

A Chetco Athabaskan Text and Translation¹

Elizabeth D. Jacobs
Seattle

William R. Seaburg
University of Hawaii

1. According to Barreman,² 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 River³ or Chetco-Tolowa⁴ in the literature. In 1960, Hoijer⁵ 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by Elizabeth D. Jacobs in 1968.⁶ Indeed, the whole of Chetco linguistic research consists of Jacobs' fieldnotes and an unpublished

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 \acute{q} , \acute{q}^w , \acute{x} , \acute{x}^w , $\acute{\gamma}$, and $\acute{\gamma}^w$ which are now written as \acute{k} , \acute{k}^w , x , x^w , γ and γ^w . 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'e.nis⁸

la?i.den	čəsi.ne	tayi?ák'wət	hát
once	a young girl	on a little point	

dasdá.la.	mé.wi.sésda. ⁹	hatdu	hat	wá?dekéni.?ála.
sat	every day she sat	then		she thought about what to do

(2) dətdən	magús	?ánditá	tətá	hi.dax'wí.
whenever	a shag	from the south	flying	to him

?áilnónla,	"?á?tayí?a	méhndi	sxáswu.yáalle."
she said	"let those living	in the point	come to get me"

hatdu	dətdən	čáš	?ándidát	tətá
so	whenever	a seagull	from the south	came flying

hatdá ?áilnənla, "ʔáʔtəyiʔa méhndi
 also she told him "let those living in the point

sxáswu.yáalle." mé.wətdən čáš ʔándi.dát
 come to get me" every time a bird from the south

tə́ta hatdá ?áilnənla, "ʔáʔtəyiʔa
 came flying always she said "let those living

méhndi sxáswu.yáalle." (3) hatdu já
 in the point come to get me" then again

də́tdən ʔándidá detə́ta dá
 whenever from the south anything flying also

?áilnənla, "ʔáʔtəyiʔa méhndi
 she said to it "let those living in the point

sxáswu.yaalle." hatdu já də́tdən xʷayán
 come to get me" so always when from whatever place

čáš tə́təʔət hatda ?áilnənla, "ʔáʔtəyiʔa
 a bird came flying again she said to it "let those
 living

méhndi sxáswu.yáalle." hatdu lʔənču laʔi.dən
 in the point come to get me" so then indeed one time

sísxan má.xʷəyete.yi.ʔi ʔané.ta hat
 the ocean she looked along towards the south and

dənə lʔəyaxəl yesʔi.la. (4) hatdu wá.ti
 people many were paddling she saw then just

ǰí.č̣i mesxélxi.la.
indeed they took

hatdu hathát sáyətxi.la yi.státé.dən.
then now they arrived there where she was to live

hi.wəndú dáni.yála ménmehn. hatdu
so then she went directly into the house then

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

ti.hí.ti ké.yułcónla. "šyášʔət,"
right away they called her "my daughter-in-law"

łcónla. hatdu disne ní.čaye¹⁰ hi.ču
they called her also the old man he also

ʔáidəłnénla, "šyášʔət." (9) hatdu čótXu
said to her "my daughter-in-law" then first thing

dá.ni.yá.ti čayí.ʔa čənʔé hi.wa.čəní.tala.
when she got they gave her stick to cook with
in there

čayí.ʔa čənʔé kəmə hatdu du yúłcit
they gave her stick fry stick but she didn't know

déteyél gʷóteʔé. hatdu ǰi magús hi.
where to put poke in the stick then shag

lélya dənə.sti. hatdu xʷe dí.tyélxa.
was lying down in center then feet he put toward the
of house fire

(10) hatdu hi· sxe mišču?é g^wéšéye
 then between big toe and next toe

té?i·lg^wétete. hidámex^wélya yesłsi·la čáyi?a
 she stuck it in the he had already shown her they gave her
 ground there

čán?e déteyél g^wáte?é. hi·wəndu
 stick where to put poke in the stick that's why

x^wá čayí·ł getla. (11) yu dətéiyel
 something she roasted where to put

g^wáte?e magús hi· dáí·lnénla.
 poke in the stick shag had already told her

déteiyel g^wáte?é hat x^we· mišče?e
 where to put poke in the stick so between his toes

hat x^wén mādən hat nu·íni·lá·la x^wé. hat
 fire near where he had put his feet

?áidełnénla, "sxe miščué g^wéšéye x^wáye·te
 he had told, "at my feet between my big at that place
 toe and the next toe

?i·łgeté." (12) hi·wəndu łčayí·ł getla.
 you put it" so then she put a big one on it

hatdu čeltá·yatíš. hatdu hi·wəndu hi·ču
 then she went for wood then because already

dá ?aiłnénla yu· magús, "šgáne x^wəyé sišłáni.
 also he said that shag "my arm in a certain
 direction will be lying

