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## A Contribution to Delta Yokuts Vocabulary: Some Items from Tamukan

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*A manuscript at the National Anthropological Archives containing words in seven different languages—some of which were misidentified in the past as being “Yukian”—is reevaluated in the light of new information. A number of unattributed Yokuts words are identified, and arguments are presented for attributing these to a little-known Delta Yokuts tribelet dialect, Tamukan. Delta Yokuts was probably spoken by a greater number of tribelets than any other Yokuts language (with the possible exception of Valley Yokuts). It is evident that the known tribelet dialects exhibited a fair amount of lexical variation. Since Delta Yokuts is one of the least attested Yokuts languages, any new information concerning it is welcome.*

Among the Yokuts Indians in the northern San Joaquin Valley and Delta region, a characteristic set of dialects were spoken. However, due to the extreme disturbances and dislocations experienced by these Yokuts groups due to Spanish missionaries in the first third of the nineteenth century, increasingly aggressive Spanish and Mexican military expeditions, an epidemic (probably malaria) in 1833, and finally the Gold Rush frenzy from 1849 until about 1870, the Yokuts populations in this area were virtually wiped out. For this reason, we know relatively little about their dialects. By the 1870s, things had gone so far that Powers (1877) did not assign any territory north of the Fresno River to the Yokuts at all.<sup>1</sup> We now know that this area was equivalent to roughly the northern 40% of the aboriginal Yokuts homeland in the San Joaquin Valley.

There are a number of word-lists known from Delta Yokuts, as this distinct group of Yokuts dialects has been usefully termed in a recent article by Blevins and Golla (2005). Kroeber (1908, 1959) was a pioneer in this regard, collecting together a number of older word-lists to demonstrate that the northern part of the valley had been under Yokuts occupation at the time of European contact. None of these word-lists includes many more than 300 items, and most are much shorter. Unfortunately,

very little sentential material has survived, and no textual material at all. The word-lists were either composed at the various missions to which Yokuts people were taken, at post-mission rancherias (villages), or at various post-Gold Rush refugee settlements. Hardly any were strictly collected *in situ originis*. All date from the early 1800s to the early 1900s.

The value of even fragmentary sources is therefore considerable for this area. According to Wallace (1978), no large section of California is so little known ethnographically as the northern San Joaquin valley. This ethnographic ignorance is echoed doubly on the linguistic front as far as Delta Yokuts is concerned. Because of the above-mentioned factors, any information, no matter how meager, is of importance, and can help in filling in some of the many gaps in our knowledge.

The Tamukan or Tamkan<sup>2</sup> Yokuts were one of the more northerly Delta Yokuts-speaking tribelets. Until now, the only information that has been published about their dialect is the set of numerals from 1 to 9 (Beeler 1961). A number of probable new Tamukan Yokuts lexical items have, however, come to my notice, effectively doubling the number of words known (see below). These are contained in Manuscript 1456 of the National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian Institution. This manuscript is misleadingly entitled “Napa,” and mostly contains the results of fieldwork carried out by Jeremiah Curtin in November, 1884 among former inhabitants of Mission San José who were living at Niles and Alisal (Pleasanton), two of the post-mission rancherias occupied by this mixed Muwekma, Plains/Coast/Lake Miwok, Delta Yokuts, and Suisun group.

### THE WORDS

The Tamukan numbers are also contained in Manuscript 1456, and (as noted above) have already been published by Beeler (1961), with the omission of the numeral 10. I repeat these here:

#### *Tamukan Numbers*

yět	‘one’	cäkěñ	‘six’
ponoi	‘two’	kidé	‘seven’
cópi	‘three’	káwinta	‘eight’
tówot	‘four’	wai	‘nine’
taraswíl	‘five’	ékuke	‘ten’
(“c” stands for [ʃ])			

These are the only forms in the manuscript explicitly indicated as being Tamukan, but are by themselves sufficient to make it clear that this is a Delta Yokuts dialect, the forms for “four” and “five” being diagnostic in this respect. However, the following unattributed words also occur in the first few pages of the manuscript, located in the left margin.

