Salish Etymological Dictionary. AERT H. KUIPERS. University of Montana
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Montana, 2002. Pp. x + 240. $20.00 (paper).

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We have, at last, a comprehensive etymological dictionary of the Salish language family.
With twenty-three languages, this is one of the largest language families in North
America. Kuipers has been working on this dictionary since the late 1960s. Early
versions, or portions thereof, have appeared off and on since that time. Now we have the
finished product, and most welcome it is.

After various items of front matter, there are 121 pages of Proto-Salish recon-
structions and descendant cognate forms supporting them. This section is followed by 22
pages of Proto–Coast Salish sets, and then 45 pages of Proto–Interior Salish sets. It
should be noted that Bella Coola, treated by most as a branch of Salish by itself, is
included as a subdivision of Coast Salish by Kuipers. Next we find 12 pages of suffixes
(mostly lexical suffixes) for the same three groupings. Then there are short sections of
Central Salish roots and "Local Coast Salish–Lillooet/Thompson Elements." Finally,
there is an index of non-Salish elements (because forms from other languages, especially
Wakashan, are included when something similar to a Salish set was found there), and
finally a very good bibliography. There is, unfortunately, no English finder list.

Among the things included in the front matter are a list of abbreviations, a rough
map of the Salish languages, and a list of abbreviations of language names, followed by
Kuipers's own classification of Salish languages and a chart of his reconstructed
phonemes, both of which differ somewhat from what others have proposed. There is also
a very good introduction, which should be read carefully by anyone using this dictionary.
It lays out Kuipers's procedures, gives justifications for various things he does, and
explains carefully his nontraditional classification of the Salish languages and why he
has rejected some earlier proposals on the reconstruction of various elements (such as
those for a Proto-Salish *r, or those regarding the correspondence of Clallam and Straits
č, č', η to p, p', m elsewhere in Salish).

For anyone not familiar with the patterns of Salish roots and stems, it should be
noted that in the body of the dictionary alphabetization ignores prefixes, especially the
very common *s-* prefix. Kuipers sometimes reconstructs *s-* along with a root when it
appears to go back to Proto-Salish. Alphabetical order in the dictionary is first by the
initial consonant of the root, and next by the second consonant of the root, whether or not
there is an intervening vowel. Vowel order is not consistent; this is no problem because of
the small number of instances of any specific C_1-C_2 combination.

There are a large number of forms reconstructed with alternate vowels (*i/a, u/a,* and
a few *u/i* and *V/ə*), alternate consonants (ejective/nonejective, labialized/nonlabialized,
velar/uvular, *l/y, l/n*), or variation in the order of consonants (called here "inversions").
Although at first this might seem confusing, it actually represents the nature of Salish
cognate sets, and provides rich and (now) easily accessible data for further study of these
kinds of alternations in Salish. The vowel alternations represent ablaut pairs; ablaut is
complex in Salish, and has received little attention. The consonant alternations have
received virtually no attention; some probably represent sound symbolic alternations.

Coverage in this dictionary is remarkably good; I found very few forms missing from
either Upper Chehalis or Columbian, the languages I know best. On the other hand,
there is very little data from Pentlatch, Nooksack, Cowlitz, Quinault, or Lower Chehalis,

but that is because data on those languages are hard to come by; they would only infrequently add anything to the reconstructed sets, and would seldom affect the reconstructions themselves. One rather interesting addition, however, would be Quinault (on the outer coast of Washington) *citxʷ* 'board' (as used for plank houses), which goes very nicely with the Proto–Interior Salish set *citxʷ* 'house, lodging' (p. 161), and moves the form firmly back to Proto-Salish. Missing completely are the "emphatic" (predicative) pronouns found in all Salish languages. On the other hand, why reconstruct a Proto–Coast Salish word for 'horse' (p. 152)? The horse did not reach the area until the latter part of the eighteenth century, too late for Proto–Coast Salish. The name probably spread with the animal.

A number of points could use some clarification for those unfamiliar with some of the finer details of Salish languages. I give just a few of these here.

Readers should add "CV" to the list of abbreviations on page vii; this refers to the "Comparative Salishan Vocabularies" of Boas (1925; see p. 236). There is a brief comment on the use of this work on page 2.

The *c > θ* shift (p. 3) also occurred in Pentlatch.

On developments of pharyngeals (p. 3): Columbian at first devoiced ꞓ to *ḥ* only in syllable-initial position; subsequent changes brought these two pharyngeals into contrast between vowels. The phoneme *ḥʷ* occurs in only one Columbian morpheme (*ʔə́ḥʷaʔ* 'cough, have a cold'), and onomatopoeia is involved here.

"In [Georgia Strait languages] where the original velars became palatals there are words with k k'" (p. 5): this is true of most Coast Salish languages.

Regarding the occasional presence in Upper Chehalis of *y* from *l* (p. 6, paragraph C): *qal/y* shows no Upper Chehalis form with *y*; perhaps *q'ilt*, *q'iyt* 'day(light), sky' is meant, but there the Upper Chehalis form is aberrant in other ways, and *šiyqʼt* 'dawn' is probably not the same etymon. Upper Chehalis *t'íqi-* from Proto–Coast Salish *t'əlqay* 'soak' fits only if it assumed that the first vowel is from *y*; but Upper Chehalis regularly loses *l* before another consonant, so the absence of *l* here does not demonstrate the point. A better example can be found under Proto-Salish *kʷul* 'to borrow'.

The first "Ch" (Upper Chehalis) in the middle of page 17 should be "Ck" (Chilliwack).

On page 70, *sməyáw* 'a large feline or canine' means 'beaver' in Pentlatch, making one wonder just what the Proto-Salish animal might have been.

On page 71, *naqas* 'one' is probably a loan from Sahaptian, but how did it get into Twana?

Three lines up from the bottom of page 146, under *s-pəču ʔ* 'watertight basket': "Ch" (Upper Chehalis) should read "Lo" (Lower Chehalis).

Chinook also has *táxəm* for 'six', paralleling Proto–Coast Salish *t'əxə(m)* (p. 153).

The suffix *-ay* 'tree, bush, plant' (p. 212) occurs fossilized as *-i* or *-iʔ* in Upper Chehalis *catáwi* and Thompson *cétwiʔ* 'cedar' (to be seen on p. 138).

Finally, I would like to make an alternative suggestion to one class of Kuipers's reconstructions. On page 7, he says that "roots beginning in *kʷu kʷ'u xʷu* mostly retain labialized velars but in individual words in individual languages shift to ču č'u šu." For these I would prefer to reconstruct a plain *ku, k'u, xu*, sequences that do not occur in most present-day Salish languages—but they can occur at least in Columbian. These could then go one of two routes: the velar could labialize before the *u*, or (before that happened) the velar could shift forward to an alveopalatal.

All in all, this is an excellent work of scholarship, which will be the cornerstone of further studies of Proto-Salish lexica and will be invaluable in any attempt to relate Salish to other language families. Much can be added to it in terms of forms from individual languages, but the reconstructions themselves will surely stand for a long time.

References

Boas, Franz
    1925   Comparative Salishan Vocabularies. American Philosophical Society Library, Boas Collection, MS B63c S2 Pt. 3. Philadelphia.