Resolution to Some Uncertain Wampano (Quiripi) Etymologies

BLAIR A. RUDES
Development Associates, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

The reconstruction of Wampano,¹ the Algonquian language spoken in much of western Connecticut and west-central Long Island until the early 20th century, is an ongoing process that will take many years. As such, my 1997 article, entitled "Resurrecting Wampano (Quiripi) from the dead: phonological preliminaries", may best be considered a working paper rather than a finished piece of research. In that article, I provided etymologies for 179 of the 225 Wampano words attested in the various short vocabularies and word lists of the language.² A few etymologies were also presented for the extensive vocabulary attested in the one published text in the Wampano language, Pierson’s 1658 catechism. As the research has progressed, etymologies have been found for several previously unexplained words. These new etymologies are presented here.³

Little toe

The first new etymology offered here is for Wampano (insular dialect, i.e., Unquachog) (peewasticconseet) ‘little toe’ (Jefferson 1791). In analyzing this word I assume that Jefferson either misheard or misrecorded the medial cluster, and that the word should have been transcribed (peewatsiconseet). This assumption is based on the fact that the most likely candidate for the initial in this word is the Wampano stem meaning ‘small’, which also appears in insular Wampano (peewatsu) ‘[it is] small’ (Jefferson

¹ The Wampano language and its dialects are better known by their local names Quiripi, Naugatuck, and Unquachog (see Rudes 1997:1–3).
² See Rudes (1997:6) for a list of the sources of these vocabularies and word lists.
³ A reconstruction preceded by the abbreviation “pseudo-PEA” is one that is based on forms from only one areal subgroup of the Eastern Algonquian languages. The abbreviation “PEA” is reserved for reconstructions based on data from representative languages from diverse subgroups of Eastern Algonquian.
1791). As noted in Rudes (1997:35, no. 131), this stem derives from PA *pi-w- ‘small’; Ives Goddard (personal communication, 1997) suggests the remainder is the inanimate intransitive final *-at- and the diminutive suffix *(e)hsi-. Thus, the stem may be reconstituted as having the phonological form *pi-wathsi-;\(^4\) Wampano ⟨peewátsu⟩ ‘[it is] small’ is a third person singular verb form and may be reconstituted as having the phonological form *pi-wathsəw.\(^5\)

In Wampano ⟨peewasticconseet⟩ ‘little toe’ the stem *pi-wathsi- ‘small’ behaves as an initial, a phenomenon well attested in the Algonquian languages (Goddard 1990:455–461). This initial is followed by the medial PA *-i-kan(e)- ‘bone’ (Goddard 1990:465), which in turn is followed by the final PA *-esit- ‘foot’ (Goddard, personal communication, 1997). Thus, the underlying structure of Wampano ⟨peewasticconseet⟩ ‘little toe’ is *pi-wathsi-kansi-t “small-bone-foot”, a structure common to pedal digits in Wampano as evidenced by ⟨cumsquausseet⟩ kəmhshkwasi-t ‘[your (sg.)] great toe’ (Jefferson 1791) from pseudo-PA *ke-meʔθ-exkwe-esit- ‘you (sg.)-great-end (?)-foot’ (David Pentland, personal communication, 1997).

To hunt

The second new etymology concerns the insular Wampano (Unquachog) word for ‘to hunt’, ⟨peénsaac⟩ (Jefferson 1791). No other Algonquian language exhibits a word with similar phonological form that means specifically ‘hunt’. However, there are words in related languages that are phonologically similar and have meanings compatible with certain types of hunting. One such example appears in Munsee. In his dictionary of the Munsee language O’Meara (1995:245–246) gives the word piindshihihkaw-eew ‘chase someone inside, send someone inside, drive someone inside (of animals)’. The last gloss could easily refer to the hunting of an animal by chasing it into an enclosure or trap. Morphologically, the Munsee word is

\(^4\) Regarding the general assumptions behind the reconstitution of the phonological forms for words in extinct languages, and the specific assumptions behind the reconstruction of the phonological form of words in Wampano, see Rudes (1997).

\(^5\) Alternatively, David Pentland (personal communication, 1997) suggests that the word contains the medial *-a-t- ‘being’ with the animate intransitive final *-esi-. Given the rules of syncope in Wampano (Rudes 1997:18–22), the only difference in the phonological form of the word would be the second vowel, *piwatsəw rather than *pi-wathsəw.
composed of a reflex of PA *piːnt- ‘inside’ plus a motion verb and a transitive third person singular ending.

Wampano (peënsaac) ‘to hunt’, however, cannot begin with PA *piːnt-, since in this language an *n would be lost before another consonant! Rather, the initial is from the unextended root PA *piːm- seen in (early) PA *piːmwa ‘he/she enters’ (Goddard 1994:188). As in Munsee, the initial is followed by a motion verb, a reflex of either PA *-iʔla- (> PEA *-iʰre-) ‘run (?)’, fall, fly’ or PA *-wehθe- (> PEA *-əhxe-) ‘walk’, which in turn is followed by the third person animate plural (PEA *-w-ak). Thus, the original meaning of Wampano (peënsaac) piːnhsaːwak was most likely ‘they (animals) go inside [a trap]’, comparable with the meaning of the Munsee word cited earlier.

