

## **Divine inspiration**

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### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to note some interesting preliminary observations about the adoption of new terminology and vocabulary in the various Eskimo-Aleut languages in conjunction with the introduction of Christianity. It is not an attempt to analyze the sociocultural consequences of the new religion, nor is it a historical review thereof.

A variety of Christian denominations set up missions in the Arctic, beginning in the Eastern Arctic with Hans Egede's Dano-Norwegian Lutheran Hope Colony near present-day Nuuk, Greenland in 1721. In the Western Arctic, Russian Orthodox missionaries arrived in Kodiak, Alaska in 1794, where they found that some Native people had already been familiarized with the Christian faith and even baptized by laymen ([www.outreachalaska.org/history.html](http://www.outreachalaska.org/history.html)). Following these two early missions found at geographical extremes came quite a number of other groups, representing both Roman Catholicism and Protestant denominations including Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Moravians, Friends, and Swedish Covenant in Alaska alone, with others in Canada.

This paper will discuss linguistic aspects of vocabulary development that resulted directly from the introduction of Christianity to the Inuit and

cover the significant trends that resulted in the religious lexicon found today in Eskimo-Aleut. First, existing native terminology was adapted for use with the new religion. In the western languages, a family of words based on a common root often serves as the basis for expressing a wide range of religious concepts, whereas this does not happen to the same extent in the east. All languages had vocabulary for the many concepts and activities related to shamanism, but relatively few of these terms were applied to the new religion, although some were relexicalized (given new meanings), primarily in the western languages. In all languages, both lexical items and terms for cultural practices or social conventions were reinterpreted or extended to analogous Christian concepts and activities. Christian religion had a perceptible semantic effect on nonreligious concepts in some languages.

Coinages (new words or phrases invented using native vocabulary) are preferred in all languages for religious actions, doctrine, and philosophy. Borrowings (words or phrases taken from another language and adapted phonologically) often relate to ritual objects or Church personnel, and Aleut and Greenlandic have significant numbers of borrowings from Russian and Danish, respectively, whereas Yupik and Inuit languages appear to have fewer religious borrowings.

## 2. Adaptation of native terminology for the new religion<sup>1</sup>

The adaptation of native terminology for Christian purposes includes the relexicalization of terms from the native religion as well as general native language terms. The terms may have been adapted to the new religion by semantic broadening, as in Aleut *adaŋ*<sup>2</sup> ‘father’ → *adaŋ* ‘father, priest’, or

<sup>1</sup> Data are from the following sources unless otherwise indicated in the text: Bergsland (1994) (Aleut), Jacobson (2012) (Central Alaskan Yup’ik), MacLean (2014) (Iñupiaq), Schneider (1985) (Inuktitut), Berthelsen & al. (1997) and Schultz-Lorentzen (1927) (West Greenlandic).

<sup>2</sup> We use local orthographies and note the following special symbols and deviations from common phonetic alphabets: in Aleut (Unangam Tunuu) *ġ* and *ŋ* are voiced and voiceless uvular fricatives respectively, *d* is a voiced dental fricative; in Central Yup’ik double letters represent voiceless sounds, *e* is shwa, prosodic rules operate to lengthen vowels and geminate consonants and an apostrophe following a consonant also indicates gemination, as described in Jacobson (2012: 48-54); in Iñupiaq *ġ* is a voiced uvular fricative, *l̥* is a palatal lateral, and *l̥* is a voiceless lateral; *g* is generally a fricative in all cases; West Greenlandic *o* and *e* are allophones of *u* and *i* written before uvulars; double letters represent long sounds, except as noted for Central Yup’ik. For other Yup’ik spelling conventions including apostrophe use, see Jacobson (2012).

by semantic shift/change, as in Aleut *qugaġ* ‘shaman’s helping spirit’ → *qugaġ* ‘devil.’