#### *Unattributed Vocabulary*

puluhel	‘man’	sāsa	‘eye’
watsia	‘woman’	tuk	‘ear’
wowit	‘old man’	sour	‘beard’
otcaú	‘head’	tele	‘tooth’
"	‘hair’	beskueso	‘neck’

#### THE ATTRIBUTION

There are a number of reasons for believing the set of unattributed items to be Tamukan. First, there are, in fact, two Yokuts word-lists contained in this manuscript: one of Tamukan numerals, and one of Tawitchi numerals. Tamukan is clearly the tribelet referred to in early nineteenth century Spanish documents as Tamcan. I hypothesize that Tawitchi refers to the well-known tribelet rancheria known as Tuguits, Tuhuits, or Tugites.<sup>3</sup> But we hear more about Tamukan in MS 1456, and nothing further about Tawitchi. In addition, the Tawitchi set of numerals is incomplete, suggesting that less information was available on this dialect than on Tamukan.

Second, we find a note in MS 1456 stating that “Cholvon spoke the same as Tamukan.” Here we are reminded of the fact that the French scholar Alphonse Pinart carried out fieldwork in 1880 on another Delta Yokuts dialect, Yachikamne, working with a consultant who had lived for some time at the no longer extant rancheria of the Tcholvones (Cholvon) near Banta (Pinart 1894). According to this consultant, the speech of her rancheria (Yachik) was the same as that of the *Tcholvones* and *Tammukamne*. Thus we have two separate sources asserting the basic identity of Cholvon and Tamukan speech.

Third, the vocabulary schedule—on a page concerned with words for “Dwellings,” and otherwise featuring only items from Suisun (Southern Patwin)—contains a heading entitled Tamukan. The intention must have been to enter Tamukan equivalents for the vocabulary schedule items on this page, but for some reason this (unfortunately!) was never done.

A more general consideration is that while the Tamukan tribelet was missionized at Mission San José, the Tugites (assuming Tawitchi = Tugites) were nearly all taken to Mission Santa Clara, with only a small number ending up at San José. The Indians involved in Curtin’s fieldwork were members of a post-mission group hailing from Mission San José.

For these reasons, it seems logical to assume that there was more knowledge available to Curtin on Tamukan than on Tawitchi, and to conclude that the marginal notes are also very likely Tamukan. An additional, phonological, reason will later be adduced.

#### THE CONSULTANT

The identity of the consultant who gave the Tamukan and Tawitchi material to Curtin in 1884 is unknown, although it is suggestive that José Guzman of Niles, who died in 1934 at about the age of 80, and who was interviewed by Kroeber, Merriam, and Harrington, had a Tamukan father.<sup>4</sup>

However, by far the most widely spoken language in later years at Mission San José was Plains Miwok. Randy Milliken estimates that 59% of the population at the mission spoke a Plains Miwok dialect in 1834 (Milliken, Shoup, and Ortiz 2006; Milliken 2007), the year the mission was secularized. It is therefore quite reasonable to suppose that this was also the most widely spoken language at the post-mission refugee settlements. Kroeber (1907a) stated that most of the Indians at Pleasanton and Niles in the early twentieth century were Miwok. Presumably he meant by this that most of them were Miwok-speaking, since he had no means of establishing their actual tribal heritage.

Indeed, Merriam (1967) confirmed in 1910 that Guzman himself was a Mewko (Plains Miwok) speaker. Kroeber noted that Guzman knew more Yokuts than his consultant for Yachikamne, Trinidad (Kroeber MS: Randall Milliken, personal communication, 2006). He had clearly largely forgotten his Yokuts by 1934, when Merriam interviewed him about his ancestral language (see Note 9 below).