Clothes

The third etymology concerns Wampano (Mā’nūk) ‘clothes’, recorded by Frank Speck on the Schaghticoke reservation (Prince and Speck 1903:350). Quite similar words are recorded for Massachusetts and Narragansett, specifically Massachusetts (mōnak) ‘cloth’ (Trumbull 1903:234), (mōnak) ‘linen cloth’ (Cotton 1829:16), and Narragansett (Mūnek) ‘an English coat or mantell’ (Williams 1643:111). Goddard (1981:70) derives the Massachusetts word from pseudo-PA *myaːθ-yəkenw- ‘ersatz hide’. The Wampano word, however, cannot directly reflect the reconstruction *myaːθ-yəkenw- since PA *θ gives Wampano r. While it is possible that the word recorded at Schaghticoke is, like a few other words in Speck’s list with n for expected r, a loan from neighboring Mahican (Rudes 1997:12), I think it more likely that this word was an innovation in Massachusetts to name the new European product, cloth, which then spread areally with the product to other New England Algonquian languages, including Wampano. Thus, I consider Wampano (Mā’nūk) māːnək a Massachusetts loan word.

Eagle

The fourth and final word I will examine here is the insular Wampano (Unquachog) word (wéquaran) ‘eagle’ (Jefferson 1791). In many Algonquian languages the words for ‘eagle’ (more specifically ‘adult bald eagle’) are developments of PA *waːpaθanyeːwa (Siebert 1975:333), the literal

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6 I am grateful to Ives Goddard for helping to clarify the etymology of this word.
meaning of which is ‘he/she has a white bird-tail’. While the initial portion of the Wampano word is clearly unrelated to the cited Proto-Algonquian reconstruction, the final sequence (-aran) is the expected Wampano reflex of PA *-aθany- ‘bird tail’.

The issue, then, is what is the source of the initial sequence (wequ-) of the Wampano word.

A number of other words in Wampano and other New England Algonquian languages begin with the sequence (wequ-) or the like. Examples include the words for ‘swan’ and ‘light’. The word for ‘swan’ is Caniba (8ieg̃érré) (Rasles 1833:383, 413), Massachusett (wequash) (Trumbull 1903:330), Narragansett (Wéquash) (Williams 1643:90), Nipmuck (8ik8asa) (Day 1975:183) and Western Abenaki (wigwahla) (Day 1994:493), with the PA noun final *-(e)?le-wa ‘bird’ (> PEA *-(e)hre-w) (Goddard 1965:215). The word for ‘light’ is Massachusett (wequai) (Trumbull 1903:288), Narragansett (Wequâi) (Williams 1643:64), and Wampano (wequâ-ai) (Pierson 1658:6), which appears to end with reflexes of the Proto-Eastern Algonquian intransitive inanimate suffix *-e’yə- (Goddard 1981:104).

My initial reaction to these data was to reconstruct pseudo-PEA *wi-kw- ‘bright’. One difficulty with this reconstruction, however, is the fact that all of the attested forms come from the New England Algonquian languages where PA *n is systematically lost before a following consonant. Thus, the root could reflect either PEA *wi-kw- or PEA *wi-nkw-. Confirmation that the latter reconstruction is the correct one comes from Carolina Algonquian, which preserves *n when initial in clusters, in the form of John White’s word (Woanagusso) ‘The Swann’ (Quinn 1955:448, no. 58). Thus, I now reconstruct the etyma of the cognate sets cited above as PEA *wi-nkwe-hre-w ‘swan’ (lit. ‘he/she is a bright bird’), pseudo-PEA *wi-nkwe-yəw ‘light’ (lit. ‘it is bright’), and pseudo-PEA *wi-nkwarane-w ‘eagle’ (lit. ‘he/she has a bright bird’s tail’).

CONCLUSION

With the addition of the four new etymologies discussed here the source of 183 of the 225 words of Wampano recorded in word lists and short vocabularies has been identified. Undoubtedly, further research will

7 I am grateful to David Costa for pointing out this correspondence.

8 I thank David Pentland for bringing this word to my attention. As he notes, however, one must assume that (Woanagusso) is a miscopying of (Weanguasso).
provide explanations for some of the remaining words. However, it is important to note that the remaining words include many that have proven intractable to linguists for decades. For example, despite early suggestions by Trumbull (1903:223) and Prince and Speck (1904:31), the source of the Wampano word for ‘boy’ — (macuchax) (Jefferson 1791), (M‘Kutch-chucks), (M‘K’chuks) (Stiles 1787), and its cognates in Massachusett, Narragansett and Pequot — remains obscure. In addition, there are place names like (Mi-öónkh-tük) ‘East Haven’ (Stiles 1787) and (Mau-tunsq) ‘West Rock’ (Stiles 1787) that resist explanation due to lack of knowledge of the specific location named and its physical features and cultural significance. Still other words, such as (Oopht) ‘deer’ (Stiles 1787), are so poorly transcribed that their origin may remain forever uncertain. Thus, it is likely that few of the remaining Wampano words attested in vocabularies and short word lists will prove amenable to historical analysis. Rather, further knowledge of the lexical origins of the Wampano language must come from the analysis and reconstitution of the extensive vocabulary attested in the 1658 Quiripi–English catechism written by Pierson, the one extant Wampano text.

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