

The Moon and the Birchbark Canoe (ł máłxetn pe ł q^wlinéwl)*

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Abstract: This paper contains a transcription, translation, and morpheme gloss of a somewhat historical Nłeʔképmx story about an expedition down the Fraser River. This story was recounted in Nłeʔkepmxcín (Thompson River Salish) by Bev Phillips, who also provided much of the translation. We then transcribed and glossed the story as it is presented in the paper.

Keywords: Nłeʔkepmxcín, Nłeʔképmx, Salish, legend, transcription

1 Introduction

This paper contains the transcription, translation, and morpheme-by-morpheme gloss of an Nłeʔképmx legend that may be loosely based on Simon Fraser’s journey down what is now called the Fraser River. There is an English translation of a slightly different version of this story found in Teit (1912) along with a historical account of the events, related by a Nłeʔképmx woman who was the granddaughter of one of the people who witnessed Simon Fraser’s visit to her tribe in 1808.

The historical legend was recounted to us in Nłeʔkepmxcín (Thompson River Salish) by Bev Phillips (BP), a native speaker of the Lytton (łqəmxcín) dialect of Nłeʔkepmxcín, who also helped us with translating the story. She told us,

This *spték^wł* (creation story) could be based on Simon Fraser’s journey down the Fraser, but it also could be about the moon (older than the arrival of Simon Fraser). I chose this story to tell as it was one of the first stories that I tried to translate. Also, this story has a lot of mythical characters with interesting powers. They are gifted with ‘magic’. The story has relevance to us as a people. Some of the characters are in different stories, and their feats are funny, amazing, incredible. I cannot explain any of this to a person who doesn’t know our ways. Creation stories are not just stories to us. (Bev Phillips)

We transcribed and glossed the legend in its entirety, using Thompson and Thompson (1992, 1996), Kroeber (1997; 1999), and Koch and Zimmerman (2010) for reference.

This paper is separated into the following sections: Section 2 contains the legend in its entirety, transcribed in Nłeʔkepmxcín; Section 3 contains the English translation; and Section 4 contains the morpheme-by-morpheme gloss.

Section 3 does not perfectly reflect the translations in Section 4 because we have made minor changes in an attempt to make the story sound more natural when told in English. For example, we often omit the introductory predicative ʔé, which roughly translates to ‘and’ or ‘and then’ when it selects for a nominalized clause, because we feel it makes the story flow better. In Section 4, sometimes we offer a literal translation of the sentence because we feel the literal translation flows better or because we want to capture any nuances that might otherwise be overlooked such as the

* Our deepest gratitude is to Bev Phillips for entrusting us with this story and helping us through the process of transcription and translation. *ném k^wuk^wscémx^w*. ‘Thank you.’ We would also like to thank the Nłab and especially Lisa Matthewson for their contributions as well as the UBC Linguistics Department, the Jacobs Research Fund Group, and the Kinkade Language and Culture Foundation for funding.

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relative clause in (9). Section 4 also has comments from BP that provide the reader with some explanation of the words used, and we have placed those directly below the sentences they correspond to.

2 Nleʔkepmxcín¹

Húmeł x^wúy pték^włtimn. Nwén ek^wu cúk^wsc e scúws n ʔéye n e tmíx^w ł snkýép. Nwén tox^wtés tékm téʔ e steʔ. ʔé s x^wúyceʔs pént.

Tətéʔ ks pépyeʔs, ʔuʔ x^wʔít néʔe e s kiʔkéyxs. Cé ł sk^wák^wes ʔeł máʔxetn maʔ(ʔk^w)úsn ǰ^wǰ^wíle nmúyipm sk^wiʔéxǰnmx.² Cúłkeʔ xéʔe tǰk ʔéʔék n e q^włinéwł tuw e szx^wépmx e tmix^wíyxs e ʔéʔék us. ʔé ʔuʔ xéʔe e s kicetíyxs e ʔǰǰmxcín n e ntǰq^wtíq^w te q^wu(ʔ)ʔúy, ʔé s xíys. X^wʔít néʔe e séytknmx e wiktíy(xs)etm us. Tətéʔ ks xíns e s ʔéxs néʔe. ʔé s x^wúyceʔs nłǰmłémix n e q^włinéwł. ʔé ʔuʔ xéʔe e s kicetíyxs ntǰwíkns e q^wu(ʔ)ʔúy. ʔé s nǰk^wǰps q^włinéwł pe ł tékm ʔesnlém néʔe. ʔé s nʔ^wǰúsc ł máʔxetn pe ł q^włinéwł. Kémeł sǰix^wł nǰáyix, ʔé s kicetíyxs e s ʔǰǰmxcíns ǰ zecín ʔeskiʔmintíyxs ł máʔxetn pe ł q^włinéwł.

