Notes on *Maihueniopsis* (Cactaceae-Opuntioideae) in southern Argentina

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Thanks to the troubled taxonomic and nomenclatural history of the genus, summarized at the commencement of this talk, the treatment of *Maihueniopsis* in the *New Cactus Lexicon* was very tentative. As part of the project on Andean Opuntioideae initiated at the IOS Inter-Congress at Bonn in 2009, various taxa of *Maihueniopsis* were included in the DNA survey by Dr Christiane Ritz. Her results indicate that the genus is monophyletic (though at least one species is misplaced!), but that further sampling would be desirable, supplemented if possible by cytological data.

During the course of the work in Germany, Dr Laura Las Peñas, a cytogeneticist at the University of Córdoba, Argentina, who is working on cacti in collaboration with Dr Roberto Kiesling, joined IOS. The possibility that she might collaborate with us was suggested and subsequently agreed. Partly to provide material for the projected cytogenetic studies, and partly to gain personal field-knowledge of the so-called *M. glomerata* group and their distribution, I travelled to southern Argentina earlier this year. During my itinerary in the provinces of Chubut, Neuquén and Mendoza, samples from some fifteen populations of *Maihueniopsis* were collected. These gave the impression that several distinct and perhaps allopatric taxa might be represented, based on differences in habit and spination. In one locality, two taxa distinct were found growing sympatrically.

The collected material was then delivered to Dr Peñas at Córdoba. Formal arrangements with her department provide that she will not only use it for cytogenetic studies, such as determining ploidy levels, but also, since legal exportation of live material from Argentina to Europe is now virtually impossible, arrange for the DNA to be extracted from a duplicate set of the samples and sent to Dr Ritz in Germany for sequencing.