#### THE LOCATION OF TAMUKAN

Tamukan (Tamcan, occasionally Tapcan) was a rancheria located in the delta of the San Joaquin River that was

inhabited by speakers of a Delta Yokuts dialect. The inhabitants were apparently known as Tammukamne (Pinart 1894), as we have seen above, although this may have been a Plains Miwok designation (see Note 1 above).

The Tamukan rancheria itself must also have been within a few miles of the rancheria of the Cholvon near Banta referred to in the previous section. Milliken (1995:256, and personal communication, 2006) is of the opinion that the Tamcan lived to the north of the Old River in the San Joaquin Delta itself, while the Cholvon lived in the Banta-Tracy area to the south. A large number of already-existing marriages involving partners from the two groups are listed among the Mission San José “marriages” that were registered at the time of first missionization, which is indicative of a close social and geographical relationship between these two groups. Duran’s 1824 map, although giving a very distorted picture of the delta, does indicate the above-mentioned

“intra-delta and extra-delta” relationship between the Tamcan and the Cholvon.

### A BRIEF COMMENTARY ON THE WORDS

Here I provide a brief word-by-word commentary on the newly identified items, although I restrict my comparisons to parallels in other Delta Yokuts dialects. In order to increase readability and reduce the number of references, the primary Yokuts dialect sources referred to in this section are listed in Table 1.

#### 1. *puluhel* ‘man’

This is almost certainly written for *puluhal*, which in turn is probably meant for *pulumhal* with a voiceless nasal allophone [m̥] of /m/ not written, a frequent Yokuts recorder’s strategy in the nineteenth century (see Smith 2006). While Newman only explicitly mentions *syllable-final* sonorant devoicing (more correctly, aspiration)

Table 1

#### YOKUTS DIALECTS AND SOURCES

Tribal/areal attribution	Tribe	Kroeber 1959	Fieldwork year	Fieldworker	Source	Consultant
<b>a. Delta Yokuts dialects</b>						
Tamukan	Tamukan	-	1884	Jeremiah Curtin	Henshaw 1888	?
Tawitchi	Tugites	-	1884	Jeremiah Curtin	Henshaw 1888	?
Yachikamne	Yachikamne	A	1909	Alfred Kroeber	Kroeber 1959	Maria Trinidad Guadalupe Gonzalez
Yachikamne	Yachikamne	B	1880	Alphonse Pinart	Pinart 1894	Maria Catarina
“Lathrop”	Coybos?	C	1906	Samuel Barrett	Kroeber 1908	Charley Dorsey
“Josiminin” [‘northerners’]. Mission San Juan Bautista	?	(K)	1819	Felipe Arroyo de la Cuesta	Beeler 1971	?
“Latrūdud” [‘westerners’]. Mission Santa Cruz	?	-	1888	Henry Henshaw	Curtin 1884	Maria Wāris
“Chalostaca.” Mission Santa Cruz	Jasnif <sup>5</sup>	J	1878	Alphonse Pinart	Pinart 1878	Maria Eulogia
Coconoon	Cuccunun	H	1854	Adam Johnston	Powers 1877	?
Mission Santa Clara	?	-	ca. 1820?	José Viader? <sup>6</sup>	Blevins & Golla 2005	?
<b>b. Other Yokuts dialects</b>						
“Takin Rancheria.” Knight’s Ferry	Mayemas? <sup>7</sup>	E	1856	Adam Johnston	Powers 1877	
Noprintre	Noprintre	K	1819/1821	Felipe Arroyo de la Cuesta	Beeler 1971	
Chawchila	Chawchila		1904	Alfred Kroeber	Kroeber 1963	
Yawelmani	Yowlumne		1930	Stanley Newman	Newman 1944	
Yawdanchi	Yawdanchi		1906	Alfred Kroeber	Kroeber 1907b	

in the case of *glottalized* sonorants, as distinct from the possibility of *word-final* devoicing with all sonorants, the environment preceding /h/ would seem to be an ideal one to cause aspiration in any sonorant. For a parallel case of unwritten final devoicing/aspiration compare the base form of this same word—/p<sup>h</sup>oolum/ (Newman 1944). This appears in Latrūdut as *pālu* [polum] (in addition to *pāluḥ*). This form exhibits the same orthographic strategy as *puluhel* with omission of the nasal.