Tətéʔ k ǰx (ʔ)e s tq^wáyes ł sk^wák^wes, ʔuʔ ʔéx néʔe ʔesmiceʔq ménxm néʔe. ǰ^wǰ^wíle ł snkýép pe ł ǰ^wǰ^wíle ʔeł maʔ(ʔk^w)úsn. X^wʔít te sqáyms sk^wiʔéxǰnmx tǰ tǰtǰzeʔéyǰst. Nǰáyix ł nmúyipm, ʔuʔ tətéʔ ks wázixs ł máʔxetn pe ł q^włinéwł. ʔé s cúts e snkýép, “Tətéʔ ks x^wúys wázix ł máʔxetn pe ł q^włinéwł.” ʔescúntem te sk^wák^wes, “X^wúy xéʔ wázix ʔe mʔén us e tmíx^w.” ʔé s ʔeskýǰms néʔe. Mʔén ǰ tmíx^w, ʔé s xíys néʔe máʔxetn pe ł q^włinéwł. ʔé s x^wúyceʔs nłǰmłémix wéʔe ʔé s nkuckúces. Cúk^w ʔuʔ xéʔe ǰ s pénts w ʔéye ł snkýép. Tətéʔ k piʔstéʔ k tǰe ks x^wúyceʔs cǰés w e tmíx^w.

3 English

Ok, I’m going to tell you all a story. It is said that Coyote had already finished his work here on the land. He had corrected everything. And then he returned.

He wasn’t alone, rather there were many there that went along. There was Sun, Moon, Morning Star, Son of Carrot Root, Diver Bird, and Arrow Arm Man.³ The seven of them arrived there in a birchbark canoe coming from the Shuswap territory. They almost reached ʔǰǰmxcín on the muddy river, and then they went ashore. There were lots of people there that saw them. It wasn’t long that they stayed there. They got back into the canoe. They almost made it to the middle of the river. But then the canoe tipped over with all who were in it. Moon sank along with the canoe. But the rest swam and reached the edge of the river, waiting for Moon and the birchbark canoe.

Sun did not speak, but he sat there smoking. Coyote, Son of Carrot Root, and Morning Star danced. Arrow Arm Man shot lots of arrows. Diver Bird dove, but Moon and the birchbark canoe did not show themselves. Coyote said, “Moon and the birchbark canoe will not show”. And, he was told by Sun, “They will appear when the land becomes dark.” And so, they waited there. After the

¹ The orthography used for Nleʔkepmxcín in this paper is a form of the North American Phonetic Alphabet (NAPA) employed by Thompson and Thompson (1992; 1996).

² The *k^w* in *sk^wiʔéxǰnmx* sounded like an ejective sometimes, but the dictionary writes it as a pulmonic stop. It’s possible that this morpheme is the word for ‘shoot’, *k^wiʔ*, though BP translated it as ‘arrow’ (Thompson & Thompson 1996:120). We also could not find any examples of this word, so the stress marking is based only on how we heard it in the recording.

³ BP also provided ‘Man who Shoots Arrows out of his Arm’ as a possible translation for the name of Arrow Arm Man. As there does not seem to be an accepted translation, we chose ‘Arrow Arm Man’, both because BP used it most commonly, and because it aligned best with the morpheme gloss of the word.

Sun set, Moon came ashore with the birchbark canoe. They all got in again and went downriver. This is the only time that Coyote returned here. He has never come back to the land again.

