

Esau and Jacob

Sopiel Selmore
Pleasant Point, Maine
1897

[Source: Albert S. Gatschet, Passamaquoddy field notes 1889–99, vol. 3, pp. 335–340. MS 233, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Suitland, MD. The present edition was prepared by Philip S. LeSourd with the assistance of David A. Francis, Sr., of Pleasant Point. Draft of April 20, 2016.]

1. Weci-macékit skicin.¹

[The origin of the Indian.]

2. Ísa Ísak 'qóssol. Ísa weci-kisáwsit mecimi-kotúnke. Sakhúpi wtoluhkalà uwhèm.

[Esau was Isaac's son. Esau always hunted for his living. Jacob worked with cattle.]

3. Nèqt peciyat uhsimísol Sakhúpi, siktelámu. Wtíyan hesísol, "Nspi-wōlamehtūwin kmílin eliptelómón, on=oc=yaka² ktahsómólon."

[Once when (Esau) came to his younger brother Jacob, he was starving. (Jacob) told his older brother, "Swear to me to give me what you own, and after that I will feed you."]

4. Ísa lithásu, "Eli-tpeltòm katáma petawōtiw naka npomawsuwákon." Etuci-nspi-wōlaméhtūwat uhsimísol wmílan kehsi-tpéltok.

[Esau thought, "What I own is not the equal in value of my life." So he swore to his younger brother to give him whatever he owned.]

5. Naka àpc ktaqhómuhs Ísak nkhápu. 'Piyemi-muhsacínol kinápīyit Ísa.

[And also the old man Isaac was blind. The gallant Esau loved him the most.]

6. Wtíyan, "Nqóss, npawátōmon ksapuwhíkon. Tàn etuci-memihpi, on=oc kmíllon wicuhketūwákon. Kíl=oc knihkanikapù. Msiw=oc knihkankúwak kótókik pōmawsuwínúwok. Mecimì=hc kwiluwik. Mecimì=hc msí kèq kmossíhtun."

[(Isaac) told him, "My son, I want some stew. When I have eaten my fill, then I will give you a legacy of assistance. You will stand at the head. You will stand before all other people. You will always be wealthy. You will always have a great deal of everything."]

¹ Selmore indicates here that Indians are descendants of Esau. Compare Genesis 25:25 on Esau's birth, just before that of his twin brother: "And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau."

² Gatschet first wrote =yaka 'later' (as <ya'ga>), then crossed out this word and added naka 'and' (as <náka>) before on-oc 'then + future' (written <ně'tch>). But =yaka fits the context here, while naka does not.

7. On nìt éhpit Repékka wnútūwan wnisūwihtícil Ísak eli-yáhat Isáwol, eli-koti-wicuhkémat Isáwol. Éhpit=ölu ’piyemi-muhsacínol Sahkupíwol.

[And then the woman Rebecca heard what her husband Isaac told Esau, how he was going to help Esau. But the woman loved Jacob more.]

8. “Wiwisáy! Nehpahàn kútsis naka ktolíhtun ksapuw híkon, naka kmíhtaqs kmílan, on=oc kil kmílkun wicuhketūwákon mèsq kisi-milàhq Isáwol.”

“Hurry! Kill a kid and make a stew, and give it to your father and then he will give *you* the legacy of assistance before he has given it to Esau.”

9. Sahkúpi ítom, “Nmíhtaqs=oc cù ntoqétōnoq, ípöcol nhésis Ísa piyehsūwìw.”

[Jacob said, “My father will surely test the way I feel, since my older brother Esau is hairy.”]

10. Repékka wtíyan wqóssol Sahkupíwol, “Öliyàn kosqèp naka mulcéssok kutsiséyak.”

[Rebecca told her son Jacob, “Make neckwear and mitts of kidskin.”]

11. Malom=öte kisáqöte ksapuw híkon. ’Peciptúwan wmihtáqsol. Sahkúpi wtíyan, “Nìl nìt kkihci-kqóss. Npeciptun ksapuw híkon.”

[Finally the stew was cooked. He took it to his father. Jacob told him, “I am your eldest son. I have brought you the stew.”]

12. Wtiyúkun wmihtáqsol, “Ckuwì. Ktoqetōnólon.” Wtítōmon ktaqhómuhs, “Ísa wpihtínol, kénuk=ölu Sahkúpi eliqtákōnat.” Naka tuciw wmace-mílan wicuhketūwákon.

[His father told him, “Come here. I will try the feel of you.” The old man said, “His hands are Esau’s, but his voice is Jacob’s.” And with that he started in giving him the legacy of assistance.]

13. Wtíyan ’qóssol Sahkupíwol, “Nihkaniw=c msiw pōmawsuwinúwok ktehsahqikapūwíhtūwak. Kil=oc msiw kèq³ kkisíhtun, naka=hc=ōna kwilūwik.”

[He said to his son Jacob, “In the future, you will stand above all of the people. You will be able to do manufacture everything, and you will be wealthy as well.”]

14. Malom=öte pecíye Ísa. Wpeciptun ksapuw híkon. Wtíyan wmihtáqsol, “Pecíye kkihci-kqóss.”

[Then at last Esau arrived. He brought the stew. He told his father, “Your eldest son has come.”]

³ Gatschet’s text indicates that the emphatic pronoun <kila> *kila* ‘you (sg.)’ should be inserted here, but such an insertion does not appear to fit the context.

15. Ktaqhómuhs ítom, “Wèn yùt ucíyan. Nkisi-mílan wicuhketűwákon.”

[The old man said, “Someone has been here, I have given him the legacy of assistance.”]

16. Ísa ítom, “Kis nèqt nkisi-pahculkunéhpon eli-tpeltòm, on tőké apc nkisi-pahcúlkun wicuhketűwákon.” Etuci-wkáyit nít=te neh páhan wsiwéhsol téhpu nomiyàt.

[Esau said, “Once already he had cheated me out of what I owned, and now this time he has cheated me out of the legacy of assistance.” He was angry enough to kill his brother right there if only he saw him.]

17. Sakhúpi kisi-macephúwe pihcetù ktahkómíkuk wnicalkùhk. Ísa etuci-sasötémit.

[Jacob ran off far away to the land of his uncle. Then Esau wept.]

18. Wtíyan wmihtáqsol, “Pésqon téhpu wicuhketűwákon kmílin, eli- téhpu -wihkéwik skitkómiq.” Ktaqhómuhs wmílan eli-pawatómólit.

[He said to his father, “Give me just one legacy of assistance, just that the land abounds in fat.” The old man gave him what he wanted.]