(13) ha¹ti mí·lnésti yániyašte cé·x^{wə}. hatdu
 then in that same direction you will wood then
 go to get

hat ĵá télxət šešú[?]niš g^wáni ĵá hídət hún^{ta}
 again for water my right arm again I'll have

síšłtá[?]e x^{wə}yé. yáni·yášte télxət^{wé}.
 it pointing the way in that direction you will go to
 bring water"

(14) ł[?]énču hat x^widé·ti šú[?] yisłsí·la
 indeed everything good did

hi·wəndu šú[?] nudél^{ti}·la.
 that's why they kept her

hi·wəndu s[?]á tiyí·dála.
 that's why a long time she remained there

nátnešət nuinił^{ti}·la gáyu nátne·ti disne sxéxe.
 she bore two babies both were boy children

(15) hatdu hí·ču čətdí·[?]e čənteyi·dála. ł^aʔi·dən
 now then a different manner of getting
 children he had

"yuhúni náitdeł," dəlnénla. hi·wəndu
 "let's go for a walk" he said to her that's why

yéilatésya·la. (16) ha¹ti·dət hat cé·dənélyəlce·la
 she went with him at a certain they sat down
 place

hatdu hát yá'í. déitełsí·la. hatdu ła'?

then she looked for his lice then one

máyilčutla hatdu hi·ti húxi·yəl'í·la nátesdélła

she caught then she stopped looking they started to return

méncən. hatdu hi. já ła'í·dən 'áidełnénla,

home then again one time he said to her

"jádət húnetdél." (17) hi·wəndu já

"let's go for a walk" that's why again

yá'má·xányi·té·la hatdu hat nátesdélła méncən.

she looked for lice so then they returned home

for him

hi·ti wáša nátdən yá'máyisłsí·la. hatdu

that's why only twice she looked for lice then

for him

nátne manúinilłtí·la. (18) hat nátne·ti dísne

two children she got so then she had two sons

manúini·łtí·la. hatdu hát 'áidełnénla,

for him so then he said to her

"dú'nci'náyi·'?" hatdu, "i..," yelénla.

"aren't you lonesome?" then "yes" she said

(19) hatdu, "méncən ji. nátja. šú'či,"

then "back home you may go all right"

yilénla. hatdu hí·wəndu méncən mestélxi·la

he told her now that's why home he took her

xənésməɬ.

by boat

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

du. se·yi·deɬla. tamá'dənti náya·túla.
never went on shore on the edge of they swam
the waves

(21) hatdu ɬá'sésti yi·da·la. hatdu "sxéxedú?"
so all day long she sat but "no children?"

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

?áti wá'wu'i·te hat nayátu·xu.
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·dacén nas'ála, "ti·dás'áti ya hu·níšte
she talked to saying "as long a time as you may live
them

hi·le·cənti xu·yu'i·te ši·səsxéxe. (22) dinecəte
as long as that you will see my children Indian
money beads

náyasdəlyu xuk'əsténesla. wá'ayánte·te.
they will be wearing around their necks that's the way they
will be

sĵá yáteslí·dæn hat wáhát dadél'ci hi·wændu
 when getting old like that sat there then

ti·'idəné hat sičálni məsxexe xi·xí·ya'í·la.
 people high-class people children swimming out
 there they
 would see

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

wəs'áyáx^wi·níš'ənti.
 for as long as they lived

hatdu ĵi. xá·dæn ya·cí·tla. (26) hatdu dá·ti.
 but at last they died then if

yudəne'é hí·yeču. yádət'xétla hathat x^wí·cəne
 their people food begged after those people

yi·lí·dæn dənə hat yi·xí·yu·lčíte
 were all gone any person who knew all about it

hatduhi náxesĵála hí·wændu t'kan d'an
 who asked for food then behind one would

naxənyát'jeĵla. hat má·səs'nég dənke du'an
 be left there they forgot it just as if no body

xí·ka náxesĵawən tí·du deslí·dæn
 asked them to feed them just they were all gone

dənke. (27) hi·wændu ĵi·ti wálnesyá 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.¹¹ 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."¹² 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.

6. Jacobs, 192-193.

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·sésta.
10. It is not clear from the original transcription whether the affricate č 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.
- Golla, Victor. 1976. Tututni (Oregon Athabaskan). To appear in IJAL 42.3.
- Hoijer, Harry. 1960. Athapaskan languages of the Pacific Coast. Culture in history, ed. by Stanley Diamond, 960-976. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Jacobs, Elizabeth D. 1968. A Chetco Athabaskan myth text from Southwestern Oregon. IJAL 34:192-193.
- Pierce, J.E. and J.M. Ryherd. 1964. The status of Athapaskan research in Oregon. IJAL 30:137-143.