4 Morpheme Gloss⁴

- (1) húmél x^wúỵ pték^wł-t-im-n.
 alright FUT tell.a.story(legend)-TR-2PL.OBJ-1SG.ERG
 ‘Ok, I’m going to tell you [all] a story/spték^wł.’ (VG)
Consultant’s comment: “(e) spték^wł is a re-creation story.” (BP)
- (2) n-wén̄ ek^wu cúk^w-s-c e=s-cúw-s n=?éye
 LOC-PFV RPT finish-CAUS-TR+3ERG DET=NMLZ-do-3POSS at=here
 n=e=tmíx^w ł=s-n-kýép.
 on=DET=land DET.REM=NMLZ-LOC-coyote
 ‘It is said that Coyote had already finished his work here on the earth.’ (VG)
- (3) n-wén̄ tox^w-t-és tékm té? e=s-te?
 LOC-PFV correct-TR-3ERG all PART DET=NMLZ-something
 ‘Coyote corrected everything.’ (VG)
- (4) ?é s=x^wúyce?=s p̄ént.
 INT NMLZ=more=3POSS return
 ‘And then he came back / returned.’ (VG)
- (5) tə~té? k=s=pé<p>ye?=s, λu? x^w?ít né?e
 AFF~NEG D/C=NMLZ=alone<DIM>=3POSS but much DEM.EST
 e=s=ki?~kéỵ-x=s.
 D/C=NMLZ=AUG~accompany-ACHV=3POSS
 ‘He wasn’t alone; there were lots of others with him.’⁵ (VG)
Literally: ‘He wasn’t alone, rather there were many there that went along.’

⁴ Abbreviations follow Leipzig Glossing Rules with the following additions adapted from Thompson and Thompson (1992; 1996) and Kroeber (1997; 1999): ACHV = achievement, AFF = affective, AUG = augmentative, AUT = autonomous, CTR = control, CTX = context, D/C = determiner/complementizer, DIM = diminutive, DIR = directive, EMPH = emphatic, EST = established in the context (demonstrative), EVID = evidential, FMV = formative, HYP = hypothetical (complementizer), IMM = immediate, INCH = inchoative, INT = introductory predicative, MID = middle, N = nearby (demonstrative), PART = particular (demonstrative), PER = persistent, QLT = qualitative, REM = remote (determiner), RFM = reaffirmative, RLT = relational (transitivizer), RLA = relative agent marker, RPT = reportative evidential, RSL = resultative, STAT = stative. We use {} to show the meaning of the entire word, the sum of the lexical morphemes, or proper names. We use “VG” (volunteered gloss) to mark the translated sentences offered by BP.

⁵ The Thompson and Thompson dictionary proposes that the reduplicated *p* in *pépye?* may be a diminutive form (1996: 233).

