BERING ISLAND ALEUT *ANATA-X̣* 'JAPANESE'

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this paper is to discuss the etymology of Bering Island Aleut *anata-x̣* 'Japanese'. In all probability this word comes from Japanese, and to support such an assumption both linguistic and ethno-historic arguments will be presented. In general terms, Japanese has had no impact on Eskimo-Aleut languages because of obvious geopolitical considerations. This fact makes even more exciting the opportunity of identifying one trace, though very small, of linguistic contact between Aleut, one member of the Eskimo-Aleut family, and Japanese, so far an isolated language.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a rather surprising way, two terms linked to Japan appear in Bergsland's *Aleut Dictionary* [hereafter *AD*]. The reader should by no means be surprised by this. In fact, several studies have reported similar cases, e.g. Worth (1960) and Bakker (1989). Interestingly enough, the former involves Aleut material too: Kor(y)ak *kalika(l)* 'write, draw' → Aleut *kalika-x̣* [→ Russian?] → Southwestern Pomo *kalikak* 'book'. The first of the words with which we are dealing here is *Yapuuna-x̣* 'Japanese person' (*AD* 464a), recorded in different (sub-)dialects at different times: the Eastern dialect in 1909, the Attuan dialect between 1909 and 1949, and the Atkan subdialect of Bering Island in 1982. For *Yapuuna-x̣* at least one variant is known: *Yapuuni-x̣*, attested in the Eastern subdialect of Nikolski in 1950 and in the Atkan dialect from 1909. *Yapuuna-x̣* reflects a final *-a-* belonging to the stem, but not to the Russian adjective from which it comes (япо́н-ский 'Japanese'). The treatment by Netsvetov of adjectives ending in -ский (m.), -ская (f.), -ское (n.) accounts for such morphological segmentation. The Aleut priest decided to translate those adjectives as nouns plus the relative case *-m*, so the first step was to erase the adjectival suffix, e.g. Алеутский язык was translated as *Unanga-m tunu-u* ['Aleut'-REL.SG 'language'-ABS.3SG] 'Aleut language', lit. 'the language of the Aleut [people]' (*AD* xxxvii a).

Now, the vowel *-a-* can be observed also in *Kasaka-x̣* 'Russian', from казáк 'Cossack', or *lasta-x̣* 'flipper', from ласт 'id.'. This "automatic *-a-*" shows up when the Russian word ends in a non-palatalized consonant. Bergsland states that if the Russian consonant is palatalized, then the "automatic vowel" will take the quality of *-i-*, e.g. *muuli-x̣* 'moth, butterfly', from моль 'id.' or *funaari-x̣* 'lantern', from фонáрь (*AD* xxxvi). However, the origin of the final *-i-* in *Yapuuni-x̣* cannot be a palatalized consonant, which in fact does not exist in the Russian word, but the epenthetic vowel appearing in consonant stems when adding consonant suffixes, e.g. vowel stem *ula-x̣* 'house', pl. Eastern *ula-n*, Western *ula-s* vs. consonant stem *ulax̣-Ø* 'bearberry', pl. *ulaɣ.in* (*AG* 50), with regular lenition of *-x̣-* to *-ɣ.-* between vowels. Thus, although both vowels *-a-* or *-i-* can be chosen by the speaker to fit a Russian word into the Aleut pattern, it seems reasonable to think that sometimes the *-i-*option reflects the epenthetic *-i-* vowel when the speaker has considered that the Russian word is just a consonant stem. Notwithstanding, it is easy to find instances of both epenthetic vowel variants *-a-* and *-i-* attested, sometimes even by the same speaker.

