A Chetco Athabaskan Text and Translation

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1. According to Barreman, the Chetco Athabaskan-speaking people aboriginally occupied the valley of the Chetco River on the coast of southern Oregon as well as the drainage of the Winchuck River to the south and a stretch of coast north of the Chetco River, perhaps as far as Cape Ferrelo. Following the Rogue River wars of the 1850's, the Chetco were removed to the reservations at Grand Ronde and Siletz.

The Chetco Athabaskan language is part of the Oregon division of the Pacific Coast branch of the Athabaskan language family. Within the Oregon division, it has been lumped with the Tolowa dialect, the two often referred to as Chetco-Smith River or Chetco-Tolowa in the literature. In 1960, Hoijer said that Chetco was reportedly spoken by three or more elderly people. It is not known if the language is now extinct.

2. The only previously published linguistic study of Chetco is a short myth text and translation by Elizabeth D. Jacobs in 1968. Indeed, the whole of Chetco linguistic research consists of Jacobs' fieldnotes and an unpublished

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vocabulary collected by J.O. Dorsey in 1884. 7

This present text is one of approximately seventeen texts dictated by Billy Metcalf to Elizabeth Jacobs during a four week session at Siletz, Oregon, in the summer of 1935. Although Jacobs had recorded lexical and paradigmatic forms a year earlier from speakers of a closely related dialect, Euchre Creek Tututni, these Chetco dictations represent her first attempts at text recording. Unfortunately, the Jacobs did not make any phonodisc recordings of Mr. Metcalf's speech nor was Mrs. Jacobs able to return to Siletz to carefully work through the texts with him.

3. We encountered a number of transcription problems in working with these texts. It was sometimes difficult to determine from the handwriting whether a particular slash indicated vowel length, stress, or the dot on an i or a j. Word boundaries were also sometimes difficult to assign and there undoubtedly will be some alteration of word boundaries in the final version of this text. Inconsistencies in the transcription have been regularized where we felt sure a particular form was mistranscribed. Other irregularities we were less certain of, especially those of vowel length and stress, have been preserved as originally transcribed. Finally, we have reinterpreted the value of several symbols, notably q, q', x, x', y, and y' which are now written as k, k', x, x', y and y'. For reasons of convenience, the symbol
e has been substituted for ɛ; the few occurrences of e in
the text are written as e.

In the interlinear translation we have tried to provide
a more literal glossing of the forms than is provided by the
informant's phrasal translation. Where we were not confident
of our analysis we have preserved the informant's English
phrasing.

While much work remains to be done in the analysis of
this and the remaining texts, we hope that even in its
preliminary state it will be of some value to comparative
Athabaskanists as well as students of northwest states oral
literature.

4. si·čálni [or] ?ánc·nis

laʔi·dən čəsini ne taʔiʔákʷət hát
once a young girl on a little point

dasdá·la. mé·wi·sésda. hatdu hat wáʔdeki·niʔála.
sat every day she sat then she thought
about what to do

(2) datədən magús ?ándita tatá hi·daxʷi.
whenever a shag from the south flying to him

ʔáilnénla, "ʔáʔayiʔa méhndi sxáswu·yálle."

she said "let those living in the point come to get me"

hatdu datədən čás ?ándidát təʔa
so whenever a seagull from the south came flying
hatdá ᾽áίʔnənla, ᾽ʔáʔtayiʔa méhndi
also she told him "let those living in the point
sxáswu·yálle." mé·wetdén čās ᾽ándi·dát
come to get me" every time a bird from the south
táta hatdá ᾽áίʔnənla, ᾽ʔáʔtayiʔa
came flying always she said "let those living méhndi sxáswu·yálle." (3) hatdu já
in the point come to get me" then again
detdén ᾽ándi·dá detétla dá
whenever from the south anything flying also
?,?,?,?,?,?,. sxáswu·yálle." hatdu já detdén xʷayán
come to get me" so always when from whatever place
čās tatáʔét hatda ᾽áίʔnənla, ᾽ʔáʔtayiʔa
a bird came flying again she said to it "let those living méhndi sxáswu·yálle." hatdu ᾽ʔáŋču ᾽laʔi·dá
in the point come to get me" so then indeed one time
sisxan má·xʷəyé-te·yiʔi ᾽ʔané·tä
the ocean she looked along towards the south and
dəné ᾽itáyaxéʔi yesʔi·la. (4) hatdu wá·ti
people many were paddling she saw then just
ni·t̂i·la
she kept looking
hatdu
right
wa·t̂i
where she sat
jí·dasdá

