

Achumawi Database

Summary of December 2022 work

You can download the current backup from

- <http://zelligharris.org/Achumawi/achumawi-db.html>

I have updated the webonary at

- <https://www.webonary.org/odissi/>

The sections in this report are

1. Reclassification as roots
2. Prosody and syllabication
3. Watershed, network, leaf

1. Reclassification as roots. In 2013, my presentation to SSILA was titled “Achumawi *-ci*”. I had identified a suffix *-ci* as a reduction of the ‘support verb’ *tuci* ‘do’, and proposed that it is used to make verbs out of stems which, in themselves, are not verbs, even from nouns as in *wáhhac* ‘bread’, *tiwáhháaci* ‘make bread’. My priority at the time was not morphological analysis, but rather to get more examples and texts into the database so as to provide a broad basis for analysis later, but for that presentation, of course, I looked for lots of examples. Consequently, there are many instances of *-ci* in the analysis view, and one thing I have undertaken this month is to change each to *c* + the stem-final vowel, which invites reconsideration of the preceding stem. I had hoped to have completed this in the course of December, but in addition to the distractions of the holiday season Covid finally caught up with Sarah and me and took a bite out of time and energy. (We have both fully recovered.)

Other choices have emerged during this clean-up, notably:

- The *ku* ‘future/potential’ morpheme, which I have broken out as a separate word (enclitic or postposition) is best understood as the root ‘*ku*’ ‘press’ in a peripheral position after the core of the verb stem. It is clear that the position of a root in the verb complex contributes strongly to its semantics, and here there is a sense of ‘pressing’ into manifestation, consistent with the general importance of the unmanifest/manifest parameter in this language and culture.
- The *ni, na* ‘iterative, again, severally; intensive’ morpheme had been treated as a prefix, but is best understood as the *ni, na* locomotion root with specialized semantics in stem-peripheral position.
- I had treated final *ca* ‘go do, go ahead and do’ as a suffix *-ca*, but it is evidently *c* ‘do’ plus volitional *a* (imperative).
- The *s* in *alússa* ‘creek’ may be *as* ‘water’, which is seen as a verb root in *yánasci* ‘it rains’, *asci* ‘rain’ (the participle ‘raining’). This (*a*)*s* root may be the basis of (*a*)*s* ‘unmanifest, indefinite’. I have not yet cross-checked occurrences of *waci* and (*a*)*swaci*, where the *as* is not always present, e.g. *ímáqci* ‘travel’, *ímmáqcaswáci* ‘always traveling’, *támmi* ‘eat’, *támwaci* ‘continually eat’, and the *a* vowel may be superseded: *sínáásúúci* ‘I seized it’, *sóósús wáci* ‘I hold something’.

When I have finished with the *-ci* cleanup, I will proceed with these. In many cases, I find a better analysis of the entire word, and sometimes a better rectification, especially with my earliest field record and with archival records. In some cases, I have undone an analysis that is obviously inadequate, putting separated morphemes back together and inserting a Vstem entry in the lexicon for later consideration.

2. Prosody and syllabication. Regularities of prosody and syllabication remain to be determined.

A glottal stop is the default syllable onset in a VV cluster (de Angulo's 'rising tone'), e.g. *táq sla'ám* 'what should I eat?', *is tla'áácá háné'* 'I wish there were people (here)'. It appears that *t* serves this function when the second vowel has low pitch, as in e.g. *-(t)umá*, *(t)icka*, *-(t)iwí*; in *-(t)éim* / *-(t)yéim* the *t* might be a 'directed motion' morpheme, but no such difference in the gloss is evident.

If *i* turns out to be the default vowel, alternation with another vowel within a stem may derive from a distinguishable root. Alternation with *a* may have a volitional sense even within a verb stem, but the emerging data are still sketchy. The conditions for *wa* 'stative' to be explicit as in *sáwasáqcamí* 'I dreamt' or reduced as in *sóót'hééwi* 'I heard, I comply' are still unclear. With *s* 'drink', we see *o* in *sóósá*, *kóósá*, *móósá*, *kóósá*, *slhóósá*, *tmcóósá*, *ttóósá*, but not after *wa* functioning as a 3rd person pronoun (*waasá*, *twaasíwci*), and not with *-um* '3rd person patient' plurals *slhissíumá*, *tmcissíumá*. Compare:

<i>ó tisi</i> 'speak, words, language'	<i>sísi</i> 'I said'	<i>slí'ís</i> 'if I speak; I would speak'
<i>téési</i> 'sing, song'	<i>suwáásá</i> 'I sang'	<i>slí'és</i> 'if I sing; I would sing'
<i>tissi</i> 'drink'	<i>sóósá</i> 'I drank'	<i>slí'is</i> 'if I drink; I would drink'
<i>tóosiimi</i> 'hunt thither'	<i>sáwaasiimi</i> 'I hunted thither'	<i>slí'óós</i> 'if I hunt thither; I would hunt thither'

'Sing' may also have *s*, but evidence is not available. It is tempting to think of the *as* root in 'drink'. I have not been consistent in writing the unstressed vowel in the 'unmanifest' *sl*'- or *sl'*'- prefixes, and here I have treated them as epenthetic. (Data for the analysis include *chááwá l'uskim qá piq'há* 'where might this one sit?', *luskim* 'I'll sit!', *tyluskim* 'let him sit!'.)

