Achumawi Database

Summary of March 2024 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/

I am reporting a couple of days early, the evening of 3/29, because I will be traveling home from California tomorrow and the next day. As usual, I’ve moved some notes into the report for next month, in hope that I will be able to make them presentable then.

Development of the Atsugewi database has taken an important step with conversations that Paul, Connor, Lisa, and I have had with Len Talmy, enabling us to move forward much more freely in collaboration with him largely by telephone and email. The two languages appear to be more different from each other than I had thought. My description at SSILA claiming that their verb templates had parallel structure was mistaken, based on a misreading of Len’s dissertation. Atsugewi appears to be more like Shasta than Achumawi.

There’s a new and easier keyboard, easier in that you won’t have to switch keyboards to alternate between typing English and Achumawi (or Atsugewi).

The sections in this report are

1. Amqʰá
2. Icóócíínóo
3. Ánca

1 Amqʰá

In my summary for February, to illustrate analysis of sentence-forms and adjunct-forms I offered a preliminary analysis this example (LR: From the Moon to the Earth:1.1.):

1. qa D qa N V qa N wi N | pro wáté ptep | V
   qa pálmas qa tíjáati wací’ qá mááh’íy ca wi cul, | amqʰá wáté icóócíínóo | sticákasaswácínóo.

At first the territory was the moon | aforesaid at doing/being | he would shepherd us

There are two core sentences, qa tíjáati wací’ qá cul ‘the territory was the moon’ and sticákasaswácínóo ‘he would shepherd us’. The phrase amqʰá wáté icóócíínóo links them. As far as I analyzed it in February, this linking is done by the word amqʰá. I classified amqʰá ‘the aforesaid’ as a pro-form, the class of referential words that includes pronouns.

A pro-form stands for something said nearby (pro = ‘for’), and in traditional grammar is said to ‘refer’ to it. It is a convenient abbreviation for repeating what is said in full elsewhere (or understood as though it had been said), together with a metalinguistic assertion that the two are existentially the
The magic of ‘referring’ is due to abbreviating the semantics of repetition and sameness in a single word.

However, amqʰá not only functions as a pronoun, it also functions as a conjunction linking two sentences. The first syllable am- appears to be an allomorph of ma ‘and’. A frequent pronunciation is mqʰá with a syllabic m and when an initial vowel is heard it usually is a schwa, as you can hear in this sound file. The second syllable is the demonstrative pronoun qʰá ‘that, that one’, of which I will say more below. It refers to something in the first sentence, whence the gloss ‘the aforesaid’. It is ambiguous but probably best refers to cul, rather than to tůqaatí, though it really doesn’t matter semantically since wací’ identifies one with the other.

Thus, amqʰá has the same form as an English relative pronoun, which combines a conjunction wh- (taken to be an allomorph of and) and a pronoun, e.g. the -ich of which, the -o of who, etc. As we shall see, the resemblance is incomplete, but on this account I have used ‘where’ in the translation of this updated analysis:

1b. qa D qa N V qa N | C | pro wáté ptcp V qa pál̓n̓as qa tůqaatí wací’ qá mááhí’y ca wí’ cul, | am | qʰá wáté icóócín̓o stícákaswacín̓o. At first the territory was the moon | and | that at doing/being he would shepherd us At first, the territory was the moon, where being active he would shepherd us.

The adjuncts qa pál̓n̓as, mááhí’y ca wí’, and icóócín̓o were discussed in February. Excising them, we see:

1c. qa N V qa N | C | pro wáté V qa tůqaatí wací’ qá cul, | am | qʰá wáté stícákaswacín̓o. the territory was the moon | and | that at he would shepherd us The territory was the moon, and there he would shepherd us.

The pro-form qʰá, which occurs as the second syllable of amqʰá, has several alternate forms: qʰá, qʰáhé, qʰáhé, qʰehé, qʰé ‘that, that one, that there, there, there yonder’ with different degrees of emphasis. It occurs in a number of phrases and compounds, most frequently in the qʰá form, less frequently as qʰé.

qʰé wáté in that place (cp. amqʰá wáté, above)
qʰáy̌ími right there
qʰáy̌íhé right there
qʰahé, qʰé that one yonder
qʰé mim just that
qʰé y̌í, qʰé y̌í tim same place again
qʰáwa, qʰáwwa some, some of them
qʰé wa with that, by that means
qʰaawééla in some places
qʰállí whatsoever
pi qʰá this there, this as mentioned
qʰé yá that, those
qʰé yáma wíyí she’s right there!
The quantifiers qʰeäm ‘many, much’ and qʰammim ‘many individuals’, may be related. (For mim compare it mim ‘I myself’, hak mim ‘just two, a pair, two of them’, tóólol mim ‘all of them’, haw haw tiši mim watʰééwini ‘he could hear even a whisper’, lohqá mim yánawááyi ‘he uses any old stick for a cane’.)