ni·mehnti
they arrived
kvé·yi·xi.
below her
hatdu
and then
já?
indeed

xá'n̄enču
one
hatdu

hastésla.
"nónxanišya.
came running up
xa'na'yi·yał."
"I came for you
hurry up"

hatdu

(5) hiwändu
that's why
ihi.
at once
x'i·dešu
all her things
núni·Áala
she piled them
there

jí
her basket, too
ye'áču.
hati
sáiyi·tála.
hatdu
she put everything together
there

nu·niyál'wa
she got ready
gáltewen.
to go
hi·wändu
that's why
oxénés
canoe

ye'ýi·'ala.
(6) hatdu
she got into
xónès
then
ye'ýi·'ala.
canoe
mölte
got into
with that

kvé·nú
her shoulders
cení·la·la
with deerskin
γál·je
they put over her
hávelgét.

hik'we
they covered her up
núsni·ixátla.
almost
jí·ći
she was naked
ste'édən.

(7) du
hardly

šút
dé·neyesús
any clothing
hi·wën
that's why
kvé
they covered her
núsni·ixát.
so now
hi·wändu

čádušú'
hí·wändu
it was good then
xónesmeh
in the boat
ne·sátla
she remained sitting
jí·ṣi mesxélxí·la.
indeed they took

hatdu hathát sáɣetxí·la yistáté·dən.
then now they arrived there where she was to live

hi·wəndú dání·yála mónmeñ. hatdu
so then she went directly into the house then

lélyaquən hát ni·sótla. (8) hatdu
in the middle place she sat down then

ti·hi·ti ké·yučénla. "šyášʔet,
right away they called her "my daughter-in-law"

áčénla. hatdu disne ni·caye10 hi·ču
they called her also the old man he also

ʔaidənánla, "šyášʔet." (9) hatdu čátxu
said to her "my daughter-in-law" then first thing

dá·ni·yá·ti čayi·ʔa ćənʔé hi·wa·ćení·tala.
when she got they gave her stick to cook with
in there

čayi·ʔa ćənʔé kəmá hatdu du yúcít
they gave her stick fry stick but she didn't know

dεťeyéł gšteʔé. hatdu jí magús hi.
where to put poke in the stick then shag

lélyaquən dəné·sti· hatdu x’e dí·tyélxa.
was lying down in center then feet he put toward the
of house

fire
(10) hatdu hi· sxe mišču?é g'ešeye
then between big toe and next toe

té'í·lg'ététe. hidámez'ólya yesi·la čáyi?a
she stuck it in the ground there

cán'e dé'ícyéi g'áste?é. hi·wéndu
stick where to put poke in the stick that's why

x'á čáyi·i getla. (11) yu dótéíyei
something she roasted where to put

g'áste?é magús hi· dái·ínáníla.
poke in the stick shag had already told her

dótéíyei g'áste?é hat x'e· miščè?e
where to put poke in the stick so between his toes

hat x'ón mádén hat nu·íni·lá·la x'é. hat
fire near where he had put his feet

?ái·ínáníla, "sxe miščùé g'ešéye x'áye·te
he had told, "at my feet between my big toe and the next toe

?i·i·geté." (12) hi·wéndu čáyi·i getla.
you put it" so then she put a big one on it

hatdu děltá·yatiš. hatdu hi·wéndu hi·ču
then she went for wood then because already

dá ?ái·ínáníla yu· magús, "šgáne x'óye síšáni.
also he said that shag "my arm in a certain
direction will be lying
(13) hati mî使人 yâniyašte céxw. hatdu
then in that same direction you will wood then
go to get

hat já tâlxet šešûniš gâni já hidet hûnta
again for water my right arm again I'll have

sišitá'e x"ayé.. yâniyâšte tâlxetx'â." it pointing the way in that direction you will go to
bring water"

(14) âñeñu hat x"idé•i šû? yisísí•la
indeed everything good did

hi•wându šû? nudéltila.
that's why they kept her

hi•wându s'á tiyi•dála.
that's why a long time she remained there

nâtnesét nuiništi•la gâyu nátne•ti disne sxexe.
she bore two babies both were boy children

(15) hatdu hi•çu čôtâ•e čânteyi•dála. ła•i•dèn
now then a different manner of getting
children he had

"yuhûni náitde•," deënènla. hi•wându
"let's go for a walk" he said to her that's why

yéilatésya•la. (16) hati•dèt hat cé•denélysèlce•la
she went with him at a certain they sat down
place
hatdu hát yá)i. dëiteísí:la. hatdu lá?
then she looked for his lice then one

máyi:cutla hatdu hi·i húxi·yal?i:la nátesdélila
she caught then she stopped looking they started to return

mán:can. hatdu hi· já la?i:den ?áide·nónla,
home then again one time he said to her