The *u* of *tuci* appears to be the *w*, *wa* 'stative', explaining the 'be' glosses of *tici*, as in *wawá tílci kú kuwá* 'you will be/become big'. The other mid vowel *e* suggests a *y* morpheme or a reduction of *i + a* in e.g. *tupti* 'go, leave', *tepti* 'go back, go home'; with this verb, the mid vowel *e* occurs finally in the imperative *tupté*, *tepté*.

3. Watershed, network, leaf. Paul asked for a translation of 'watershed', for use in the STEM program that he has got funded. I proposed phrases using *tílahpi* 'net, network'.

- *aaqo u tílahpi* 'mountain's network'
- *aaqo u as tílahpi* 'mountain's water network'
- *tííqaati u tílahpi* 'earth's network'
- *tííqaati u as tílahpi* 'earth's water network'

The discussion I provided was somewhat jumbled. I'll include a summary here.

Gravity pulls (*lu*) water downslope. We see this *lu* in *alússa* 'creek'.

Gully, ditches, and creek beds are very visible parts of a watershed collecting water from the slopes surrounding them.

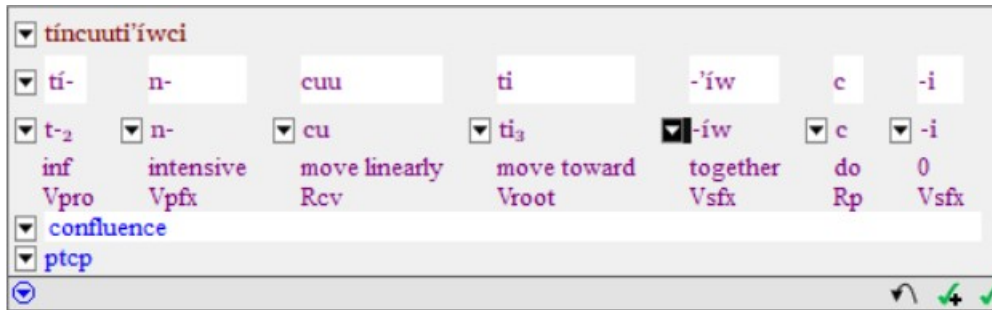
as'ú ticummi 'where water runs'

as'ú ticúmmo'oy 'gully, ditch, where water used to run'

qa álússa ú ticuumóó'oy hay' sínúwí 'I remembered where the creek used to run.'

Water also sinks into the earth, and then moves through the earth underground, and the earth filters the water. Water that has sunk into the earth at a higher elevation may be kept down by a relatively impervious layer of clay or rock, and emerge lower down as a spring. Such a flow might open a channel and become an underground stream. Lost River would be a big example, if you could find it. (See <http://npshistory.com/publications/usfs/region/5/modoc/history.pdf> on p. 7).

The current in *acúmmá* 'river' pushes, thrusts, and crosses (*cu*) the land. *Tíncuuti'íwci* (JPH: *íncuuti'íw*) is the confluence of Fall River and Pit River. Rivulets, streams, brooks, and creeks are tributaries to larger creeks, thence to rivers, the river, and the sea.



All of these together form a network across the land, like the veins in a leaf.

Everybody I worked with in the 1970s had some uncertainty or confusion between *ćiláhpi* 'leaf' and *tílahpi*, *tílohpi* 'web' or 'net'. My transcriptions also show uncertainty about the consonant cluster, sometimes writing laryngealized *p'*, due to effects of the epiglottal gesture on supralaryngeal air pressure and even physically on the larynx. This is evident also in archival records from earlier times. I have combed through examples. Not many are in the audio record, but I have listened closely to them and I have examined their sound spectrograms.

The alternation between *lah'* and *loh'* is due to the *w* 'stative' morpheme:

tílahpi 'unfinished net.'; *wálahpá* 'he's making a net'
tílohpi 'finished net'; *wálohpa* 'he's made a net'

The second root is *pa* 'put, place, drop' with the stem-final *i* vowel of the participle form. The *loh'* root is glossed 'toss', in *tacillohwami* 'throw away'. How is 'toss' pertinent?

Another gloss of *tílahpi*, *tílohpi* is 'spider web'. I think the 'net' gloss is a metaphor based on the 'spider web' meaning. A noun *lohti* is glossed 'Web' (perhaps better 'web strand') in the 'Spider and Lizard' story as the means of transporting Spider and Lizard through the air across the ocean. The *ti* root may be the one denoting action with the whole body, the backside, or an indeterminate body part, or it may be one of the 'directed movement' roots. This is a reference to how spiders travel through the air. A spider climbs to a high point and takes a stance with its abdomen to the sky, releasing fine silk threads from its spinneret. It's as though she's tossing the threads in the air, and then they carry her. Electric fields provide enough force to lift the spider in the air, then winds carry it, with the threads extending upward. This is called ballooning (or kiting), and can carry a spider hundreds of miles. Atmospheric samples collected from balloons at five kilometres altitude and ships mid-ocean have reported spider landings. This is primarily used by newly hatched spiderlings to disperse, but adults can do it too if necessary.

In stories there are other instances where people lift off the land to escape, sometimes shooting an arrow to carry a line upward. Important matters are related. Smoke, intentions, prayers, and invocations are conferred to the winds. The silk of the spider is like that of which a cocoon is made.

I mentioned that speakers sometimes said *ćiláhpi* for 'net' when they meant *tílahpi* or *tílohpi*. This is relevant because the network of veins in a leaf sometimes becomes prominently visible as a fallen leaf decays. The *ći* may allude to their being attached 'upon, atop' the tree or plant.