtains the bride's parents consent and agrees upon a bride price (2)

3.4 Maturity: "A matured Mocoví girl could be recognized by a crown like tonsure around her head, vertical furrows 2 inches wide cut in her thick hair, and her completed tattooing (2)."

3.5 Marriage ceremony: The ceremony begins with a symbolic kidnapping of the wife. The wife is taken from her home followed by a fake battle between the families and is then brought to the future husband's hut. Whether the bride is playing along with the kidnapping or is truly resisting, she is given away and becomes the husband's property. She is required to hide her head with netting and sulk in a corner. Women from the village come and console her and her relative-in-laws offer her food. After a while her husband will yell at her to stop crying and orders her to bring him something. His order is an invitation for her to willingly accept the situation and with time start making conversation with her new husband. (2)

3.6 Birth and Celebration: The only celebrated birth is of a chief's son. To celebrate, old women paraded around dressed as Mocoví warriors while wearing horse hair wigs symbolizing scalps and holding ceremonial bows and arrows and spears. They visit the baby and compete for the honor of being the first to give the child their breast. They also present the child with a decorative mat. The chief's baby and along with another from the village are carried under a canopy to the chief's hut where the babies will spend the night together making them brothers-in-arms. On the eighth day after the baby is born his hair is cut and his ears and lips are perforated. (2)

3.7 Infanticide: "The rapid decline of so many Chaco tribes has often been explained by the deeply rooted practice of infanticide which is so common among the Chaco tribes" (2). Twins are believed to be a bad omen and are usually killed. Infanticide is rationalized by regarding the woman to be unable to nurse two babies. The Mocoví kill their newborn if the slightest suspicion of illegitimacy has occurred. If the family has too many kids, out on a journey, or if food is scarce the mother will try to abort the child or kill it once it's born without hesitation. Many women will try and use drugs or have another woman press or punch her abdomen to provoke an abortion. Women will also rid of any baby with abnormalities. (2)

Warfare/homicide

4.1 Historical accounts of external warfare: During the 16th and 17th century the "Mocoví, Toha, and Mhayd horsemen looted the Spanish farms and ranches, and even became a direct threat to Santo Fe, Corrientes, Asuncion, Santiago del Estero, Tucuman and Cordoba (2)." "Mocoví descended from the Bermejo River into the Pampa, and in the north the Mhayad wrestled the fertile Province of Itati east of the Paraguay River from the Guarani and the Spaniards (2)."

4.2 Military: The Mocoví noblemen are members of the military societies. The introduction of the horse within the Mocoví helped put them on equal footing with their enemies and helped their army become more mobile. (2)

4.3 Reasons for war: The main motivations for war are the death of a tribe member by violence or witchcraft, trespassing on hunting and fishing territory, looting of herds or sheep, and the desire to capture women and children. (2)

4.4 Treatment of prisoners: The Mocoví are one of the few Chaco Indians that treat their captured women and children as slaves rather than turning them into members of the group. (2).

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mobility pattern: The Mocoví are highly mobile and often follow the seasonal game. During the fishing season they will make camp along the river for easy access. (2)

5.2 Housing: The Mocoví build primitive, non-permanent homes with wind screens built from animal skins. Individuals sleep in hammocks and cradles are made from skin attached to two posts. (2)

5.3 Social interaction: The main entertainment among the Mocoví is having boxing tournaments. Young members will fight each other and are often trade as young children for this particular event. During meetings with other tribes the Mocoví organize horse races in which the lay heavy wagers. (2).

5.4 Trade: Modern Mocoví trade skins and handmade goods with western civilizations. (1) Before European contact, the Mocoví only had cotton for weaving until they received wool from the Andean Indians. (2)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion

6.1 Death of husband/Widows: Women watch over their dying men and hasten his death if they believe he is doomed or suffering. After his death the women will burst out in hysterics by striking and yelling at him. For 3 or 4 night all the women wail within the funeral hut. Days after the widow stays in her hut, her head shaven and covered in netting and can only be removed when they remarry. (2)

6.2 Burials and Ceremonies: A Mocoví corpse is wrapped in animal skins and buried in a shallow grave. The grave is then covered with branches and logs. The family places water and food near the grave. If a child has died, one hand remains uncovered so the child can accept food and water from the family. If a man has died at war is bones are brought back to the family and is later buried upon return. Ceremonies are extravagant and last 9 days for a fallen warrior. (2)

6.3 Naming after Death: The near relatives of the deceased as well as the extended family of a deceased warrior must take a new name in hopes of deceiving the ghost of the deceased, believing it will come back and drag fellow tribesmen into the afterworld. (2)

6.4 Myths and Beliefs: Star clusters are believed to be living beings and are called "Our Grandfather." When a star disappears from the sky it is attributed to an illness and is rejoiced at its return. The Mocoví show signs of content when the new moon rises in the sky and they ask upon the moon for good physical strength. Men tie deer hooves around their ankles and wrists to help them run faster. They give credit to Caiman's teeth in the belief that they posses healing powers and will heal a serpent's bite if held against the wound. They trace an infant's illness back to the father, who must have eaten a taboo food. In the case of disease, a shaman removes the pathogen by blowing and spitting on the ill and chants a wordless song to expel the evil. The blowing and spitting is often followed by vicious suction which in most cases draws blood. It is believed that eclipses are celestial jaguars attacking the moon and sun. According to Chaco mythology, the Mocoví believe that a cataclysm resulted in entire darkness over the earth for a year and during this catastrophe people were transformed into birds and animals. (2)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: Black and red paint is used over the entire body in preparation of war, games, and rituals. (2)

7.2 Body Piercing: Young woman force thin, spiraled strips of palm leaf into their ear lobes. Wooden lip plugs encased in silver plates are adorned by men. Feathers often dyed red and pink are worn in a series of holes in their lips, cheeks, nose, and ears. (2)

7.3 Haircut: A custom common in both sexes within many groups of the Chaco is to shave their hair running back from the forehead, to leave a small portion of bare skin giving the illusion of having big foreheads.

7.4 Tattooing: Within the Mocoví tribe the women are more abundantly tattooed. "A child, especially a girl, was first tattooed when 6 or 7 (2)." Tattoos are first traced along the outline with charcoal and then small bundles of cactus needles puncture the skin dipped in soot and saliva. (2)

9. Other interesting cultural features

- While traveling on horseback, upper class Mocoví woman will protect their complexion against the sun by covering their face with a fan full of rhea feathers that is balanced on their shoulders. (2)
- They use peccary bristles, anteater hair, or roots and twigs to groom their hair. (2)
- Many tribes throughout the Chaco, both sexes dislike facial hair. (2)

Numbered references

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