

TWO SERI MYTHS

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THE FLY MAKES FIRE¹

1. ʔánt koŋ kʷáá ipáXXii kiʔaX kotama ʔánt kom iti taʔkama táaX ano káaʔkaʔa. 2. Xkóommooxk ti kix tiX kʷíkkee kiʔ kʷyámmaatoX. 3. óX isox itaʔ tok tijma šiX kóoXXii kom itakoXɿ tóommaatoX ʔamáx kWtotnimaX ʔánt kiʔ iti taʔkamaX šiX kiʔ kóoXXii kiʔ ʔéʔe íkkoot ki kotom ʔánt kiʔ iti tommaX šiík ʔákkiiX mota imiiʔoo

LITERAL TRANSLATION

1. Earth the (extended) now being-finished with having (as if it were) earth the extended on being (happening to it) that-time at it-was
2. Fly that the (seated) he person the he-made-fire-by-friction-as-he-does
3. Thus he-himself doing-it there being thing dead the (lying down) being-with-it making-fire-by-friction fire hitting-it land the on being

FREE TRANSLATION

This story happened almost at the beginning of the world. The fly, by rubbing his front legs together, makes fire by friction-making-motions just like a person. Thus when the fly is with an animal carcass and makes fire by

¹ These stories, told by Roberto Herrera T., were taped in Desemboque, Sonora. The following phonemic symbols have been used in transcribing these texts: Stops /p t k ʔ/ are labial, dental, velar, and glottal respectively. Velar stop /kʷ/ is labialized. Flat spirants /p ɬ x ɣ/ are labial, alveolar, velar, and back velar respectively. Grooved/rounded spirants /w s ʃ/ are labial, alveolar, and alveo-palatal retroflex respectively. Nasals /m n ŋ/ are labial, dental, and velar respectively. Oral sonants /l r y/ are lateral, flap, and palatal respectively. Vowels /i e o a/ are high close front, mid open front, mid close back, and low open central respectively. Stress is /ǂ/. Nasalization is /ɰ/. For a detailed discussion of the phonemes of Seri, see Moser and Moser, 1965. Consonant Vowel Balance in Seri (Hokan) Syllables. *LINGUISTICS*, 16: 50-67.

taax. 4. táaXa'ò kWtpaktaX óX pákta yoke. 5. oX k'í'ʔaa ʔiš ak XoX šíX kiʔ kóoXXii kiʔ ʔéekkoot kotom ʔákkiiX tommaX ʔáa tmako XoX šíik kiʔ imíi'ʔoo taaX Xkóommoxk ti kix ʔáa tixX mos táao k'itapaktaX tóommaatoX Xaʔ ʔaX taʔíi ʔaXtama ʔamáak k'ʔáisX Xaʔ šíX k'ʔs k'ʔaa tapma itá'ʔooX ʔáptko kk'áaʔpiʔa. 6. táaXc kWtpakta ʔánt kiʔ iti káaʔkaʔa.

THE COTTONTAIL AND THE MOUNTAIN LION

1. ʔánt kom iti k'íiʔka ʔak ʔiš kWtáʔka ʔaXtama Xíkkaa kkám kon to kotom ʔánt kom iti ton to kómmoom. 2. óX tpakta to k'íiʔka iti Xáššoox tintika ʔánt šo itao to kontíkkaaʔa. 3. šíX kiʔ kkám táaXo ipokáa'ò óXo So

thing the dead the plant between the be-lying-down land the on lying-on bird somewhere coming-from he-saw-it that. 4. That it-being-seen-like thus it-is-seen it-is-said. 5. Thus happening this area even thing the dead the desert lying-down somewhere when-it-is over-there hard-to-see even bird he sees-it that-time fly that the there being (seated) again that when-it-was-seen-like making-fire-by-friction and just feeling just-then fire shot and thing same to-be being (standing) seeing-it finally it-arrived-there. 6. That it-being-seen-like land the on it-is.

1. Earth the (extended) on being area here being when-doubtless things living the (extended) there being (extended) earth the (extended) on being (extended) there there-were (extended). 2. Thus it-was-seen there being on mountain-lion going-there place a passing-by there he-went. 3. Thing the living that perhaps-he-was looking-for thus one

friction and makes smoke signals, the bird flying along finds the carcass on the desert. That is why it happens like that. Even today when any carcass is out of sight on the desert, the bird, due to the fly making fire by friction and making smoke signals, as it were, finds it and finally gets to it. That is how it happens.