Bergsland explained *Yapuuni-x̣* as a "Aleut-Russian" hybrid plural in *i*, it means, *Япóн-ы (instead of the normative Япóнц-ы, see below) → Aleut *Yapuun-i-* (vel sim.), as Bergsland argues (*AD* xxxvii a). It seems likely, however, that Aleuts took this word from one of the casi obliqui of the Russian word, for example from the genitive (из) Япóни-и or the locative (в) Япóни-и. This fact is attested among many languages from Siberia, e.g. Dolgan *ostoluobaj* or Yakut *ostolobuoj*, from Russian (из) столóв-ой, the genitive form case of столóв-ая 'table' (Stachowski 1999: 11), but the lack of similar parallels in Aleut rest plausibility to this option. In fact, the same Russian word entered the Aleut lexicon through the casus rectus: *stuluguuya-*, *stulu(u)gaya-*, *stuluvaya-* 'table knife, butter knife' (*AD* 372b), all from столóв-ая or столов-áя 'table'. Another departure point could be Япóни-я 'Japan' or Япóнц-ы 'Japanese (people)', but in this case Aleut parallels show that the strategies of adaptation would have resolved this situation in a rather different way, cf. pl. *Niimcha-s* 'Germans' ← нéмц-ы 'id.' (*AD* 284a) or *kitaayichaa-* 'Chinese, Chinaman', pl. *Kitaaychi-n* (Eastern dialects) or *Kitaaychi-s* (Western dialects) ← китáец 'id.', pl. китáйц-ы respectively (*AD* 242a) or *xudi-* 'to deal (cards)' ← ходи́-ть 'to lead, play cards' (*AD* 165b), pl. *liizi-s* 'skis' (Western dialects) ← лы́ж-и 'id.' (*AD* 256a).

Records tell us that *Yapuuna-x̣* and *Yapuuni-x̣* were used both in the Eastern and Western Aleutians, covering the most important dialectal zones. This enables us to accept the idea that those words were likely well known and in use by the Aleuts. In fact, they appear in a few well-attested expressions: *Yapuuni-m tana-ngin* ['Japanese'-REL.SG 'island'-ABS.PL] (Nikolski 1950) or *Yapuuna(-m) tana-ng* ['Japanese'(-REL.SG) 'island'- ABS.PL] (Attuan 1949, with the apocopation of *ngin* > *-ng*) 'the Japanese islands, Japan' and *Yapuuni-m sunax̣taqa-a* ['Japanese'-REL.

SG 'ship'-ABS.3SG] (Atkan 1909) 'an old Japanese ship'. The curious reader may be a bit disturbed if he tries to find *sunax̣taqa-x̣* in Bergsland's dictionary. This word, which comes from Jochelson's own notes (Bergsland and Dirks 1990: 546 [text 78, line 62]), does not appear in the dictionary as a lemma, but only in the postbase section (*AD* 512), whence one learns that to the word *suna-x̣*, *suun'ga-x̣*, *suugnax̣* 'ship' (*AD* 377a-b), from Russian súдно 'ship' has been added the postbase *-x̣taqa-* 'used N, old, worn N, former N', e.g. *uliig-* 'mukluk (native boots)' → *uliixtaqa-x̣* 'old mukluks'.

The second word is *anata-x̣* 'Japanese person' (*AD* 72a). According to the philological description, it was attested for the first (and last) time in 1982 in the Atkan dialect (Bering Island subdialect). A quick look at the sources section (p. xliv) will show that this is the year in which E.V. Golovko wrote down about seventy words on Bering Island during his fieldwork on the Aleutians (another word belonging to Golovko's list is *Yapuuna-x̣* ~ *Yapuuni-x̣*, commented on above). No further information about *anata-x̣* is provided, so we are dealing with one of the many *hapax legomena* glossed in Bergsland's Aleut dictionary. (The present author has tried unsuccessfully to contact E.V. Golovko in order to find out more about the current usage of the word among the Aleuts of the Bering Island. Only later was the author told that Golovko seems not to answer mails any longer.) Although the origin of *Yapuuna-x̣* ~ *Yapuuni-x̣* is clear, the same cannot be said about the etymology of *anata-x̣*. No explanation of this word is given in the appendix devoted to loanwords (*AD* 654–662). One section there is entitled "Probable loanwords, source not known" (p. 657). The criteria for including probable candidates to be considered loanwords is that given words should exhibit some kind of anomalous phonology and/or meaning. Since *anata-x̣* is not quoted, it must be concluded that Bergsland considered neither the phonology nor the meaning of *anata-x̣* to be anomalous, and therefore, he thought it should be a native Aleut word. Following this legitimate assumption, where does *anata-x̣* come from?