- (6) \acute{c} - \acute{e} \acute{t} - s - \acute{k}^w \acute{a} \acute{k}^w \acute{e} s η \acute{e} $m\acute{a}$ \acute{t} - $x\acute{e}$ - tn
 EMPH-INT DET.REM=NMLZ-sun and light-foot-INS{Moon}
 $m\acute{a}$ < η >-(k^w) \acute{u} $s\acute{n}$ $\acute{q}^w\acute{e}$ ~ $\acute{q}^w\acute{i}$ \acute{l} - \acute{e}
 light<INCH>-star{Morning.Star} AFF~wither-FMV{Son.of.Carrot.Root}
 n - $m\acute{u}$ $y\acute{i}$ - p - m s - $k^w\acute{i}$ η - \acute{e} χ \acute{n} - $m\acute{x}$.
 LOC-land.in.water-INCH-CTR.MID{Diver.Bird} NMLZ-arrow-upper.arm-person
 ‘There was Sun, Moon, Morning Star, Son of Carrot Root, Diver Bird, and Arrow Arm Man
 (a man who can shoot arrows out of his arm).’^{6,7} (VG)
- (7) $c\acute{u}$ \acute{t} - $k\acute{e}$ η $x\acute{e}$ η \acute{e} $t\acute{a}$ = k = $\acute{\lambda}$ η \acute{e} < $\acute{z}\acute{e}$ > k n = \acute{e} = $q^w\acute{h}\acute{i}$ n - \acute{e} $w\acute{t}$
 point-digit{seven} DEM.N OBL=D/C=arrive<PL> in=DET=birchbark-canoe
 $t\acute{u}w$ = \acute{e} = s - $z\acute{x}$ $\acute{w}\acute{e}$ p - $m\acute{x}$ \acute{e} = $t\acute{m}\acute{i}x^w$ - $\acute{y}\acute{x}s$ \acute{e} = $\acute{\lambda}$ η \acute{e} < $\acute{z}\acute{e}$ > k = us .
 from=DET=NMLZ-Shuswap-people DET=land-3PL D/C=arrive<PL>=3SBJV
 ‘The seven of them arrived there in a birchbark canoe, coming from the Shuswap territory.’
 (VG)
- (8) η \acute{e} $\acute{\lambda}$ u η $x\acute{e}$ η \acute{e} \acute{e} = s - $k\acute{i}c$ - \acute{e} - t - $\acute{y}\acute{x}s$
 INT PER DEM.N D/C=NMLZ-arrive-DIR-TR-3PL
 \acute{e} = $\acute{\lambda}$ \acute{q} - $\acute{a}m$ - $c\acute{i}n$ n = \acute{e} = n - $t\acute{a}q^w$ ~ $t\acute{i}q^w$
 DET=cross.over-CTR.MID-river.mouth{Lytton} on=DET=LOC-AUG~muddy.water
 t = \acute{e} = $q^w\acute{u}$ (η)- η \acute{u} y , η \acute{e} s = $x\acute{i}y$ = s .
 OBL=DET=river-RFM INT NMLZ=go.ashore=3POSS
 ‘They almost reached $\acute{\lambda}\acute{q}\acute{a}m\acute{c}\acute{i}n$ on the muddy river, and they came ashore.’ (VG)
Consultant’s comment: “ $\acute{\lambda}\acute{q}\acute{a}m\acute{c}\acute{i}n$ is ‘where the rivers meet’ which is near Lytton.” (BP)
- (9) x^w η $\acute{i}t$ $n\acute{e}$ η \acute{e} \acute{e} = $s\acute{e}y\acute{t}k\acute{n}$ - $m\acute{x}$ \acute{e} = $w\acute{i}k$ - t - \acute{y} ($x\acute{s}$)- \acute{e} - t - $m\acute{u}s$.
 much DEM.EST DET=compatriot-people D/C=see-TR-3PL-DIR-TR-RLA
 ‘Lots of people saw them there.’⁸ (VG)
Literally: ‘There were lots of people there that saw them.’

⁶ We were not able to find the name or word for ‘Morning Star’ in the dictionary. There is no audible [k^w] or [\acute{t}] in any case, so it sounds like [$m\acute{a}\eta\acute{u}s\acute{n}$] in every instance. Given the English translation, we estimate that one of the following is likely to be an accurate gloss:

- (i) $m\acute{a}$ < η >-(\acute{t})- \acute{u} s - \acute{n} or (ii) $m\acute{a}$ < η >-(\acute{t})-(k^w) \acute{u} $s\acute{n}$
 light<INCH>-sky-FMV light<INCH>-star

We opt for the latter because it aligns with the translation more literally.

⁷ The name $\acute{q}^w\acute{e}\acute{q}^w\acute{i}l\acute{e}$ was found in the Thompson and Thompson dictionary without a complete explanation for the morphemic parsing (1996: 309), but the $-e$ suffix in is described by Thompson and Thompson as a general formative (FMV) whose meaning is not yet clearly understood (1992: 126), so that is how we choose to gloss it.

⁸ We did not hear the [$x\acute{s}$] sequence in the word $w\acute{i}k\acute{t}\acute{y}(x\acute{s})\acute{e}t\acute{m}\acute{u}s$ as shown by the parentheses. However, we believe this to be the third person plural morpheme because of BP’s use of the word ‘them’ as the object of ‘see’ in the translation, which aligns with the position of the morpheme as a transitive object suffix. Furthermore, we perceived the stress to be on the second syllable, which we have marked with an acute accent, and this is consistent with the examples of this inflection from Thompson and Thompson (1992:81).

