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The Penobscot Dictionary Project: Preferences
and Problems of Format, Presentation, and Entry

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The responsibilities of the lexicographer of a bilingual dictionary are many and onerous. They include the following multiple duties: striving for a relative completeness of entry which from a practical point of view is almost unattainable; a clarity of style of presentation to facilitate reference by both professional linguists and informed laymen; accuracy and completeness of translation, especially when multiple meanings are involved; an indication of antonyms and synonyms; the inclusion of personal and place-names, as well as eponyms and terms for epic personages and mythological beings whether benevolent or malevolent; the presentation of appropriate or poignant examples of usage and idiom; the inclusion of relevant data on dialectal variation; and the incorporation of succinct accounts of an ethnographic nature which affect or involve lexical meaning and usage, reflecting the cultural diversity of the peoples who spoke or are still speaking the two languages.

Algonquian lexicography so far has made little progress in this century despite auspicious beginnings in the nineteenth century. Although one is forced to recognize the more or less deficient character of the earlier works, the printed Algonquian language dictionaries of the following authors come to mind with their dates of first publication, namely: Rasles (1833), Baraga (1853), Watkins (1865), Lacombe (1874), Cuoq (1886), Zeisberger (1887), Rand (1888), Dencke (attributed author, edited by Brinton and Anthony, 1888), and Tims (1889). Three others published in the early twentieth century, those of Lemoine (1901), Trumbull (1903), and Petter (1915), were completely or largely composed in the nineteenth century. Of all these, the Ojibwa dictionary of Baraga and that of Cree by Watkins are the most commendable and are still extremely useful. Both are now considerably over a century old. Only recently has there been a renaissance of interest in the compilation of adequate dictionaries of the various Algonquian languages, and it is to be hoped that this resurgence will not falter.

The posthumous appearance of Bloomfield's Menomini dictionary in 1975, which the author completed about 1946, is a very favorable development, and thanks are due to the editor, Charles Hockett, that it has finally seen the light of day. Bloomfield modestly called it a "lexicon" rather than a dictionary, although it is as replete as many other works which have been titled as dictionaries. However, there are regretfully some adverse aspects concerning the Menomini lexicon. The publication format is a paperbound glue-and-paste job in which the leaves are not folded and sewed, and readily fall out when the paste dries or the volume is subjected to use. Some uncertainty and confusion of the short front vowels /ε/e/i/ exists in many forms. There is undoubtedly much Menomini vocabulary which is not recorded. In fact, some vocabulary can be found in

Bloomfield's Menomini texts which cannot be located in the lexicon. Examples are: nehkápawát 'when it dissolved' (p. 10), and ayānawihisit 'she grew faint' (p. 380), unless the first represents nehka·pa·we·w 'he, it soaks until soft' as given in the lexicon (compare Cree tihka·pa·we·w 'it dissolves'), and the second a reduplicated form of a·nawehesow 'he fails, gives up'. In either case, at least, the meanings require elaboration, or they may be separate forms.

There are two chief problems in forming a Penobscot dictionary, namely: (1) the best approach to the lexical materials found in the older Eastern Abenaki dictionaries of the Jesuit missionaries, and (2) the difficulties of efficient dictionary entry that stem from the phenomenon of syncope in some but not all manifestations of the same morpheme. Both are more complicated matters than is apparent on the surface.

In recent years some Algonquianists have been disposed to give an excess of due faith and credit to the linguistic materials inherited from the past which have been recorded by missionaries and travellers. These have some legitimate interest and usefulness, but should be used with extreme caution and one must not go overboard and attribute virtues to them which they often do not possess. Most of these records are very deficient from the points of view of phonology, dialectology, and semantics. The main focus of missionaries was proselytism, not linguistics, and many of them were relatively ignorant men whose outstanding virtues were altruism and devotion. Only in the case of the extinct languages do the records of the distant past assume major importance, simply because that is all there is and ever will be available.