"jádat húnetdé·i." (17) hi·wándu já
"let's go for a walk" that's why again

yá)má·xányi·té·la hatdu hat nátesdélila mán:can.
she looked for lice so then they returned home for him

hi·ti wáša nátđen yá)máyísísí:la. hatdu
that's why only twice she looked for lice then for him

nátné manúiniítí:la. (18) hat nátne·ti dí:ne
two children she got so then she had two sons

manúini·ittí:la. hatdu hát ?áide·nónla,
for him so then he said to her

"dú?nci\'náyi·??" hatdu, "i..." yežnénla.
"aren't you lonesome?" then "yes" she said

(19) hatdu, "mán:can ji· nátja· šú?či,"
then "back home you may go all right"

yènénla. hatdu hi·wándu mán:can mëstélxi:la
he told her now that's why home he took her
by boat

(20) hatdu sé·yi·yala. hatdu hát mesxéxe
then she got out but their boys

du· se·yi·deši. tamá?dentí náya·túla.
never went on shore on the edge of they swam

(21) hatdu lá?séšti yí·dá·la. hatdu "sxéxedú?"
so all day long she, sat but "no children?"

"tamá?dentí náya·tú," jenla. (21) "ti·dás-
"on the edge of they swim" she answered "just as
waves

long as they will live they'll be there in the
water

xu?wú?i·te ti·dás?ati." hatdú hat
you'll see them as long as they live" then
like that

xí·dačón nas?ála, "ti·dás?áti ya hu·níšte
she talked to saying "as long a time as you may live
them

hi·le·centi xu·yu?i·te ši·sæxéxe. (22) dinečete
as long as that you will see my children Indian
money beads

náyasdélyu xuk?asténesla. wá?ayánte·te.
they will be wearing around their necks that's the way they
will be
dana'te anyone who asks them for food stā? something to eat xomēču dutxe·te.

'nex'ači·čut,' hdu·nonte. hatdu hi·mātī naxwa·bčute. 'feed us' tell them then with that that will feed you

de·stau·ité·de." (23) hdu hi·wēn wa·ti some kind of food you that's how it all happened will receive"

déʔanyi·te·la. hatdu hi·wēndū dēn si·čálni just that way that's why whenever the more

mëšxe si·čálni xí·yaʔi·dan ji·či high-class people when you see them just exactly

mex'yolye yánli·la ji·danē cēyu mësxe wēni. you can recognize them as Indian women's children

hatdu hi·wēndu detdan xí·xíyaʔi·ʔet hāli so whenever you see them there just

xaiyéčudatxet yatési·tayás, "nex'ači·čut," ask them to feed you tell them "we're hungry, feed us"

yayi·nonte. (24) hdu hāli· tēla hi·sē·litla tell them then whale floated ashore

hatdu hāli xinē·xayiʔála. ji·či xučáyeyu so then just they cut it all up those grandchildren

xidałchtwen. hatdu já· dēn sisxan máxu dadēlce· fed them so whenever ocean bank sat
sja yateslí-den hat wáhát dadéli hi-wéndu
when getting old like that sat there then

li?iddéné hat sičálni mêsxe xí-xí-ya'i-la.
people high-class people children swimming out
there they would see

(25) hatdu ti-das'áti. wa'li-xi-dayés leůlala
then as long as they lived they fed them that way

wes'ayáx'i-nís'énti.
for as long as they lived

hatdu ji-xá-den ya'čí-îte. (26) hatdu dá'li-
but at last they died then if

yudene?é hi-yeču. yádětxétla hat that x'í-čone
their people food begged after those people

yi-li-den déné hat yi-xí-yu'l'ite
were all gone any person who knew all about it

hatduhi náxesjála hi-wéndu tk'an d'an
who asked for food then behind one would

naxényátjella. hat má-sèsånég dánke du'ën
be left there they forgot it just as if nobody

xi'ka náxesjáwen ti-du deslí-den
asked them to feed them just they were all gone

dánke. (27) hi-wéndu ji-či wáñnesyá kí-dána.
like that that's how that's as long as story
5. She's Making a Basket
[or]
Lots of Wolves Out in the Ocean

Once a young girl sat on a little point [out in the ocean]. Every day she sat [there]. Then she thought about what to do. (2) Whenever a shag came flying from the south she said to him, "Let those living inside the point come to get me." And whenever a seagull came flying from the south she also told him, "Let those people living in the point come to get me." Every time a bird came flying from the south she always said, "Let the people living in the point come after me." (3) Then again, whenever anything came flying from the south she said to it, "Let those living in the point come after me." So always whenever a bird came flying from somewhere she said to it, "Let those living in the point come to get me." Then, indeed, one time she looked along the ocean to the south and saw many people paddling. (4) She kept looking and they arrived right below where she was sitting. And then, indeed, one man came running up. "I come for you. Hurry." (5) So she immediately piled all of her things with her basket. She put everything together. Then she got ready to go. She got into the boat. (6) When she got into the canoe with him they covered her shoulders and body with deerskin. They covered her up. She was almost naked. (7) She had hardly any clothing, that's why they
covered her. So now it was good. She remained sitting in the canoe and they travelled.