The *-hal* is a plural suffix, as is *-hay* in *pulumjai* (/p<sup>h</sup>ulum-hay/), given by Arroyo de la Cuesta as Josiminin. Other cases are Latrūdut *pulumhal*, and *pulumal*, and Jasnīl *pulubal*. This plural response for a singular item is thus evidenced from several Delta Yokuts sources, and can perhaps be explained by a common factor in the elicitation strategy for the first item asked for in interviews, as ‘man’ frequently would have been.

This item in this meaning is diagnostic for Delta Yokuts. It does occur in distant Yawelmani, but with the meaning ‘husband.’

## 2. *watsia* ‘woman’

Parallels here are *watia* (Lathrop), *watcia* (Latrūdud), and *uačeia* (Jasnīl). This form is not recorded for Yachikamne, but a diminutive form *watcatc* is, in the meaning ‘old woman’ (Kroeber 1959). It does not occur outside Delta Yokuts, although a related word occurs in some Northern Valley dialects: *huathrajai* ‘woman’ (Noprintre), *water-ii* ‘girl’ (Takin).

## 3. *wowit* ‘old man’

The only other record of this form is from Kroeber’s Yachikamne, *wōwitc*.

## 4/5. *otcau* ‘head, hair’

This is the near-universal Yokuts form /‘otr’ow/ for ‘head.’ For hair we often find a separate term in Delta Yokuts: *tolus* (Coconoon), *dōlus* (Yachikamne, Kroeber 1959), *tolús* (Mission Santa Clara Doctrina), and a more southerly-occurring item, *kxootaš* (Jasnīl), shared with the even more southerly Northern Valley Noprintre dialect *cótas*.

Some Delta Yokuts dialects have a Spanish borrowing for ‘head,’ a curiosity we will refer to in connection with the Tamukan word for ‘neck’ below. [N.B. Here, and

passim, I use the digraph *tr* for convenience’ sake to indicate the retroflex stop series.]

## 6. *sāsa* ‘eye’

This is the general Yokuts form /sasa’/ for ‘eye.’ A number of Delta Yokuts dialects display what appears to be a raised front vowel in this word, but it is difficult to explain this. Kroeber’s Yachikamne has *sisa*, Coconoon has *sessah*, while the Northern Valley Yokuts Takin also has *cessak*. Tamukan appears to share this feature, conceivably a raised allophone of /a/. What is possibly a similar phenomenon may appear in *puluhel* and *cākēn* (see above).

## 7. *tuk* ‘ear’

Again we have a general Yokuts word—/t<sup>h</sup>uk’/. Nothing more needs to be said about this.

## 8. *sour* ‘beard’

This form is extremely interesting. The Yawelmani form /taam’utr<sup>h</sup>/ is the form found for ‘beard’ in most Valley Yokuts dialects, as exemplified, for example, by Chawchila *drāmutr* (presumably for *dāmutr*—see Kroeber 1963) and Noprintre *tamuths*. However, for Delta Yokuts we have forms from Mission Santa Cruz consultants that resemble the Tamukan form in having an initial sibilant fricative. The Jasnīl dialect has the form *šoobutx*, while the so-called Latrūdud dialect has the form *sābut*.<sup>8</sup> Probably we could phonemicize the Santa Cruz forms as /šoom(‘)utr<sup>h</sup>/ and /soom(‘)utr<sup>h</sup>/ respectively, with the [b] allophone of /m(‘)/ appearing in both forms.