There are several dialects of the Eastern Abenaki language, namely Penobscot, Caniba, Arosagunticook, Pigwacket (Pequaket), and probably Sokoki. The latter, once spoken in the upper Connecticut River valley, may be linguistically identical with Pigwacket, as shown by a study of place-names and other inconclusive historical inferences, and was almost certainly an Eastern Abenaki dialect. Sokokis were the earliest migrants to the Abenaki bourgades on the St. Lawrence River at Sillery, Bécancour, Three Rivers, St. Francis, and St. Francis de Sales. The Jesuit recorders did not distinguish these dialects and lumped them all as Abenaki. Consequently it is difficult to disentangle Abenaki dialectology. Also, beginning in 1675 and continuing for nearly a century, Abenaki groups and families were in constant movement back and forth from northern New England to the St. Lawrence valley as the exigencies of the intercolonial wars required. When Father Sebastien Rasles first came to the Kennebec in the autumn of 1694, Norridgewock was already a refugee village and contained families from lower Maine and from the former Caniba village of Taconock and others on the coast. All the missionary bourgades on the St. Lawrence were also refugee villages and inhabited by Abenakis from various locations in northern New England. The Bécancour Abenaki

village at which Frank Speck early in this century obtained some texts from the last speaker, François Neptune, was first settled by Sokokis, but later the major element were Canibas who started moving there as early as 1704. Properly speaking there is no Wawenock dialect, and what he recorded from Neptune is essentially Caniba.

The three earliest and most valuable Abenaki dictionaries by Jesuits are those of Fathers Sebastien Rasles, Joseph Aubery, and an anonymous manuscript entitled Racines Abnaguises preserved in the Archives of the Séminaire de Québec, Université Laval, in Québec City. The latter is undated but apparently older than the works of Rasles and Aubery, and was almost certainly composed at Sillery near Québec, or less likely at St. Francis de Sales on the Chaudière River, sometime between 1675 and 1695, but probably during the 1680's before the onset of King William's War in 1689. So far my efforts to identify the handwriting have been inconclusive. The manuscript runs to 129 pages, but unfortunately pages 33 to 98 inclusive are missing. I have found this dictionary fragment, despite its brevity, to be of very high quality both as to recording and translation, and in these respects it is superior to those of Rasles and Aubery. The dialect it records differs considerably from Penobscot and Caniba, but is definitely an Eastern Abenaki dialect, and is probably Pigwacket or Sokoki, if these two are not actually the same or nearly so.

In the light of reports of recent rapid linguistic changes in other Algonquian languages, for example Menomine, Fox, Ojibwa, Delaware, and Atsina, the Eastern Abenaki dialects (Caniba at Bécancour as recorded by Speck, and Penobscot) of the early twentieth century show little linguistic change from the records of the late seventeenth century. However, there probably has been minor vocabulary loss. Even the loanwords from French and English which entered the language during the seventeenth century are the same and few additions have been made in the interim. The conservatism of Eastern Abenaki is apparent. Modern Penobscot scarcely differs from seventeenth century Penobscot.

The writing system employed by the Jesuit missionaries for recording Eastern Abenaki has the following deficiencies: (1) suprasegmentals which are phonemic are not indicated at all; (2) a and aĩ (tense α) are confused with slight to moderate frequency, showing that aĩ was probably not a nasalized vowel in any Eastern Abenaki dialect since Frenchmen with nasalized vowel phonemes in their native speech would probably not fail to hear the contrast accurately; (3) the contrasts of k, hk, kk, and s, hs, ss, and hss, and so forth, are not distinguished; (4) the character \bar{g} , and the sometimes inconsistently used variants \bar{g} and \bar{g} , are very inadequate, and may represent w, o, wo, wa, ew, and ewe; and (5) e (schwa ə) is not used consistently, especially by Rasles, sometimes being inserted incorrectly between consonants when there is a cluster, and sometimes being omitted when there is no cluster. However, in justice to Rasles, in his late recordings when he had a better knowledge of the language, he did distinguish hk (which he wrote 'k)

from kk, and ht (his t) from tt, and so on. This Aubery never did.

