

The Singing Beaver of Missisquoi

Theophile Panadis

May 9, 1964

Odanak, PQ

Source: Gordon Day. [Abenaki texts], pp. 100–102. MS, Canadian Museum of Civilization.
Hull, PQ.

Day's transcription and literal translation are given below in (a); a retranscription by Philip LeSourd is given in (b), followed by a new translation.

1. a. ⟨Nôwadoga, agwa, gôgazejagigaden Mazipskoizibok odalodanaazinôssa wakaswak Wôbanakiiak.⟩

“It was long ago, it is said, many dirty years (colloquialism) ago on Flint River (Missisquoi) there lived in a village a few Abenakis.”

b. Nąwat=əka=ak^wa kəkahsəcakikatən Mahsipskowi-sipok wətalotanaasinąssa wahkahsəwak Wąpanahkiiak.

‘A long time ago, they say, a hell of a lot of years ago, a small number of Abenakis had a village on the Flint River (Missisquoi).’

2. a. ⟨Ni agwa zalakiwi ospôzewiwi ni gici behanem ali nôdazibad senojiwi mamakajoak.⟩

“And they say one time early in the morning and (there was) an old woman that went for water at the shore at the foot of the falls.”

b. Ni=ak^wa salahkiwi wəspəşəwiwi ni kihci-phanəm ali-nətasipat ssənociwi mamahkacoak.

‘And, they say, it was early one morning when old woman went to get water at the shore at the foot of the rapids.’

3. a. ⟨Ni onodawôn awanihi gadowi nolemakantok.⟩

“And she heard him someone softly singing (humming).”

b. Ni wənotawəŋ awanihi katawi-noləmahkantok.

‘And then she heard someone start to sing softly.’

4. a. ⟨Ni ogwilawôbin⟩

“And she looked around.”

b. Ni wək^wilawəpin.

‘Then she looked around.’

5. a. ⟨Askwa ozômi aida bezegawan, ni aiyagô askôôbid mamakaiwi.⟩

“Still too much it is foggy, and must she wait a while.”

b. Ask^wa wəsəmi aita pəsəkawan, ni ayakə askawəpit mamahkaiwi.

‘It was still too foggy to see, so she had to wait and watch for a little while.’

6. a. ⟨Zalakiwiga ki adoji spigosaig awan, ni onamiôn ni demakwa batkwabilid senek, segadalaapkok.⟩

“Suddenly it did then it lifted the fog, And she saw him then a beaver who is sitting on a rock, on a flat rock.”

b. Salahkiwi=ka=hki atoci-spikohsaik awan, ni wənamiān ni təmahk^wa patk^wapilit ssənək, ssəkatalaapskok.

‘But then suddenly the fog lifted, and there she saw a beaver sitting facing her on a rock, on a ledge.’

7. a. ⟨Ni [--ni--] odebsedawôn maôwi gagwsa wa ôpci lintok.⟩

‘And [--and--] she listened to exactly what it is this one is singing.’

b. Ni wətəpsətawān maāwi kak^wsa wa apci-lintok.

‘Then she listened to exactly what he was singing.’

8. a. ⟨Niga olintowaogon lintowôgan: “Anakwikaji gedodana”⟩

‘And he sang for her a song: ‘It will grow up to trees your town’.’

b. Ni=ka wəlintowawəkon lintowākan: “Anahkihka=ci kətotana.”

‘Then he sang a song for her: “Your town will grow up to trees.”’

9. a. ⟨Ni omôzhagsedamen, ni nda agwitta ogizi wawktamowen gagwsa alemintok.⟩

‘And she found it curious, And not right then she could not understand it what it is he continued to sing.’

b. Ni wəməshaksətamən, ni āta=ak^wa=tta wəkisi-wawtamowən kak^wsa aləmintok.

‘She found this curious, and they say she couldn’t really understand what he went on to sing.’