Now to return to the Tamukan item. On the reasonable supposition that phonological interference from Plains Miwok was involved in the transmission of these Tamukan words, I hypothesize that what Curtin heard was [sooβur] or [soowur]. The final [r] could be an attempt at the final retroflex stop, which also does not occur in recorded Plains Miwok dialects. If this is correct, then we could reconstruct the actual Tamukan form as /soom(‘)utr<sup>h</sup>/, in line with the two Mission Santa Cruz forms. In support of this we have the fact that in Southern Sierra Miwok (Broadbent 1964:12) the allophony of retroflex /t/ is stated as [t̚], [d̚], or a flap r. The [β] or [w] could well represent a Miwok-influenced attempt at [b], a sound not present natively in Plains Miwok. Spanish intervocalic /b/ ([β]) in loans is usually represented

in Plains Miwok as /w/ (cf. Spanish *sábado* ‘Saturday,’ which is borrowed as /saawulu-/-—see Callaghan 1984). For completeness I note that in Southern Sierra Miwok Broadbent gives the range of allophones of /p/ as [p], [b] or [β], indicating an allophonic relationship between [b] and [β].

The relationship with the Yawelmani and other Valley Yokuts forms for ‘beard’ is not as straightforward as it might appear. Northern Valley Yokuts Noprintre has, beside *tamuths* ‘beard,’ the form *siomuths* ‘body hair.’ This last presumably represents /soom(‘)utr<sup>h</sup>/. The sibilant onset and rounded vowel in the initial syllable suggests very strongly that this form is cognate with the Delta Yokuts forms, despite their somewhat different semantics. Some sound-symbolic relationship between the two forms cannot be ruled out, of course.

The occurrence of an original voiced stop allophone in this word in Tamukan—if we are correct in our reconstitution of one—is an additional piece of evidence suggesting that these marginal forms should indeed be attributed to Tamukan and not Tawitchi. The Tamukan numerals *taraswil* and *kidé* have the original phoneme /n/ represented by “r, d.” The parallel “denasalization” is what I am suggesting occurs in *soofw|ur*, which I have reconstituted as [soobutr<sup>h</sup>] (= /soom(‘)utr<sup>h</sup>/). For what it is worth, in the Tawitchi numerals we see no sign of this phenomenon. So, for instance, the Tawitchi equivalent of Tamukan *kidé* is *kínek*. That Tamukan really had the feature of sonorant denasalization (cf. Smith and Botma 2006) is confirmed by the mission register variant spelling *Tapcan*, beside *Tamcan*.

### 8. *tele* ‘tooth’

Once again we find a general Yokuts word, /t<sup>h</sup>eliy/. All that can be noted here is that it has the northern form /t<sup>h</sup>eliy/ rather than the southern form /t<sup>h</sup>eyiy/. This is unsurprising.

### 9. *bescueso* ‘neck’

This is certainly the Spanish *pecueso* ‘neck.’ This is a surprising word to find as a loan, if indeed it is meant as a Tamukan form. But we do have the parallel of ‘head’ referred to above. Three Delta Yokuts sources give a surprising Spanish loan for the word ‘head.’ The first of these is the Santa Clara Doctrina form *cauhahasau*, which Blevins and Golla insightfully derive from Spanish

*cabeza*, interpreting it phonologically as /kawa’ašaw/,<sup>9</sup> and the second the Jasnil form, which Pinart records as *kxauisa*. This we could possibly phonemicize as /k<sup>h</sup>awisa/ if the writing *kx* is meant to indicate aspiration of the /k/. The Latrūdut form is *kawisa*, which seems similar, but does not tell us anything about possible aspiration.

The reason for the use of a Spanish word for ‘neck’ in the mission-influenced Tamukan dialect could possibly lie in the confusion that appears in many recordings by Europeans of the Yokuts items for ‘nape,’ ‘neck,’ ‘throat,’ ‘windpipe,’ and ‘gullet’ (cf. Kroeber 1963:212). The use of a Spanish item for ‘head’ might have arisen under similar circumstances at some missions, since some dialects, like Tamukan, use the same Yokuts term /‘otr’ow/ for ‘head’ and ‘hair.’