The Abenaki dictionary of Rasles, the first Algonquian language dictionary ever published (in 1833), has been the most extensively and widely quoted over the years of any Algonquian dictionary. Not only have many linguists and philologists quoted it, but many historians and naturalists. Among the latter Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Palmer are to be mentioned. It was composed from 1690 to 1721 by Father Rasles for his own use, and was never revised or corrected by him for publication. Entries were made at various times and at several places, first at Sillery, on a few visits to Bécancour, and mostly at Norridgewock on the upper Kennebec River. Most of the lexicon is undoubtedly Caniba, but other Abenaki dialects are sometimes represented and there are a few terms which do not seem to belong to any Abenaki dialect. Both of the latter groups seem for the most part to have been recorded at Sillery. Many translations appear to be situational interpretations rather than true translations, especially the earlier ones. The materials of both Rasles and Aubery suggest that the hardships of missionary life in the wilderness may have at times adversely affected the recordings. Some errors may be due to the fact that they made new entries of terms they had heard during the day by candlelight at night, and fatigue and the lapse of many hours sometimes impaired their sound impressions and linguistic memories. Father Rasles was a thorn in the flesh to many of the New Englanders because he urged the Abenakis to stand their ground and oppose English encroachment on their lands. He lost his dictionary and other papers in January 1722 when some English soldiers under Colonel Thomas Westbrook raided Norridgewock in time of peace and stole his possessions while he escaped to the safety of the woods. France and England were at peace at the time, there was no state of general war, and the Massachusetts Council and Governor Dummer did not declare war on the Abenakis until July 1722. The Rasles manuscript was examined in the Harvard University Library. The writing is large and clear. There were several types of ink used but none are faded to the point of illegibility. The editor of the published version, John Pickering, has made quite a number of errors in interpretation and transcription, as well as some omissions. However, most of the material has been published faithfully.

To illustrate the character, reliability, and difficulties involved in the use of the Jesuit Abenaki dictionaries, a considerable number of excerpts have been assembled from the published version of the dictionary of Rasles, without checking the original manuscript. The first reference numerals are to the manuscript pages, and the second to the Pickering pagination. To these have been added some forms from Aubery's manuscript dictionary. Each item is followed by modern Penobscot (marked Pb) equivalents elicited from Penobscot speakers followed by accurate English translations, and sometimes by comments.

- (1) Rasles (314-315, 475) and (366-367, 461)
psakédar - espèce de lèpre
psakédémerek8 - il l'a (wrong reading of k for s or
 's)

Aubery

pesakkédé - chancre, pl. pesakkétar

Pb

pesáhkete - 'dark burned spot, petechia, ecchymosis,
 chancre', pl. pesáhketal

pesahketémolehso - 'he has spotted fever (menin-
 gococcic meningitis)'

It will be noted that Aubery's translation and recording are superior to that of Rasles.

- (2) Rasles (111, 412)
nekesañrek8a - je les ai longs (mes cheveux)

Pb

nəkəsələkwa - 'I ache in the armpits'

- (3) Rasles (457, 526) and (384-385, 502)
arégnasé8aŋgan - savon
nederégnemen - je savonne; je frotte une peau grasse
 avec le main.

Pb

alekənahsēwəkan - 'tanning process'

nətələkənəmən - 'I tan it (a hide)'

- (4) Rasles (90-91, 405)
a8isenāñk - rognons de castor

Pb

āwisənək - 'dried pieces of castor or beaver musk'

Recording is correct, but the translation is skewed.

- (5) Rasles (39, 562)
tañneba kañdak 8étsi maneni8i 8ramsed8ra? - comment
 pourrai-je croire à l'aveugle, sans autre
 consideration?

Pb

iānpə kətahk weči-manəni-wəlūmsətola - 'Why should
 I, for instance, believe you right off?'

In the last word Rasles has a which should have been ai in his system.

- (6) Rasles (316-317, 476)
aketsebañrass8 - limasson (limaçon)

Pb

akačəpūlahso - 'marsh gas, methane' (animate gender,
 and conceived by Abenakis to be a shy creature
 often heard but never seen)

- (7) Rasles (21, 556)
kinañg8ba kemétsinēheban érirañasaané - (no translation
 given)

Pb

kīnək^wəpa kəməhčīneppan, elihlāsāne - 'at least you would have died if (I or he) had gone'

The sentence is ambiguous, since elihlāsāne means both 'if I had gone' or 'if he had gone'. To resolve the ambiguity pronouns nāya 'I' or nəkəma 'he, she' would have to be inserted before this verb form. The first verb is an independent preterite perfective form, the latter is a changed subjunctive, present perfective. Rasles fails to distinguish č from hč and l from hl, and there is a misprint of h for b or p.

