Achumawi Database: Summary for March 2021

The current backup can be downloaded (with instructions) from the usual location at
http://zelligharris.org/achumawi-db.html

I was unaware that it is illegal to pick up and carry off *any* bird feathers, not just eagle feathers. Our older daughter Aria sent this collection of beautiful portraits to her sister and me:

https://www.fws.gov/lab/featheratlas/

Tóóh̓é "feather" looks like *tawaah̓ííci* might be the related verb, with a simpler form seen in *Ah̓ííci* "leading, being the head, being chief", also as a noun "leader, head [man], chief" (in the sense of "[one who is] leading, the leading one"). This "-ing" participle doesn't have the initial *w* which seems to underly that *o* vowel in *tóóh̓é*, but a *w-* prefix is at the beginning of *wih̓h̓éélu, wih̓h̓ééluucan*, which is also glossed "leader, head [man], chief". Thereby hangs a tale.

That *w* is the critter I've been tracking all over the database this past month, with its cousin *ẏ* sometimes crossing the trail. At the beginning of the month I thought they might reveal themselves, but sorting out their ways needs protracted attention, and the month has been much scattered by circumstances. Most delightfully among these circumstances, vaccinations have permitted both our daughters to be here on an extended visit, and three grandchildren. One (Hazel) will be 3 in June, one is due in mid-May, and the third is due in September.

So I will report here what I have found and what I am guessing thus far, as a place-holder to which we will return later when we have more light. Perhaps not all of this will survive in this form.
First, a summary of the materials involved.

-uw-	be (affix-bearer for adjectives and other stative words)
ẇ-	one that _____ habitually/characteristically (but in some cases still glossed as *ẇ-* "3rd person" in distinction from *ẏ-* "3rd person").
-wa	stative
-wa, -wáté	locative
-wa	instrumental
-wi	dwelling at __, belonging to __, having __
waci	continuative = <stem> + *w-* + *c* (as in *tuci* "do")

-uw-, -ẏ-. The copula. English "be, being, been" is called a 'copula' by grammarians, or sometimes a 'linking verb', supposedly because it couples or links the subject of a sentence with a word that is not a verb, such as an adjective or a classifier or relationship noun. These words are like verbs: they assert the state, condition, or category of their subject (*a deer is an animal, the deer is hungry*) or the relationship of the subject to the object (*Jack is the father of Pete and Mel*), but these 'stative' words cannot carry the prefixes and suffixes that go on a verb. Just as in English and many other languages, the copula does that for them. There are two in Achumawi:

- The *-uw-* copula is used with adjectives: *allu ẏuwí* "She's hungry".
- The *-ẏ-* copula is used with animate nouns and nominal expressions: *mah̓hoq̓ twiẏí qa tóósi* "a deer is a (game) animal".
- If the noun is not animate, the iterative/intensive *n-* prefix on the *-uw-* copula makes the distinction: *asẇú tẏánuwí qá pi* "this is a (pine) tree".

In words like *twiẏí* and *tẏánuwí*, the initial *t* is currently glossed as "evidential". Various prefixes and glosses identify activities that are witnessed, inferred, evident, and hearsay, but I haven't figured this out, so we won't follow this digression very far. In connection with these words, we can say this:

- *Wiẏí* occurs without *t-* when it links an adverb rather than a noun to the subject pronoun: *pʰíiẇa wiẏí* "he's here".
- *Ẏánuwí* occurs without *t-* only in negative or privative expressions, i.e. unmanifest: *ċé ẏánuwí pʰíiẇa* "there is none here"; *sí yánuwí as paapúúka* "there's no water in the bucket (the bucket lacks water)" where *si* seems to be an indefinite pro-form; *cʰís ẏánuwí* "there's no room (too much of something else)". Maybe the logic is, that which is not manifested can't be evident.

ẇ- stative. While there seem to be exceptions, *w-* as a prefix generally indicates a continuous, habitual, or characteristic activity.

wih̓híílu [*wih̓héílu*]	"leads; leader, head person, chief" (*hi* "use head, be head, lead"; *lu* "pull")
winílláátiwí	"repeatedly moves camp around; white people" (*tiníllááti* "move camp").

This *ẇ-* is often glossed as 3rd person, but with the sense of a state or condition.