The time was when animal life was found on the earth. It happened that a mountain lion was passing by a certain place. Perhaps he was looking for

ʔáiiʔa. 4. to kontíʔa iti šáax pak tok taʔkama kʷtáaʔpma ʔápXa pak ano toi tok kʷóiiʔa. 5. šo to kotomma itíipxk ʔant íkki itasnanma to kóttoon yoke. 6. Xáššoox kop óX téé yoke. 7. ktám ʔip kom isíkkoot ak ʔaX Xomássool óX itái yoke. 8. óX tpaktama ʔápXa kom óX tte yoke. 9. óX yopakta Xášík kiʔ ktámkW kiʔ káokí kiʔ iʔtákkootin táaX iti iʔakóssootimiʔ óX yopakta óX téé yoke. 10. óX tee itáXXii mos óX téé yoke ʔápXa kom. 11. Xáššoox íhít šo tok yíix taaX ʔápX iʔkáitaxk šo ʔpóʔʔiit iʔpóXXii ʔíš ak kontʔapa Xáššoox iʔmíʔʔaa koʔséektim óX téé yoke.

12. óX tpaktama šaax kiʔ íppoot ta ʔak táaX Xkátnix

it-was. 4. There going on cave some there when-being when-he-arrived-at-it cottontails some inside being there they-were. 5. One there lying-down grabbing-it place against holding-it he-was-lying-down it-is-said. 6. Mountain-lion the (standing) thus he-spoke it-is-said. 7. Male this the (lying down) its-back area just it-is-yellow thus he-told-him it-is-said. 8. Thus when-it-was-seen cottontail the (lying down) thus he-spoke it-is-said. 9. Thus it-was-seen mountain-lions the males the large (pl) the I-killing-them that upon I-carried-them-on-my-back thus it-was-seen thus he-spoke it-is-said. 10. Thus he-spoke finishing-it also thus he-spoke it-is said cottontail the (lying down). 11. Mountain-lion its-head a there it-was (seated) that outside put-seated-thing (pl) a when-I-eat-it when-I-finish here area when-I-go mountain-lion tracks I-will-look-for thus he-spoke it-is-said.

12. Thus when-it-was-seen cave the back-of that area there wood-

something to eat. As he was going along there he came to a cave in which there were some cottontails. He grabbed one of them and held it down with his paw. Then the mountain lion spoke. "This cottontail's back is all yellow," he said. Then the cottontail spoke. "The reason for that is that I killed large male mountain lions and carried them on my back." Then the cottontail spoke to the other rabbits. "Bring out the mountain lion's head that is over there and after I have eaten some of it I will go out and look for some more mountain lion tracks."

So from inside the cave the other cottontails rolled out a cactus boot that

Xa? yopa? moxéppée kk^wóottiix ki? ano kíixi?i. 13. táaXa? šo ?áa motama ?ápX iki ta?ketX ?ánt ta?masiim ?ánso táXXaaXimma Xáššoox kop itíi šíX ti kom itákkaatX ?ápX iki tpánšX yoke. 14. tóxxoošma ?ápX iki tpanšXma ?ápXa koi mos ?ápX ?ant kWteme ?ápX iki tpánkox yoke. 15. óX tpactama ?aa ntí?aat iti ?é?ee kk^wóottiix óX kissoox an kíinneex šo ?aa tomma tíX an ?ant kWsíimmeetá kWtáškamma óX téé yoke šiX kk^wássiitiq Xa? téekkeek. 16. ?e íppoot íkp ak íkp ?ássooma?a. 17. ?é?aa ko?ptásiitimma tóii nt?ámmaat óX téé yoke.

pecker-nest-casing and called sahuaro dry the inside it-was-seated, 13. of-those one there coming outside to taking-it place rolling-it just when-it-sounded-raspy mountain-lion the (standing) hearing-it thing that the (lying down letting-it-go outside to he-ran it-is said. 14. When he-fled outside to when-he ran cottontails the also outside place arrived-at (pl) outside to ran (pl) it-is-said. 15. Thus when-it-was-seen there going (pl) on plant dry thus truly (large) in open a there being (extended) it in place they-arrived-at (pl) when-they-arrived (pl) thus he-spoke it-is-said thing deceiver and he said. 16. I farthest-inside its-side area its-side permit-(my)-future-lying-down. 17. I being when-I-deceived-him away we-went (pl) thus he-spoke it-is-said.

came from a dry sahuaro, and when the mountain lion heard the raspy sound of the rolling cactus boot, he released the cottontail and ran away. As he fled, the cottontails also tore out of there and ran away. After awhile they came to a large dry thicket, and when they had rushed inside, the cottontail that had fooled the mountain lion spoke to the others. "Let me lie down way in the back. It is because I fooled him that we got away."