(8) Aubery (418)

sisikk8é - serpent à sonnette

Rasles (460-461, 528)

sisik8é - serpent à sonnettes

Pb

síhsikh^we - 'rattlesnake'

Aubery fails to distinguish s and hs, kk and hk, and Rasles s and hs, k and hk.

(9) Aubery (380)

nematsira8a - j'ay mal au coeur

Pb

nəmāčilawa - 'I am nauseous, nauseated'

(10) Rasles (326-327, 479)

m̄da kad8narañk8é tseg8ar 8ni'reg8 - si celui qui l'a né la coupe, on fent, il en meurt

Pb

nēta katonālukk^we, č8k^wal wēnihləkol - 'If he doesn't remove (pluck) it (him), the tumor (wen) will kill him'

(11) Rasles (343, 487)

nepakitenīke 8aŋga 8tsi metsinētebāna - je fais présent pour le mort

Pb

nepakītēnike owūka weči-mehčīnētəpana - 'I make a novena because of the one that has died'

The translation that Rasles gives is difficult to explain. The AI verb pakītēnike 'he makes a gesture of veneration, he kowtows (to the sun, or supernatural being)' apparently belonged to the vocabulary of the little known pre-contact aboriginal religion, but was adapted by Catholic missionaries to mean 'he makes a novena'. The second or subordinate verb is a changed conjunct prioritive preterite perfective, and the pronoun is in prioritive form. Rasles does not record the required initial vowel change.

(12) Rasles (48-49, 391)

sakiritséh8n - bague

Pb

sahkíləčahon - 'finger ring'

- (13) Rasles (424-425, 516)
nimeska kég8i kadā8i mirera - je viens quérir ce que
 je te veux donner

Pb

nəməskamən kek^w ketawī-miləla - 'I found something I
 intend giving thee'

The first verb is incomplete, and the second fails to show the required initial change.

- (14) Rasles (234-235, 450)
mañda tē8i - il n'y est pas

Pb

āta ttēwi - 'It is not there' (statement of attested
 fact by the speaker)

The French is ambiguous, and this has misled several Algonquianists to believe they had discovered a cognate in Abenaki of Bloomfield's reconstruction *te.wa 'he exists' which is supported only by Ojibwa and Menomini. However, ttēwi is the negative form of the (II) verb āhte 'it is there, it is placed.'

- (15) Rasles (260-261, 459)
nekesinērdam - j'ai froid quand je suis habillé
 légèrement

Pb

nəkəssínelətam - 'I am conscious of the cold, I am
 aware that I am cold'

- (16) Rasles (260-261, 459)
kisaskats8 - le malade est froid

Pb

kisáskačo - 'he has frostbite, he is frostbitten'

- (17) Rasles (463, 528)
kég8s é8ékkassa érokkāné - de quoi te sers-tu pour
 faire cela?

Pb

kək^wəss ewehkása´, elohkāne - 'What had you used
 when you worked?'

The first verb is a changed conjunct present perfective, the second a changed subjunctive. More usual and closer to Rasles' French would be:

kək^wəss ewehkása´, ni elihtawāne - 'What had you
 used when you made that?'

- (18) Rasles (250-251, 456)
n8n8tses8aŋgan - la fièvre quarte vel tierce, seu,
 qui vient toujours à la même heure

nen8n8tsesi - je l'ai tel
n8n8tses8 - il a tel

Pb

nonoĉesówakan - 'asthma'
nənónoĉesi - 'I have asthma, an asthmatic attack'
nónoĉeso - 'he has asthma'

(19) Rasles (326-327, 479)

mañdamars8 - il a une maladie habituelle dont il
guéri et puis retombe

Pb

matámalso - 'he has the shaking palsy, Parkinson's
disease'

(20) Rasles (354-355, 492)

8tsét - nerf du corps de l'homme vel animaux, pl.
8tséttar

Aubery (439)

metzéttar - les nerfs aboutissent à la cervelle

Pb

wəĉehte - 'sinew, gristle', pl. wəĉehtal

When animate this means 'whitlow', pl. wəĉehtak

(21) Rasles (30-31, 386)

ma'ri'k8k - lieu où il n'y a quelque du bois franc,
seu, où il n'y a point de sapinage

Pb

mählihkok (loc.) - 'at, in the meadow, treeless
marsh'

mählihk (INAN) - 'meadow, treeless marsh', pl.

mählihkol

According to his system Rasles records the term correctly,
but only in locative form, and his translation is cumbersome.