They arrived at the place where she was to live. She went directly into the house. She sat down in the middle place [back of the fire]. (8) Right away they named her. "My daughter-in-law," they called her. The old man also said to her, "My daughter-in-law." (9) Then the first thing after she got there, they gave her a stick for cooking. They gave her a roasting stick but she didn't know where to put it. Then, indeed, shag who was lying down in the center of the house put his feet toward the fire. (10) So then she stuck the stick in the ground between his big toe and his second toe. He had already shown her where to put the stick they gave her. Then she roasted something. (11) Shag had already told her where to place that stick. Where to put that stick [was] between his toes near the fire where he had put his feet. He had said, "At my feet between my big toe and the next toe is the place to put it." (12) So she put a large [salmon] on the stick.

Then she went to get wood. Shag had already told her, "My arm will be lying in a certain direction. (13) You will go in that same direction to get wood. Also I will have my right arm pointing the way to go for water. You will go in that direction to bring water." (14) Indeed, she did everything just right and so they kept her.
She remained there for a long time. She bore two children, both boys. (15) However, he had a different manner of getting children. Once he said to her, "Let's go for a walk." That's why she went with him. (16) They sat down at a certain place and she looked for his head lice. She caught one so she stopped looking, and they returned home. Then another time he said to her, "Let's go for a walk." (17) Again she looked for a louse and they returned home. That was just twice she caught lice for him. Two children she got for him. (18) So then she had two sons for him. Now he said to her, "Aren't you lonesome?" "Yes," she said. (19) "It will be good that you return home," he told her. So he took her home in the canoe.

(20) Then she got out [of the boat]. But their sons never went on shore. They swam on the edge of the waves. So all that day she remained. "No children?" [They asked.] "They are swimming on the edge of the waves," she answered. (21) "Just as long as they may live, they will be there in the water. You will see them like that as long as they live." Then she spoke further, saying, "For as long as you live, for that long a time you will see my children. (22) They will have Indian money beads around their necks. That is the way it will be. Anyone can ask them for food, ask for something to eat. Tell them, 'Feed us!' Then they will feed you with that. Some kind of food you will receive."

(23) That's how it all happened in just that manner.
That's why when you see the more high-class [or chiefly] people you can recognize them as the Indian woman's children. So whenever you see them swimming there, just ask them to feed you. Tell them, "We're hungry. Feed us." (24) Then like that a whale floated ashore and they cut it up. Those [very] grandchildren fed them [like that]. So whenever people who were getting old sat on the ocean bank, sometimes they would see those high-class children swimming out there. (25) And they fed them that way for as long as they lived.

But, at last they died. (26) Then, after those people were all gone, if any person who knew about it asked for food, one [whale] would be left behind there. It was just as if they forgot it; nobody asked them to feed them. (27) They were just all gone like that. That's the length of the story.

6.

Notes

1. I wish to acknowledge the generous support of the Melville and Elizabeth Jacobs Research Fund, Whatcom Museum Foundation, Bellingham, Washington, which has made this work possible.

2. Barreman, 7-9.

3. Pierce and Ryherd, 142.

4. Golla, Ms., 2.

5. Hoijer, 962.

7. Pierce and Ryherd, 140.

8. This dictation is unusual in that it is the only one in the collection for which the informant gave two titles. Mr. Metcalf translated the first title as, "She's Making a Basket" but where the word appears in the body of the text, it is translated as "'high-class' or 'chiefly' people."

9. This form was originally transcribed as mé·wi·sėsta.

10. It is not clear from the original transcription whether the affricate $ is glottalized or not.

11. The informant does not bother to say that she cracks the louse in her teeth and is thus impregnated. A native audience would have known this.

12. There may have been a reason for not naming 'whale.' He is only alluded to here.

7. References

Barreman, Joel V. 1944. Chetco archaeology, A report of the Lone Ranch Creek Shell Mound on the coast of southern Oregon. General Series in Anthropology 11.