Other details:

- There may be an etymological (historical) relationship between ma ‘and’ and ma ‘look, see, find’, or possibly ma ~ pa ‘throw, put, drop, lose’.
- The sentence-adjunct qa pálínas and the noun-adjunct mááhíy ca wí were explained last month. In appropriate context, even without that adjunct the noun čul ‘sun’ can refer to the moon.
- Mááhíy ca wí ‘night-dwelling’ can be analyzed further into centers and adjuncts, with ca wí in a gray area of enclitic postpositions, not quite suffixes, not quite free-standing words, and the stative root ý’ currently treated as a suffix.
- The gerund ícóóciínóo has -ín past tense, in keeping with the temporal location for the sentence as a whole. The volitional -a or -óo occurs frequently other than in an imperative, emphasizing intentionality. Further analysis of those details is in a later section below. It is ambiguous, but neither the free translation nor the English retelling supports reading the subject as –s- ‘we’. The probable reading is ‘he having been doing [things] there’. Kwán ‘silver fox’ is probably the 3rd-person subject, rather than Creator (qa heéwísí or Apóónikaha), given his role in sentence 11 and in the subsequent story about re-creating a world on earth.

This example is sentence 2.3 from the text LR: Deer Man:

2. títʰimyi | ma | we lóqmí ánca, ma úúlóqíña wíccí am qʰá wítúútaamátíya.
V | C | D | D Pro C D V C Pro V

hired | and | so/then next day he and in evening resembles and that one available for work

‘Then they hired him, and so next day and getting on toward evening he was ready to work for hire.’

In the preceding sentence, one of a party of hunters gives the old man the contractual tobacco and says “I’ll hire you if you’ll tell us where to find deer”.

There are actually three core sentences here. The first core sentence is the 3rd-person subordinate verb títʰimyi ‘hired him’. Then wítúútaamátíya ‘he was ready to work’ occurs twice, but the first occurrence is unspoken because in context it contributes no additional information. It is reduced to zero phonemic content, but still understood to be present.¹ She starts to say we lóqmí ánca wítúútaamátíya ‘so the next day he was ready to work’, but before pronouncing the sentential verb she interrupts with the refinement ma úúlóqíña wíccí ‘and it was becoming evening’. Undoing that reduction, the more explicit form of the sentence is

¹ It is well established that we already have to have zero allomorphs, e.g. the plural of sheep in English. Extending that more broadly on the basis of low information makes for a simpler and more regular grammar.
A free-standing pronoun may be used in addition to the pronominal prefix for mere emphasis, but the effect of emphasizing some particular third person can be similar to the ‘switch reference’ phenomenon described in other languages. Here, ánca is an alert that the subject of wítúátaamátýa is the old man, not the hunter who hired him. Then in the last conjunct the second pronoun amqʰá has its more basic meaning ‘and that one’ rather than functioning like a relative pronoun. It refers back to ánca in the immediately preceding conjunct. This is not a misstatement followed by a repair, because she needed to say both that it was the next day and that it was late in the day.

Details:

- I have omitted má ánca we before the first word tittʰimyi. This is a common filler, which I usually glossed ‘and then’.
- The second conjunct sentence begins with we; an interjection with an inceptive nuance: we Ḩuípta ‘OK, let’s go’, we Ḩuí Ḩuí ‘let me think!’, amqʰáwa we tyuwisayámihíní ‘well, he got tired of that’.
- Lóqmí ‘next day’ is glossed ‘tomorrow’ in many contexts; its relationship to úúlóqmí ‘evening’ is still obscure.
- The phrase N wíccí ‘resembles N, approximates N’ usually occurs with a final glottal stop, suggesting that the word is wíccíy, with c ‘do’ and stative ý. This generalization still needs to be tested.

Telling the story to a less ignorant person, she would presumably have omitted the first sentence, amqʰá, and the conjoining with comma intonation, so that the story would have begun with haṃís piláyuuccóóluucan tyanawámmihíní qa wiyácáálu ú támmi kúcí.

As always, analysis sometimes leads to further rectification. In (LR: Bear Doctor cures a thief: 4) I had written … tinimmáci qa ticépawaci qa qʰé qa piláyuucóolu cʰú sa aíná ticci. Checking the audio for intonation and rhythm, to verify the phrasing, I corrected qa ticépawaci, which made no sense (“he saw the watching”?) to the conjoined sentence ma ticépawaci …; and a slight drop in pitch and intensity, verified with Praat, led to correcting qa piláyuucóolu cʰú sa aíná ticci (“”?) to the ‘possessive’ qa piláyuucóolu u cʰú sa aíná ticci, again much more sensible. Here is the analysis of sentence 4:

4. C Pro ka Art N ka Pro V
am qʰá kam qá aapóóha ka [qʰahé tinímmááci ],
and that agent the Burney Mountain agent that one he saw

And that mountain,

C Pro ka Art N ka Pro V
am qʰá kam qá aapóóha ka qʰahé tinímmááci
and that agent the Burney Mountain agent that one he saw
and that Burney Mountain saw that fellow

C V Art Pro Art N u Pro post D V
ma ticépíswaci qa qʰé qa píláyuucóólu u cʰú sa aamá ticei .
and watched that the young man’s pro indef but he did
and watched whatever that young man did.