(22) Rasles (26-27, 558)

minag8i arokkaēig8ē m8sak idam8kēk8 nesa8arokkē - (no
translation given)

Pb

mīnak^w alohkhátəyək^w, mōsahk itámohkek^w, nesawálohke -
'I if you all are working steadily, don't you say I am
tired of working.'

(23) Rasles (8-9, 550)

n8igañdamen aña8i nepañba'tamen, areneki nepats8rek8
matsini8ēsk8 - à la vérité j'aime bien la prière,
&c., mais le démon me trompe

Pb

nəwīkātamen, ālawi nəpāpahtamen, ālənəki nəpāhĉolək^w,
maĉī-niwesk^w - 'I accède to it, although I am a
religionist (Catholic), unaware that the Bad Spirit
cheats me.'

Except for one failure to distinguish ĉ and hĉ, the
recording is good, but the translation is skewed.

- (24) Rasles (116-117, 414)
arsagahigan - coffre
 Aubery (591)
aresagahigan - coffre
 Pb
aləssákəhikan - 'chest, trunk'

Rasles gives the coastal dialect form alsákəhikan with syncope of the second vowel.

- (25) Anon. Ms., Sillery (?) (21)
tañni kederarañm8ttamen? - sur quel air chante tu?
 sur quel ton?
 Rasles (98-99, 407)
nederarañm8'tamen - je prens le ton, je dis l'air
 Pb
tan kətələlámohitamən' - 'In what tone of voice do you speak?'
aləlámohitam - 'he uses such a tone of voice, he sings or speaks with such a tone' (objectless TI)
nətələlámohitamən - 'I sing or speak it with such a tone'

It will be noted that the second vowel of the stem is a in both recordings, but is ə in Penobscot.

- (26) Rasles (302-303, 473) (464-465, 529)
neki'rē - il se couche
 Pb
nkīhle - 'he (the sun) sets'
- (27) Rasles (54-55, 393)
tekinañgan - berceau de bois
 Aubery (41)
tkinañgan - berceau
 Pb
tkínakan - 'cradle board'
- (28) Aubery (17)
éd8tsi bég8azerdam8h8dit io, epeg8atsi ka8ak - tant ils sont indolents la dessus, il dorment, ils le sont tant qu'ils dorment
 Pb
etoči-pekwaselətámohətit iyo əpəkʷahč káwəwak - 'They thought this was so useless that they even fell asleep'
- (29) Anon. Ms., Sillery (?) (21)
nedera8kké - j'ai ressemblance
 Rasles (440-441, 522)
nedera8aké - je ressemble
 Pb
nətəláwəhke - 'I have a resemblance, I resemble someone or something'
nətálawke - (coastal dialect, with different rules of syncope)

It will be noted that Rasles records the longer form without syncope.

From the above examples it is clear that these early missionary recordings are not reliable enough in either phonetic representation or translation to be included in an Eastern Abenaki dictionary that has any claim to precision unless confirmed and re-recorded. They are useful only for re-elicitation to augment the lexicon which the modern investigator may collect.

In the course of reviewing the early missionary materials the field-worker encounters a considerable number of Eastern Abenaki forms which are immediately understood by Penobscot speakers but which they recognize as unusual or are not used in their dialect. These are re-elicited and included in the dictionary but are marked as obsolescent or belonging to another Eastern Abenaki dialect. The following are typical of such forms:

- (1) Anon. Ms., Sillery (?) (9)
8damañganakk8em - manche de calumet
 Rasles (82-83, 402)
8damañganak8em - (calumet) son bâton
 Aubery (42)
8damañganakk8ém - manche de pipe
 Re-elicitation
wətaməkánahkwem - 'pipestem' (apparently found in all Eastern Abenaki dialects except Penobscot)
 Pb
wətaməkánahtəkʷ - 'pipestem'
- (2) Anon. Ms., Sillery (?) (21)
nedañbararañmi - je reprends haleine (haleine)
 Re-elicitation
nətapalálami - 'I recover my breath' (intelligible to Penobscots, but rarely if ever used)
 Pb
nətapəčí-nehse - 'I recover my breath'
- (3) Aubery (7)
nedabaritéhémən io - je débarrasse cet endroit en coupent les arbres
 Re-elicitation
nətapalíhtehəmən - 'I clear it of trees' (intelligible to Penobscots, but not so used)
 Pb
nətapalahsíhtehəmən - 'I clear it of brush, trees'
nəmosíktehəmən - 'I clear it off (of vegetation)'
- (4) Rasles (316-317, 476)
 ka8di - lit, natte
 Aubery (26)
 ka8añ - lit, le cachez (?)
 Re-elicitation
kāwan - 'bed' (intelligible to Penobscots, but not so used; probably Aroosagunticook dialect or Pigwacket, or both)

Pb

kāwoti - 'bed'

(5) Aubery (43)

añda nepédakk8si - je ne suis pas assés grand pour
y'atteindre

Re-elicitation

āta nāpetāhk^wesiwi - 'I am not tall enough to reach
there' (intelligible to Penobscots and probably
obsolescent)

Aubery has omitted the final negative marker -wi, probably by oversight.

Pb

āhtamā nēmēmənēmowən - 'I cannot reach it' is the
usual form today, but the former word is also known.

Rasles also recorded a number of words which probably do not belong to any Eastern Abenaki dialect, and some few forms that are apparently found only in Sokoki, or in Sokoki-Pigwacket if these are not actually nearly the same. These probably were recorded at Sillery in the period 1690-1691 where remnants of other Algonquian speaking groups resided who had survived the ravages of several epidemics of smallpox, measles, spotted fever, and viral hepatitis. Some examples follow:

(1) Rasles (404-405, 510)

mesai - (poisson) assez gros

This is probably the lawyer or burbot, called also loach, ling, and cusk. Compare Ojibwa misay and Menomini mesa·y.

(2) Rasles (112-113, 413)

atié - chien

This is probably from some southern New England language since no similar word for 'dog' is found in any Abenaki dialect.

(3) Rasles (528-529, 518)

sañmes - raquette de femme

This appears to be a loanword or a misrecording from Cree asa·mis 'small snowshoe'. It does not belong to any Eastern Abenaki dialect.

(4) Rasles (496-497, 541) (478-479, 533)

n8men - je viens de làn8m - j'en reviens, je viens de

Anon. Ms., Sillery (?) (122, 123)

n8m - je viens8m - il vient8m8o - cela vient

The dialectal affiliations of this verb are not clear. It is found in several of the southern New England languages, and in Nipmuck-Pocumtuck specifically as recorded in the dictionary of Mathevet (Day 1975:18). However, the evidence seems to point to the conclusion that it was found also in Sokoki, or Sokoki-Pigwacket, but was absent in Caniba and Penobscot. Rasles probably recorded the term at Sillery in 1690-1691.

From the preceding discussion, supported by demonstration and examples, it is concluded that the Penobscot dictionary should not be expanded by the uncontrolled inclusion of forms from the older missionary records representing the other extinct Eastern Abenaki dialects, except for a few special examples, or unless such terms can be re-elicited.

The other major problem of Eastern Algonquian lexicography is that of the order of lexical entry and reference which is complicated by the syncope of the weak vowels a and e in light closed syllables ending in spirants h and s, and by a less common type of syncope of e in open syllables. In Abenaki syncope is much more complex than in Potawatomi and some Ojibwa dialects where a "Semitic system" based on a consonantal skeleton seems to work satisfactorily for linguists, although not always too well for non-linguists who will be using these proposed dictionaries. Miner has recently discussed these matters in an impartial approach and called attention to the very similar "Alsation system" of Martin and Lienhart for solving the same problem in Alsatian German dialects.