10. a. ⟨Na aida demakwa Nda nitta cannintowi.⟩

“That beaver not right away he didn’t stop singing.”

b. Na aita tēmahk^wa ąta ni=ttā canintowi.

‘That beaver did not stop singing right away.’

11. a. ⟨Ni mina ominawi omôjanton, ni odidamen, “Ganewaji aiyagô ojimôjagwa, ni gwilawatonô bildowiwi dôni adali odanaaziakw. Ni gemeskambaji kinawi zibo, msitegwa, niji dali golintonganô. Gowijokamgabaji. Gebaamiji olidebabiba ndaki yo dali. Baami msagen gedakiwô oji ggassowiak. Niji gedagik odali batkanninô geji Alnôbamenawak, niji gedali odanaazinô ni ojiji askamiwi.”⟩

“And again over again he began to sing, and he said, ‘But you must go away, and look for a different place where there you settle. And you will find it a certain river, a large river, and will there they will well receive you. You will have help. You will be better settled than here. More it is big your territory for your crowd. And will others they there come our brother Indians, and will you there settle there for forever.’”

b. ‘Ni mina wəminawi-mącanton, ni wətitamən, “Kanəwa=ci ayaką wəci-mąciak^wa, ni kək^wilawahtoną pilətowiwī tąni atali-otanaasiak^w. Ni kəməskaməpa=ci kinawi sibo, msihtək^wa, ni=ci tali koli-ntonəkaną. Kəwicohkaməkaba=ci. Kəpaami=ci -wəli-tapapipa ątahki yo tali. Paami-msakən kətahkiwą wəci kahsowiak. Ni=ci ketakik wətali-patkanniną kici-alənapamənawak, ni=ci kətali-otanaasiną ni wəci=ci askamiwi.’”

‘Then he started up singing again, and he said, “But you must go away from here and look for a different place where you can establish a village. And you will find a certain river, a big river, and you will be well received there. You will have help. You will be better situated

there than you are here. You will have a larger territory for your population. And then other fellow Indians of ours will arrive, and you will establish a village there forever.”

12. a. ⟨Niga ni Mazipskowizibok ni anegi ni nliwitama.⟩

“And it is that Flint River that a while ago I call it that.”

b. Ni=ka ni Mahsipskowi-sipok ni aneki ni nliwihtama.

‘And about that Flint River as I called it a while back.’

13. a. ⟨Nda -- nowanaldamen gowitamolnô maôwi dôni ni liwitôzo.⟩

“Not -- I forget it to tell you really how that is called.”

b. Aṭa, nəwanalətamən kəwihtamolənaṅ maṅwi ṭani ni liwihtəso.

‘No, I forgot to tell you just what it is called.’

14. a. ⟨Obilowiwitamenôb ni nôwad -- Dagwahôganizek.⟩

“It used to be called differently long ago -- At the little mill.”

b. Wəpiləwi-wihtamənəp ni nəwat: Tak^wahəkanisək.

‘They used to call it something different long ago: At the little sawmill.’

15. a. ⟨Dagwahôganiz ni aob waji likezôôzig abazial, ni ni (nigik) Alnôbak oliwitamenô dagwaôganizek.⟩

“A little mill there there was for sawing logs, and those Indians they called it at the little mill.”

b. Tak^wahąkanis ni aop waci-likəsąsık apasial, ni ni nikik alənapak wəliwihtaməna
Tak^wahąkanisək.

‘A little mill was there for sawing logs, so the Indians called the place “at the little sawmill.”’

16. a. ⟨Ni alemidebihlôk[g?] yo nikwôbi mamaôwi opci ôdokazia. liwitôzo ni Swanton.⟩

‘And it continues here now just as I am speaking. it is called that Swanton (Vermont).’

b. Ni aləmi-təpihlək yo nihk^wapi mamaąwi ąpci-ątohkasia. Liwihtąso ni Swanton.

‘And it is still going on now right while I am speaking. The place is called Swanton (Vermont).’