2. LOOKING FOR INTERNAL ETYMOLOGY

The single word that could fit the requirements to be considered a relative of *anata-x̣* appears to be *anat-*, *anati-x̣, ahnati-x̣* 'mark, property (on weapons, implements, driftwood)' (*AD* 72b). Bergsland does not list *anata-x̣* among the derivatives of this root. It should be apparent that for the Norwegian linguist it was clear a priori that one is not related to the other. In any case, the shape of *anat-*, *anati-x̣* might have influenced Bergsland to think that *anata-x̣* is a native word. On the other hand, given the proverbial conservativeness of Bergsland, it is easy to understand that without "conclusive" evidence he just preferred not to go deeper into etymological analyses. However, the presence of many instances of "(?)"

thourought the Aleut dictionary demonstrates that from time to time Bergsland could accept a bit of speculation. In fact, I feel quite confident (in the same way Bergsland felt about his "conclusive evidence") about the fact that if he had known about the Japanese option to explain *anata-x̣*, he would have noted it, at least with the sign "(?)". Despite the obvious difficulties that one finds just at first sight, let us develop the argumentation a bit in order to be absolutely sure that we are not rejecting the "true solution".

The plural of this word is used to name landmarks, e.g. cliffs, hills, gorges, and creeks, and for memorizing the location of fish in the sea. It is also used to mean birthmarks in the expression *aniqdu-m anati-i* ['child'-REL.SG 'mark'-ABS.3SG] (Eastern subdialect of Akutan 1983) or diacritical marks in *tunu-m qusa-m anati-ngin* ['word'- REL.SG '(space) above'- REL.SG 'mark'-ABS.PL] (Eastern 1870), lit. 'marks above the word'. Bergsland analyses it as *ana-t-*, whose general meaning 'procuring something' comes from *ana-x̣* 'something' (< *a-* 'to be', connected with Proto-Eskimo *-(ŋ)u-* 'id' [*CED* 419b], + postbase *-na-* 'agent'), and the (verbal) postbase *-t-* 'to cause to become' (*AD* 550–551). Two obvious and serious problems arise: the first one is dealing with how to explain a metaphorical link between 'mark, property' and 'Japanese person'. Perhaps Aleuts see Japanese people as very possessive and business oriented. Unfortunately, this idea does not make sense and in addition is much too speculative and indemonstrable, if not simply naïve in itself. The other problem concerns morphology, since *anati-x̣* is not the same as *anata-x̣*. This could be another instance of *Yapuuna-* vs. *Yapuuni-* opposition, i.e. of 'stem-*a*' vs. 'stem-epenthetic *i*'. That *-i-* in *anati-x̣* is another case of epenthetic vowel seems to be obvious. However, there is no reason to create two different stems because the speaker does not deal here with any (Russian) loanword, at least in the case of *anat-*, *anati-x̣, ahnati-x̣*, so the *-a*-stem variant is unnecessary (as for *Yapuuna/i-*, it is the phonology of the Aleut word that forces us to see here a clear instance of Russian loanword, i.e. Aleut speakers naturalized a foreign word that resembles exactly Russian Япóн-). In general, this etymological solution does not sound convincing. Moreover, a better explanation actually can be argued, though it denies the native character of *anata-x̣*.

3. LOOKING FOR EXTERNAL ETYMOLOGY

It seems that *anata-x̣* has neither an Aleut pedigree nor a Russian, Eskimo, or English one. Interestingly enough, nobody has previously suggested to look at the object of the definition of *anata-x̣*: the Japanese people or, to be more concrete, the Japanese language. Suddenly and immediately, the solution comes to the surface. The Japanese personal pronoun *anata* 'you', also in *anatagata* 'you (pl.)', as well as in *anata-no* 'your', seems to be the perfect match for the Aleut word. Although

the borrowability of the personal pronouns is up today a hard question both for historical linguists and specialists in language contact, Thomason and Everett (2001) have showed that languages do borrow personal pronouns more than one might expect, despite the close relationship of their grammatical and lexical values. Anyway, it must be kept in mind that in this case *anata* has not been borrowed as a pronoun, but as a noun. As far as it is concerned with this Japanese loanword, the borrowing process took place in the easiest way: the pure, complete Japanese form *anata* was taken as a whole (with no dialectal or historical troubles). Since *anata* ends in a vowel – and not any vowel, but /a/, the most frequent and the most popular in Aleut – the Aleut speaker had no problem to just add the absolutive mark -x̣. Only the socio-linguistic status of this Japanese pronoun – its politeness – deserves some attention.