A listing of initial morphemes or roots in morphophonemic notation seems to be the most convenient and practical method of overcoming the problems presented by syncope in Penobscot. Syncope is not always a regular and predictable process in Eastern Abenaki. Besides the regular syncope of the weak vowels a and e in odd-numbered light syllables, the process is complicated by several other factors, namely: (1) dialectal variation, especially of the inland and coastal dialects, (2) the elimination or modification of regular syncope in archaistic type of speech employed by some narrators for rhetorical effect, (3) the conflict and contrast of competing forms, (4) the formulation of conventionalized forms from the same morphemes which contrast semantically, (5) a certain amount of permissible free variation reflecting the idiosyncratic preferences of the individual speaker, and (6) the effect of suprasegmentals and adjacent segmental sound features on syncope. A few examples of some of these factors and types follow:

(1) Regular Syncope

- (a) Root /nəhk-/ - 'to darkness'
nənīhkapi - 'I am blind'
nkāpo - 'he is blind'

sh → ʃh or ø
 ahk → ø

- (b) Root /ahkiy-/ - 'land, ground'
nətāhki - 'my land'
kki - 'land', pl. kkəyal
nətāhkihke - 'I plant, farm, till the soil'
kkīhke - 'he plants'

Examples for paper;

(2) Dialectal Variation

- (a) alíhtolo - 'he builds a boat, canoe' (inland)
áhtolo - (coastal)
nətəlíhtoli - 'I build a boat' (inland)
nətəhtoli - (coastal)
- (b) aləssákəhikan - 'trunk, chest' (inland)
alsákəhikan - (coastal)
- (c) Root /tapahs-/ - 'low, flat'
tapáhsitəmə - 'it is shallow, the water depth is low' (inland)
tápsitəmə - (coastal)
- (d) wəlahkámike - 'it is a valley' (inland)
wəlkámike - (coastal)

(3) Archaistic Speech

- ahk^wamalso - 'he is sick' (usual)
ahk^wamələssə - (archaistic)

(4) Conflict and Contrast

- nólke - 'deer'
nólakhe - 'I throw well'

This is featured by invariability or phonolexical fixation.

(5) Conventionalized Formulation of Identical Morphemes

Pb

- (a) áhpsk^wanse - 'dress'
nətáhpsk^wanse - 'my dress'
- (b) psk^wanáhse - 'coat (of men)'
nətahpsk^wanáhse - 'my coat', or
nətahpsk^wanáhse - (free variation, and also archaistic speech)
nətahpsk^wanáhsehke - 'I make a coat, robe'

Rasles (444-445, 524) and (282-283, 465)

- nedapsk⁸añnsé - ma robe, mon couvre
nedapsk⁸añnasé - ma robe, mon habit
nedapsk⁸anasé⁴ké - je fais un habit, une robe

Anon. Ms., Sillery (?) (9)

- psk⁸anassé - un juste au corps

Aubery (319)

- psk⁸anassé - habit, juste au corps

The forms given by Rasles and others would indicate that this conventionalized phonolexical variation in Eastern Abenaki is not of recent origin.

(6) Permissible Free Variation

- (a) pəsk^wəle - 'he, it ignites, catches fire, bursts into flames', or
psk^wəle

- (b) pəssihlo - 'he has, gets a foreign body in his
eye' (only form)
nəpəssihli - 'I have, get a foreign body in my
eye', or
nəpəsli

(7) Effect of Adjacent Sounds and Suprasegmentals
Schwa (ə) in open syllables before a sibilant and
following a checked syllable or an accented tonic syllable
is syncopated.

- māhksən - 'shoe, moccasin'
māhk^wəss - 'fawn'
āpseso - 'he sweats'
māčewātohkso - 'she (cow, doe) is in heat'

Conclusion: The Penobscot language has been obsolescent
for over twenty-five years or more. A rather large body of
material has been gathered at irregular periods, but the
labor and cost of assemblage, organization, and presentation
have been awesome. A recent grant through the Penobscot
Nation to me from the U.S. National Endowment for the
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ADDENDUM

An examination of the original manuscript of the anonymous Racines Abnaquises at the time of my recent visit to Québec suggests additional information. I am indebted to Father Honorius Provost, archivist of the Séminaire de Québec, 25 rue Sainte Famille, for courteously making the original available to me. The paper is uniform throughout, and is antique handmade laid paper without date or watermarks. It appears to have been manufactured during the first half of the eighteenth century, and to be of about 1720 - 1730 vintage. The whole manuscript, therefore, is probably an early copy, not an original. Therefore, the handwriting is probably not that of the original author or collector, and its anonymous author will remain unknown.