The status of aamá needs some work. Here, I’ve labeled it an adverb D, but in other instances it is glossed ‘but’. De Ángulo glosses it ‘always, ever’. Here are some examples illustrating a sense of closure, delimiting the complete set of possibilities for the referent.

íáqʰá tím aamá tsiyí séétʰuuki I might not come back again at all.
amuíyá aamá all mud, muddy, just mud
cʰú sa aamá ó mlís let her say whatever [she wants]
iège aamá tkiyí you’re the kind that talks that way
hamis pá aamá one at a time (hamis pá another, pá indeed)
tinááta, má ánca qʰe qa yalyú aamá And just that one man went.
(He went, and he just that one man.)
aamá hákil pʰitúúwi wic yééwa for something like two whole years
aamá cʰúuíací whenever
ʔriśyi aamá just good ones, all good ones
stíínsúíínhínóo aamá they watched us all the time
yalyú aamá wíccíy mostly young men
stúúmántáta yá aamá just let me sleep!

In sentence 7.2 of “LR: The first white men in GV” amqʰá seems best translated ‘among them’, referring to the ‘young men’ mentioned in sentence 7.1 of that text as follows:

5. qʰarí wíccí? wíiníyaakíní, yalyú aamá wíccí?
quant V V N
many resembles came young man only resembles
A few more came, young men mostly.
One young man named Burney was one of them.

The stative root ́y functioning as copula usually has the stative/habitual w- as the 3rd person pronoun, but this is an ephemeral condition so we see ýý.
2. icóócínóo

The past-tense participle icóócínóo in the first example above (in the phrase amqʰá wáté icóócínóo) is an unusual construction. It seems to begin with the nonsingular imperative ic-, as in ʰicupté! ‘go!’ (dual or plural). At the end are -ín ‘past tense’ and -óó an imperative suffix. The stem -óóc- is the combination of c with uwá, a stative morpheme related to the copula uw which occurs with adjectives. This -óóc- alternates with -uwáác-, just as c ‘do’ sometimes is glossed as ‘be’, as though in alternation with uw ‘be’. Examples: cʰá stuwááci kúcí ‘what should I do?’ (also: cʰá stuwa tuci kúcí), cʰá móóci kúcí ‘what should you do?’, cʰá tuwááci kúcí ‘what should he do?’. I have not looked into the conditions for the alternation. It is the same apparently stative alternation that we see in e.g. tóósaqcamí ‘dream’, sáwasáqcamí ‘I dream’.

It can have a sense of approximation or incompleteness:
ýáncittásći ‘he crawled to the top’
ýáncittáscoocí ‘he crawled almost to the top’
yálúpći qá čul ‘the sun is touching upon the top’ (it’s sundown)
yálúpcicoocí qá čul ‘the sun is almost touching’ (it’s getting late, almost sundown)

In -icóóc- the first c may be in the ‘be’ sense, followed by the auxiliary c ‘do’. The ‘future volitional’ ca is another specialization which can follow even -icóóc-, e.g.: cʰééwa slhicóócíica. ‘in what way can they do anything to me’

3. Ánca

Ánca ‘so, thus, then’ occurs rarely alone, and very frequently in the phrase má ánca ‘and so, and then’. Its analysis is still unclear. It probably is a referential somewhat similar to amqʰá, so that má ánca has the meaning ‘and relative to the aforesaid’.

Below are all the occurrences in the DB other than in the má ánca construction.

Glossed ‘just now’, so perhaps signifying interruption of what had come before:
Lééći tóó ánca sinímmáácí. ‘I see a magpie’
Pál m, ánca sóótʰééwí. ‘Now I hear it’

Glossed ‘likewise’, referring to the object of comparison:
ánúúkʰééwí ó tissi tíími ánca tyánuwí qa tíístí “The proper (stories) are the same as talk descended from the High One.”

Glossed ‘only, particularly’, contrasting with overt or implied prior context:

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2 Sometimes shortened to má ánca. Though it functions as a unit, the syllable canon prohibits a long vowel before a consonant cluster, so má ánca must be two words, not one.
íssi wa ánca tilaháámí kú tyánuwí hew tuci kú tucci tyánuwí. “It’s (about) talking business in the indigenous way, it’s (a matter of) not forgetting.”

pi ánca tʰásýí ýuwí “This is a good one.”

kʰéstam qa pʰuíwa we húkýé pá we mów ánca. “That's all finished here, now over there oh you've done it! (oh you fixed it!).”

aa cʰútika woy woy, wé ánca mliité. (Song.) ‘Oh ground squirrel, sob, sob, now thus she’s going to conserve (the food).”

titʰimyi ma we lóqmi ánca, ma úúlóqmi wíccí amqʰá wítúútaamátýa. “Then they hired him, and so next day pretty early in the evening (he was ready to) lend/work for hire.”

qʰé ánca íyáwwaw qa qʰé ánca. ‘Just to him you two give (meat), only to him.’

lóqmi ánca mlítawáy qa támmi kúci. “Tomorrow I’m going to look for food.” (mlítawáy kúci, not támmi kú.)

qʰé mów ánca qa maaqí wacucí. “That seems to be smoke rising.”

ís tuccóómé ánca. “That’s not for Indians.”