- (10) tə~téʔ k=s=xíñ=s e=s=ʔéx=s néʔe.
 AFF~NEG D/C=NMLZ=be.long=3POSS D/C=NMLZ=reside=3POSS DEM.EST
 ‘They didn’t stay there much longer.’ (VG)
Literally: ‘It wasn’t long that they stayed there.’
- (11) ʔé s=x^wúyceʔ=s n-ləm~lém-ix n=e=q^wlin-éwł.
 INT NMLZ=more=3POSS LOC-AUG~enter-AUT in=DET=birchbark-canoe
 ‘They got back into the canoe.’ (VG)
- (12) ʔé ʔuʔ xéʔe e=s=kic-e-t-íyxs n-tx^w-íkn-s
 INT PER DEM.N D/C=NMLZ=arrive-DIR-TR-3PL LOC-straight-back{middle}-3POSS
 e=q^wu(?)-ʔúy.
 DET=river-RFM
 ‘And they almost made it to the middle of the river.’
- (13) ʔé s=n-pk^w-əp=s ł=q^wlin-éwł pe ł=tékm
 INT NMLZ=LOC-spill-INCH=3POSS DET.REM=birchbark-canoe with DET.REM=all
 ʔes-n-lém néʔe.
 STAT-LOC-aboard DEM.EST
 ‘And the canoe tipped over with all who were in it.’
- (14) ʔé s=n-ŕ^wʔús=c ł=máŕ-xe-tn pe
 INT NMLZ=LOC-sink=3POSS DET.REM=light-foot-INS{Moon} with
 ł=q^wlin-éwł.
 DET.REM=birchbark-canoe
 ‘And then the moon sank along with the canoe.’
- (15) kémeł e=s-ʔix^wł n-qáy-ix, ʔé s=kic-e-t-íyxs
 but DET=NMLZ-some LOC-swim-AUT INT NMLZ=arrive-DIR-TR-3PL
 e=s=ʔq-əm-cín=s e=ze-cín
 D/C=NMLZ=cross.over-CTR.MID-river.mouth=3POSS DET=edge-river.mouth
 ʔes-kiʔ-min-t-íyxs ł=máŕ-xe-tn pe
 STAT-wait-RLT-TR-3PL DET.REM=light-foot-INS{Moon} with
 ł=q^wlin-éwł.
 DET.REM=birchbark-canoe
 ‘And the rest, they swam and reached the edge of the river, waiting for Moon and the
 birchbark canoe.’ (VG)

The suffix *-(e)mus* in this word is what Kroeber calls “relative agent marker” which he claims is diachronically derived from the combination of the passive suffix *-(e)m/* (which he calls “agent demotion”) and the third person subjunctive subject clitic *=us*, and that it is synchronically analyzable as monomorphemic and used when a subject is the target of relativization as in this sentence (1997:391–392). For more examples, see Kroeber (1997: 391–392; 1999: 299–301). For these reasons, we choose to gloss it as a relative agent marker rather than passive and subjunctive.

