

**BULLETIN 27,
TSIMSHIAN TEXTS**

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**FRANZ BOAS & SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION BUREAU
OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY. ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS**

BULLETIN 27, TSIMSHIAN TEXTS

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY: J. W. POWELL, DIRECTOR
BULLETIN 27

TSIMSHIAN TEXTS

BY

FRANZ BOAS



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TSIMSHIAN TEXTS

NASS RIVER DIALECT

Recorded and translated by
FRANZ BOAS

INTRODUCTION

The following texts were collected in Kinkolith, at the mouth of the Nass river, during the months of November and December, 1894, while I was engaged in researches under the auspices of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. The principal object of these investigations was a study of the Athapascan tribe of Portland canal, and the following texts were collected incidentally only. The ethnologic results of these investigations were published in the reports of the Committee on the Northwestern Tribes of Canada of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.¹

The texts are in the Nass River dialect of the Tsimshian language. The dialect is called by the natives Nisqa'e. The texts were obtained from four individuals—Philip, Moses, Chief Mountain, and Moody. By far the greater number of them are myths of the tribe. Judging from similar myths which I collected in previous years among the Tsimshian proper,² they are only moderately well told.

Possibly the method of transcribing sounds is not quite satisfactory. I have not been able to determine definitely if there are one or two palatized l's. I consider it probable that there may be two; but in the present texts all the palatized l's are rendered by one character. There is also a certain inconsistency in my perception of the surds and sonants, the fortis, or the surd followed by a hiatus, very often sounding similar to the sonant. I have not endeavored to make the spelling throughout consistent, but have rather followed the transcription which seemed to me most appropriate at the time when I wrote the texts down.

FRANZ BOAS.

NEW YORK, *June, 1899.*

¹ Report of the 65th meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Ipswich, 1895, pp. 569-586.

² Franz Boas, *Indianische Sagen von der nord-pazifischen Küste Amerikas*, Berlin, 1895, pp. 272-305.

Alphabet

a, e, i, o, u	have their continental sounds (short).
ā, ē, ī, ō, ū	long vowels.
ɛ	obscure e in flower.
ʌ, ɛ, ɪ, ɔ, ʊ	vowels not articulated, but indicated by position of the month.
ä	in German Bär.
â	aw in law.
ô	o German voll.
ê	e in bell.
ai	i in island.
au	ow in how.
L	posterior palatal l; the tip of tongue touches the alveoli of the lower jaw, the back of the tongue is pressed against the hard palate; generally surd. The occurrence of the corresponding sonant is doubtful. Possibly there is still another l, produced a little nearer the front part of the hard palate.
q	velar k.
g	velar g.
k	English k.
g'	palatalized g, almost gy.
k'	palatalized k, almost ky.
x	ch in German Bach.
X	x pronounced at the posterior border of the hard palate.
x'	palatal x as in German ich.
s	pronounced with open teeth, therefore somewhat similar to English sh.
d, t } b, p } g, k }	as in English, but surd and sonant more difficult to distinguish.
h	as in English.
y	as in year.
w	as in English, probably always aspirated.
l } m } n }	as in English; as terminal sounds articulated but inaudible, unless followed by a word beginning with a vowel.
,	a pause; when following an initial or terminal mute, it tends to increase the stress of the latter.

TXĀ'MSEM AND LÔQÔBOLĀ'

[1-5 told by Moses; 6-8, 2a, and 5a told by Phillip]

1. There was a town in which a chief and chieftainess were living. The chieftainess had done something bad. She had a lover, but the chief did not know it. The young man loved the chieftainess very much. He often went to the place where she lived with the chief. Then the chieftainess resolved, "I will pretend to die." She pretended to be very sick, because she wanted to marry that man. After a short time she pretended to die. Then all the people cried. Before she died the chieftainess said, "Make a large box in which to bury me when I am dead." The people made a box and put her

TXĀ'MSEM AND LÔQÔBOLĀ'