It must be admitted that this slight addition to Tamukan vocabulary does not add much to our existing knowledge of Delta Yokuts dialects as a whole.<sup>10</sup> However, the Delta Yokuts character of Tamukan is confirmed, an important fact in itself, since it is the most north-westerly dialect for which we have data. In addition, four out of the nine new items have only been found in Delta Yokuts dialects. Even such confirmation is useful in our present state of ignorance.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>In the appendix to Powers’ book, two northern Yokuts word-lists dating from the 1850s are provided, from the Stanislaus and Merced river drainages, but no reference is made to these in the main text.

<sup>2</sup>That the Yokuts version of the name is Tamcan, with no epenthetic vowel, is clear. The name occurs frequently in the mission records, and is always written Tamcan (or Tapcan). I am indebted to Bill Weigel for the suggestion that *Tamukan* represents an attempt to render /tam’kan/, with a glottalized /m’. However, the alternative spelling with *p* can be explained as due to the widespread phenomenon of nasal devoicing in Delta Yokuts. Since Tamukan is the form of the name associated with the words in MS 1456, I will employ it here.

<sup>3</sup>The spellings of this tribelet name in the mission records are as follows—Santa Clara: *Tugite*, *Tugites*; San José: *Tuquits/Tuguits*, *Tugites*, *Tuhuits*. As Yokuts in general lacks a true voiced stop series, the writing *g*, *gu* probably indicates a /w/ or /w’/ phoneme, as does *hu* (*qu* would have to be a misreading, or possibly an indication that we have glottalized /w/ here). The Yokuts form of this name would then be something like /tuwiti(‘)/ or /tuwitri(‘)—the nature of the stops, plain, aspirated, or glottalized, remains unclear.

<sup>4</sup>His aboriginally-born father was still living in Pleasanton at the time of the 1880 U.S. census.

<sup>5</sup>The consultant for the “Chalostaca” dialect, Eulogia, has been identified by Randall Milliken (personal communication, 2006) as a member of the Jasnil/Atsnil tribelet from around Turlock.

<sup>6</sup>This identification was made by Randall Milliken.

<sup>7</sup>José Patricio can probably be identified with Juan José Patricio (born at Mission Santa Clara in 1835, of Mayemas parentage).

<sup>8</sup>The symbol *â* is used by Henshaw to indicate a back mid-rounded vowel, presumably of a fairly low quality.

<sup>9</sup>This form looks like a locative in /-w/, i.e. ‘on the head.’

<sup>10</sup>There is a possible additional fragmentary source of Tamukan vocabulary. Bennyhoff (1977:128) quotes Merriam (n.d.) as reporting finding a Yatchicumne survivor, Joe Guzman, living at Niles in 1934 “who was able to remember six words of his language (one was Yokuts, one was Miwok, one was Spanish, and three were unique).” As we know, Delta Yokuts has a number of lexical items that occur in no other Yokuts language. Possibly Merriam’s “unique” words fall into this category. Despite Merriam’s description of Guzman as Yatchicumne, his father is listed in the baptismal register of Mission San José as Tamcan, and his mother as Lacquisemne. Clearly, “his language” must have been Yokuts. I have had no access to this source.

Note: Pre-modern transcriptions are given in italics.

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I am very grateful to Victor Golla, Randall Milliken, and Bill Weigel for discussions of and comments on various aspects of this paper. Milliken has informed me that he now considers the Tamukan to have lived to the north and east of the Old River. This involves a minor change in the location indicated elsewhere (Milliken 1995:229). I would also like to acknowledge his invaluable assistance in identifying particular Yokuts individuals appearing in the Spanish mission registers. Any errors are my responsibility.

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