- (16) tə~té? k=əx (?e s=t-q^wáy-e=s ɬ=s-k^wák^wes,
 AFF~NEG D/C=IPFV INT NMLZ=QLT-speak-RSL=3POSS DET.REM=NMLZ-sun
 ʎu? ʔéx néʔe ʔes-míceʔq ménx-m néʔe.
 but IPFV DEM.EST STAT-sit inhale.smoke-CTR.MID DEM.EST
 ‘Sun did not move but sat there smoking.’ (VG)
Literally: ‘Sun did not speak but sat there smoking.’
- (17) q^wəy-cút ɬ=s-n-kýép pe
 dance-REFL DET.REM=NMLZ-LOC-coyote with
 ɬ=q^wə~q^wíl-e ʔeɬ
 DET.REM=AFF~wither-FMV{Son.of.Carrot.Root} and
 ma<ʔ>(ʃ)-(k^w)úsñ.
 ligh<INCH>-star{Morning.Star}
 ‘Coyote, Son of Carrot Root, and Morning Star danced.’ (VG)
Literally: ‘Coyote danced with Son of Carrot Root and Morning Star.’
- (18) x^wʔít t=e=s=qáy-m=s s-k^wiʔ-éχən-mx
 many OBL=DET=NMLZ=shoot-CTR.MID=3POSS NMLZ-arrow-upper.arm-person
 t=ə=tə~təz-eʔ-éyst.
 OBL=DET=PL~arrowhead-FMV-flint
 ‘Arrow Arm Man shot lots of arrows.’ (VG)
- (19) n-qáy-ix ɬ=nmúyipm, ʎu? tə~té? k=s=wáz-ix=s
 LOC-swim-AUT DET.REM=Diver.Bird but AFF~NEG D/C=NMLZ=show-AUT=3POSS
 ɬ=máʃ-xe-tn pe ɬ=q^wɬin-éwɬ.
 DET.REM=light-foot-INS{Moon} with DET.REM=birchbark-canoe
 ‘Diver Bird dove, but Moon and the birchbark canoe did not show themselves.’ (VG)
- (20) ʔé s=cú-t=s e=s-n-kýép, “tə~té?
 INT NMLZ=say-IMM=3POSS DET=NMLZ-LOC-coyote AFF~NEG
 k=s=x^wúy=s wáz-ix ɬ=máʃ-xe-tn pe
 D/C=NMLZ=FUT=3POSS show-AUT DET.REM=light-foot-INS{Moon} with
 ɬ=q^wɬin-éwɬ.”
 DET.REM=birchbark-canoe
 ‘Coyote said, “Moon and the birchbark canoe will not show [themselves].”’ (VG)
- (21) ʔé s=cún-t-em t=e=s-k^wák^wes, “x^wúy xéʔ wáz-ix
 INT NMLZ=tell-TR-PASS OBL=DET=NMLZ-sun FUT DEM.N show-AUT
 ʔe=m<ʔ>én=us e=tmíx^w.”
 HYP=shady<INCH>=3SBJV DET=land
 ‘The Sun told him, “That will show when the land gets shady.”’ (VG)
Literally: ‘And he was told by Sun, “They will appear when the land becomes dark.”’
- (22) ʔé s=ʔes-ký-əm=s néʔe.
 INT NMLZ=STAT-wait-CTR.MID=3POSS DEM.EST
 ‘And they waited there.’ (VG)

- (23) m<ʔ>én ə=tmíxʷ, ʔé s=xíy=s néʔe
 shady<INCH> DET=land INT NMLZ=go.ashore=3POSS DEM.EST
 máʕ-xe-tn pe ʔ=qʷlín-éwł.
 light-foot-INS {Moon} with DET.REM=birchbark-canoe
 ‘After the Sun set, Moon came ashore with the birchbark canoe.’ (VG)
Literally: ‘The land became dark, and Moon came ashore with the birchbark canoe.’
- (24) ʔé s=xʷúyceʔ=s n-ləm~lém-ix wéʔe ʔé
 INT NMLZ=more=3POSS LOC-AUG~enter-AUT DEM.CTX INT
 s=n-kuc~kúce=s.
 NMLZ=LOC-AUG~go.downriver=3POSS
 ‘And they all got in again and went downriver.’ (VG)
- (25) cúkʷ=ʕuʔ xéʔe ə=s=ʔént=s w=ʔéye ʔ=s-n-kýép.
 only=EXCL DEM.N D/C=NMLZ=return=3POSS to=here DET.REM=NMLZ-LOC-coyote
 ‘It is the only time that Coyote came back.’ (VG)
Literally: ‘This is the only time that Coyote returned here.’
- (26) tə~téʔ k=piʔ-s-téʔ k=téʔe k=s=xʷúyceʔ=s
 AFF~NEG D/C=when-NMLZ-something {anytime} D/C=PART D/C=NMLZ=more=3POSS
 cʔés w=e=tmíxʷ.
 come to=DET=land
 ‘He has never come back to the land again.’ (VG)

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