1.	Hēt ^k l. qal-ts'a'p.	Nlk'ē	k'āll	sem'ā'g'it	dē-k'āll	sig'idemma'q.	1
	There stood	a town.	Then	one	chief	and one	chieftainess.
	Nlk'ē	sg'it.	hwil.	sig'idemma'q.	K'āll	lgo-g'a'tg'ê,	nlnē t'an
	Then	had	done	the chieftainess.	One	little	man, he who
	lēl'luksl.	sig'idemma'q.	N'g'it	hwilā'x'l	sem'ā'g'it.	SEM-s'epeni.	3
	stole	often	the chieftain- ess.	Not	knew it	the chief.	Very he loved
	sig'idemma'q	t'an	qaqā'ōdet	al	ded'ā't	al	awa'al
	the chieftainess	who	went there	to	she was	in proximity	of the chief.
	tgōnl	sa-gā'ōtk'l	sig'idemma'q:	“Ānl	dem	nō'ōē	al
	this	resolved	the chieftainess:	“Good	(fut.)	I am	and (fut.)
	si-bē'ek"seē.”	Nlk'ē	ā'd'fksk'l	dem	hwil	s'epk'l	sig'idemma'q.
	make I lie.”	Then	came	(fut.)	being	sick	the chieftain- ess.
	Nlk'ē	wi-t'ē'sl	ha-s'epk'l	al	si-bē'k"stg'ê	dēnt	hwilā
	Then	was great	sickness	at	she	a lie	(fut.)
	k'āll	g'at,	qan	hēt.	N'g'i	mak'l	sg'ēl.
	one	man,	there- fore	said so.	Not	long	lay
	nō'ōt.	Nlk'ē	sig'a'tk'l.	txanē'tk'l.	qal-ts'a'p.	Nlk'ē	tgōnl
	she was died.	Then	cried	all the	people.	Then	this
	sig'idemma'q:	“Tse	si-lāisem	xpēis	tse	hwil	lō-sg'i'ēē.”
	the chieftainess:	“Make	that large	a box	where	in	I shall
	nlk'ēt	dzā'pdēr.	xpēist.	Nlk'ēt	lō-mā'qdēt	lā'ōt.	Nlk'ēt
	then	they made	a box.	Then	in	they put	in it.
					her		Then

into it. They put it on the branches of a tree in the woods. The chieftainess had a spoon and a fish knife in her box. She pretended to be dead. For two nights the chief went into the woods, and sat right under the box in which the chieftainess was lying. Then he ceased to cry. Behold, there were maggots falling down from the bottom of the box. Then the chief thought, "She is full of maggots." But actually the chieftainess was scraping the spoon with her fish knife, and the scrapings looked just like maggots. In the evening her lover went into the woods. He climbed the tree and knocked on the box, saying, "Let me in, ghost!" He said so twice. Then the chieftainess replied, "Ha-ha! I pretend to make maggots out of myself

- 1 q'aldix'-ma'qdet al g'ilē'lix'. Nlk'et ma'qsaandēl gan.
 in the rear they put at in the woods. Then they put her on a tree.
 of the houses her
- 2 Ts'ōsg'im nak', nlk'et lō-dā'ml. sīg'idemna'ql q'aldō'x' qanl.
 A little while, then in held in the chieftainess a spoon and
 her hands
- 3 ha-q'ō'l. Bēk'l hwī'ltg'ē. Nīg'idē nō'ōt. Nla g'ē'lp'el yu'ksa
 a knife to She lied she did so. Not she was (Perf.) two evenings
 split salmon.
- 4 qa'nē-hwīla q'aldix'-iū'l sem'āg'it al lōgōl-dep-d'āt al laXl
 always in the rear went the chief under he sat at under
 of the houses
- 5 hwīl lē-sg'īl xpē'is hwīl lō-sg'īl sīg'idemna'q. la Lēsk'l
 where on was the box where in lay the chieftain- When finished
 ess.
- 6 wi-yē'tk'l sem'āg'it, gwina'dēl, smā'wun qa'nē-hwīla mak't al
 crying the chief, behold, maggots always fell at
 down
- 7 bak't al siā'nL xpē'ist. Nlk'ē tgōnl hēt qātL sem'āg'it:
 came at the bottom of the box. Then this said the heart of the chief:
 out of
- 8 "la smā'wun da." Dē'yal qā'ōtl sem'āg'it. Tgōnl hwīl
 "It is all maggots." Thus said the heart of the chief. This did
- 9 sīg'idemna'qg'ē. la'lbel q'aldō'x' al ha-q'ō'l. Nlk'et hōg'īgāL
 the chieftainess. She the spoon with the fish Then like
 scraped knife.
- 10 smā'wunL lā q'am-lā'lbeqskt al q'aldō'x'. Nlk'ē huX yu'ksa.
 maggots (perf.) refuse of scraping at the spoon. Then again it was
 evening.
- 11 Nlk'ē huX q'aldix'-iū'l an-k'ō'Xt. Nlk'et men-hē'tēnl gan.
 Then again to the rear went her sweetheart. Then up he placed a tree.
 of the houses
- 12 Nlk'ē men-iū'l g'a'tg'ē. Nlk'et nā-d'isd'ē'st. Nlk'ē tgōnl
 Then up went the man. Then with he his hand knocked. Then this
- 13 hē'tg'ē: "Ts'ent'ēnē, lū'laq. Ts'ent'ēnē, lū'laq."¹ G'ē'lp'el
 he said: "Let me enter, ghost. Let me enter, ghost." Twice
- 14 hē'tg'ē. Nlk'ē dē'lemexk'l sīg'idemna'q: "Hāhā, algwā'l
 he said so. Then answered the chieftain- "Hāhā, therefore
 ess.
- 15 qan sīsqaxsā'ntg'ē." Nlk'et hux q'angō'ul la hā'bel an-sg'ē'ist.
 I pretend to make mag- Then again she opened the cover the grave.
 gots out of myself."

¹These words are in Tsimshian dialect.