ċíkkoh̓ waċiiq̓éési	"the foot is broken".
cum cum wámííci	"it drips".
wisuuċi, wínásuuċi; wiléél̓i	"(it's) dry; (it's) wet". (*suċ suċ ucí'* "(cloth) shrinks up, draws up")
qa yályú ka waṫuuq̓ááli qa álisti	"the man hit the rock".

Words with ẇ- are in many cases translated as a noun, in the sense "one that characteristically ____".

qʰé wínípʰááci yályú	"That fat man".
lúpẇíísé wa wáási tsiẏí. táq ẇa ṁóósi kú?	"I hunt with a bow. What will you hunt with?"
Cʰú wímmaċci tḱiẏí téési?	"Do you know how to sing?"
Asċé wíc icéécíʼ ẏuwí.	"It looks like it's cold".

The root *c* "do" functions as an auxiliary verb.

ilískéékí wacíwci	They play musical instruments
ilískéékí lhicíumá	we play musical instruments
ḣúk wací ya	he's bad (*ḣúk* "coal", *aliiḣúkwaci* "bad", *li* "extend hand/arm")
pucaṅ pucaṅ ẇací	"it's kinked, kinky"

Many verbs are compound with a stem plus *waci* as an auxiliary verb indicating a durative or continuous state. De Angulo calls this an adverbial suffix *swadz*, glossed "habituative". (The *s* is sometimes present, and appears to be the *si/sa* indefininite pro-form mentioned above, but that's in a different rabbit warren that I got into for a while.)

tikuuła waci	steady, hold upright
sóĺíkẏaa waci	I hold hands up (above shoulders)
sánaṫeq̇ĺí waci	I pile flat objects

-*wi* affiliation/characteristic.

acúmmááwi	river-dwelling, 'belonging to' the river; Fall River people, Pit River people.
acúmmááwi álisti	river rock
puwwááwi	having *puwwá* "horns" (any horned animal); cow, cattle
páwwi	elk-hide armor (páw "elk")

A number of similar morphemes are probably etymological rather than a productive feature of the language by which we can derive new vocabulary, but better understanding of it may prove me wrong in this.

There is a *wa-* alternating with *o-* at the beginning of some verb stems. The following examples suggest that the *wa-* in the first pair may be identical to the apparently pronominal *w-* in the second pair.

tóósáqcami, sáwaasáqcami	"dream"; "I dream"
waasáqcam, waasáqcam	"he dreams", "dreamer"

(The other occurrence of *saq* is, intriguingly, in *síísáqẏuuyí* "I don't have any __, I lack __", where *uy* is a form of the benefactive "doing for __" and *ẏ* may be a stative morpheme related to the *ẏ* copula.

The verbs translated "say", "drink", "sing", and "hunt" are differentiated in part by this morphophonemic alternation.

ó tissi	say	*ó sisẏí*	*ó l̇ís*
tissi	drink	*sóósá*	*l̇ís*
téési	sing	*siwáásá*	*l̇és*
tóósi (-m/-k)	hunt	*sáwaasi*	*l̇ós*

Similar morphemes may have once been in this "stative" set, but appear to have differentiated and specialized at an earlier stage of language history.

ó with "say, speak". Some inflected forms of "say, speak" and "drink" are homophonous. The disambiguating *ó* that often precedes the "say, speak" verbs may possibly be related to *wa*, or perhaps simply an onomatopoeic exemplification of speech.

wáwi. The word *wáwi* "as a set collectively" (*itt^hú taaqám wáwi* "my relatives") is still unanalyzed.

Several suffixes or enclitic postpositions have allomorphs beginning with *l* and other consonants, dissociating them from a possible historical relation to the *w-* discussed here.

-wa instrumental.

sápp^hi wa, sápp^hi la	with a boat

-wa, wáté locative.

tikuuła waci	steady, hold upright
sól̇íkẏaa waci	I hold hands up (above shoulders)
sánaṫeq̇l̇í waci	I pile flat objects

There are many verbs which end with *-w* plus *-i* or (for the imperative) *-a*.

Most kinship terms have the form of a verb with the *w-* prefix, but a derivation from a corresponding verb has not been obvious.

wattaaẇí	"daughter"
wappísẇí, weenúnẇí	"older sister", "younger sister"
waaẏí	father

Summary and path forward. In the analysis of verbs and deverbal nouns (nominalizations), most of these will be in an interim form as relatively unanalyzed units for now. They're just not yet ripe for the picking. As usual, there are some changes in the database.