4. "HOW", "WHERE", AND "WHEN"

As in any proposal of loanwords, "how", "where" and "when" are the very questions to be answered in order to accept it, despite the fact that to answer them most of the time means to speculate a bit. In the case of *anata*, "when" and "where" turn out to be difficult questions. The first piece of information to keep in mind is that Aleut *anata-x̣* has been once documented, in a single dialect, and by a single person, in more or less recent times (namely, 1982). Its marginal and recent status must be considered therefore as the logical consequence of being a loanword. Bering Island, so named after Vitus Bering, belongs to the Commander Islands (the second most important being Copper Island), the nearest Aleut Islands to Japan (see map in Woodbury 1984: 50; *AD* has no maps of the Commander Islands), so geographically speaking, the contact between one another could be easily understood. However, the main contact between Japanese people and Aleuts assuredly took place in the Near Islands (Attu Island) and Rat Islands (Kiska Island), since the Japanese army invaded those places in 1942. The people of Attu were taken in captivity to Japan, where many Aleuts died. The rest of the surviving people – twenty-five Attuans and seventy Atkans – were resettled on Atka in 1944 and 1945 (Lantis 1984: 166; Kohlhoff 1995; *AG* 5). As for the Commander Islands, they were settled likewise in the 1820s by Russians, Bering Island mostly from Atka, Copper Island mostly from Attu. In 1972, the Aleuts of the Commander Islands were concentrated in the village of Bering Island, where the Atkan subdialect of Bering Island is now spoken by a handful of elderly people (*AD* xvi). Since no direct contact between Japanese people and the Commander Islands is recorded, but mainly with Attuans and few Atkans, Golovko had to have interviewed in 1982 with an Atkan resettled on Bering Island during or soon after the Second World War, despite the fact that, with the purchase of Alaska by the United States in 1867, the Aleuts of the Commander

Islands were cut off from their relatives to the east. What the hypothesis requires is an Atkan who, after meeting Japanese people, traveled, for some reason, to the Bering Island and stayed there till the coming of Golovko. Another option, far more simple, is that Bering Islanders just had direct contact with the Japanese, for example by means of the shipping port in Kamchatka.

"How" must be an easier answer. The sociological and cultural explanation to understand such a loanword could be as follows: Japanese people called the Aleuts by shouting 'you!' (in Japanese *anata!*), very reasonable taking into account the tense atmosphere that must exist during a process of conquer. The clear-cut hierarchy of "soldier" vs. "civilian", if not "conqueror" vs. "conquered", is in some way reflected by the socio-linguistic status of the Japanese personal pronoun *anata*, pl. *anatagata* or *anatatachi*, the first plural form being more polite, the second one sometimes addressed to children. In opposition with *kimi* (pl. *kimitachi* or *kimira*), used almost exclusively among men, and the most respectful *sensei*, *anata* infrequently means 'Sir, Madame', but obviously that is not the case here. *Anata* is never used to speak to people of high status, but only with equals or with people whom the speaker considers to be of lower status. Thus, Aleuts perhaps decided to refer to Japanese people from that: *anata-x̣*. If we accept that they did this knowing the meaning of Japanese *anata* (Attuans were in contact with the Japanese for at least three years), then this is a typical case of folk etymology. If they did not, then we can assume "interpretative misunderstanding". In fact, there is a somewhat similar example that can be compared with Japanese *anata* 'you', that is, when a person or a collective is named after a (personal) pronoun: in 1778, during the Cook expedition, David Samwell recorded in English Bay, Unalaska (*AD*, map 6, p. 606, nº 115), the word *Chengan* with the meaning of 'a man', but what the Aleut actually said was *hingan* 'that one (you see there)' (*AD* xxxviii), one of the many deictics of the Aleut language (see under "Demonstratives" in *AD* 567 and *AG* 72–80). Likewise the Japanese form *anata* seems to repeat a similar history. Documented from the 9th century (first texts: *Makura no sōshi*, *Genji monogatari*), *anata* 'illud latus' must be seen as a contraction of the modifier form *a-no2*, of the deictic *are-* (or *a-*) 'that (yonder), that (over there)', and the noun *kata* 'side, direction', the original meaning of the resulting form being 'over there, that side (over there)', e.g. *anata [f]uto uti-ide-tamaf-er-u kowe-no omosiro-sa* [that side suddenly PREF-go out(INF)-HON-PROG-ATTR voice-GEN beautiful-NML] 'the beauty of [his] voice, which suddenly went out [from] that side', *apud* Vovin (2003: 125). The selected fragment belongs to *Hamamatsu chūnagon monogatari* (I: 199.4), dated around 1064. This locative meaning begins to vanish during the 16th and 17th century and soon it takes the sense of a personal pronoun. Rodriguez (1620[1993]: 55rº) already in 1620 glossed it as "pronomes mais corrẽtes pera terceiras pessoas: *anata* 'elle, aquelle, este, cortés'".

5. HELPFUL PARALLELS

Given the rather speculative nature of the scenario just set up in the previous section, it is worth noting some interesting comments made by the Polish botanist Benedykt Dybowski, who spent several months working in the Aleutian Islands, necessarily having to be in contact with the Aleuts and their language. Well-known among specialists of Chukotko-Kamchatkan languages for his linguistic inquiries, Dybowski wrote in his report on Commander Island that the etymology of the ethnonym "Aleut" was at the time unknown. However, Dybowski quotes the folk etymology proposed by Veniaminov, i.e. that "Aleut" comes from the Aleut expression *Alik-yuaja* meaning 'what? what's that?' (actually Eastern Aleut *alqu -x̱ hinga?* 'what's that?' or similar). Dybowski comments, it seems, that in order to support Veniaminov's (wrong) etymology (*AG* 1), that, after all, Itelmens called Russians "Bohboh" because they were saying constantly Boг 'God' and that in the same way, many Siberian natives called the Polish "Panpan", from Polish *Pan* 'Lord, Sir, Master' (1885: 20–21 ft.). Since there is no reason to doubt Dybowski's testimony, Aleut *anata-x̱* 'Japanese' must be counted as another example of the same mechanism to create ethnonyms, i.e. to use a word frequently used by another ethnic group. But if the "creative process" is so simple, one could even add that the "war scenario" proposed for the origin of Aleut *anata-x̱* 'Japanese' should be reinterpreted in easier and maybe more credible terms just assuming that Bering Aleuts heard many times the word *anata* – quite conceivable taking into account that spoken Japanese very often requires the formal presence of personal pronouns – as a consequence of which they started using it to refer to Japanese, despite the meaning of the word, as in the case of "Bohboh" or "Panpan". As a matter of detail, it only remains obscure why not **anata(a)nata* (vel sim.) was not used, one possible answer being that reduplication is not a natural morphological recourse in Aleut, at least in comparison with what is known in other Eurasian languages. A very illustrative instance can be found in Finnish dialects according to the exposition of Jarva (2003). However, developing that argument would take much more space than that strictly necessary for the main goal of this paper.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In sum, this paper has tried to show that the Aleut word *anata-x̱* is actually a Japanese loanword. Under the pressure of this linguistic finding, I have forged a historical scenario that might shed light on the circumstances of the origin of this word and make sense of its temporal and geographical attestation. While the historical reasoning is speculative, the linguistic reasoning is, however, principled and based on precise and ample data. As with many other languages, Aleut contains hundreds of loanwords from many different languages. Bergsland was able to

identify unmistakably Russian, Eskimo (mainly from the Yupik branch, Central Alaskan Yup'ik and Alutiiq being the main donors), Kor(y)ak, Tanaina, Tlingit, and English borrowings. This Japanese case is, of course, exceptional because only one loanword from this language has been identified so far. From an etymological point of view, however, the Aleut language is still unexplored – in spite of the huge efforts made by Bergsland in his seminal papers on the topic, Bergsland (1986 and 1989), see now *i.a.* Alonso de la Fuente (2006/2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c). So perhaps new loanwords may be discovered in future researches.

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ABBREVIATIONS

3SG	anaphoric third person
ABS	absolutive
AD	Bergsland (2001^2)
AG	Bergsland (1997)
ATTR	attributive
CED	Fortescue, Jacobson & Kaplan (1994)
GEN	genitive
HON	honorific
INF	infinitive
NML	nominalizer
PL	plural
PRE	prefix
PROG	progressive
REL	relative
SG	singular

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