## 2.1. Webs of Meaning

In Aleut, Yupik, and Iñupiaq, a single traditional religious term in each group appears to have been adopted with a host of new meanings to represent the new religion. The terms most commonly used for Christian activities typically referred to the native ‘messenger feast’ or to ‘Native dancing’ and this despite the fact that the Native activities themselves were berated as sinful (Burch 1994: 90). In Aleut, for example, the root *kamga-* originally referred to feasting, as in *kamgaġ* ‘feast’, and *kamgalix-* to ‘to hold a feast.’ With the adoption of Christianity, specifically Russian Orthodoxy, *kamga-* served as the basis for *kamgaġ* ‘church; church service; prayer, (Christian) religion; (Christian) holiday’ *kamgalix-* ‘to pray’, *kamgaasiġ* ‘prayer’, *kamgadaġ* ‘Christian; godchild’, *kamgadadgul*, *kamgaġsilix-* ‘to baptize’, *kamgagalix-* ‘to be worshiped’, *kamgaġtal-* ‘to have as a religion’, and *kamgaaluġ* ‘icon.’ Most of these concepts are semantically relatable: thus, the church is the place in which one prays; a Christian is one who prays (in a church); to baptize is to make someone a Christian, and likewise, to have a godchild is to be responsible for making (baptizing) the godchild a Christian and raising it as such. The term *snganaadaġ* ‘something bewitched, taboo, untouchable’ and its derivatives have also served for a host of important Christian concepts, including ‘holy’, ‘Holy Spirit’, ‘Holy Trinity’, ‘to receive the Eucharist’, and ‘to consecrate.’

In Russian Orthodox and Catholic areas, Yup’ik extends the use of the term *agayu* ‘traditional mask’ and derivatives (such as the corresponding verb *agayu-* ‘to celebrate a mask ceremony’) to the Christian concepts *Agayun* ‘God’, *a(n)gayuvik*, ‘church’, *agayu-* ‘pray’, *agayuar-* ‘to go to church’, *agayuma-* ‘to be a Christian’, *agayulirta* ‘priest’ (although in some areas, the word for ‘priest’ is *kass’aq* (also ‘white person’), from Russian *kasak* ‘cossack’), *agayussuun* ‘hymn, hymnal, religious object’, and *Agayuneq* ‘Sunday.’ (Some terms have also been used in Protestant circles, such as *agayulirta* ‘minister’, although many Christian denominations had their own *separate* terminology, e.g. *qulirarta*

‘Protestant minister’ from *quliraq* ‘traditional story, legend’, especially in areas with competing churches, Jacobson 2012: vol. 1: 580).

In Northern Alaska, the Iñupiat had rather fewer semantic extensions of a group of words based on a similar root, although as with Yup’ik, derivations of the root *añaayu-* or *agaayu-* ‘to pray’ are commonly used. Words derived from this root appear to have been borrowed from Yup’ik with the meaning ‘to pray’, since they do not exist otherwise in Iñupiaq with a pre-Christian meaning and they show phonological anomalies in Iñupiaq (e.g. /aa/, since the historical Iñupiaq form would have been *agayu-* or *anayu-* (Fortescue & al. 2010: 7, 34), also found in Nunivak Yup’ik with the meaning ‘mask’). Iñupiaq derivations of this root include *Agaayyun* ‘God’, literally ‘device for praying’, *agaayyuvik*, *añaayyuvik* ‘church’, *agaayyu-* ‘to pray; to hold a funeral for’, *agaayyuliqsi* ‘minister, pastor, preacher’, and King Island *añaayuniq* ‘Sunday’, *añaayuniqpak* ‘Easter, big holiday’.

The Eastern Inuit speaking area does not appear to have the broadly systematic appropriations from the traditional religion that we see in the West. Few pre-Christian ceremonial or shamanic terms are applied to Christianity in the Eastern Arctic, particularly with as broad a range of meanings as the terms given above; these terms tend, rather, to be coinages. In Greenlandic, ‘God’ is *Guuti* from Danish; and contrast *oqaluffik* ‘church, place where one talks’ with *naalagiar-* ‘to go to church, to be there to hear’ and *qinu-* ‘to pray’, originally ‘to beg.’ In Inuktitut, the situation is similar and includes the following terms: the loan *Guuti* from English, *Anirnialuk* ‘God, the great spirit’, or *Naalagaq* ‘Lord, who must be obeyed’; *tutsiavik* ‘church, place where one asks for something’, and *tutsiavigi-* ‘to pray, to ask for something’; *iksigarjuaq* (and variant forms like *itsigarjuaq*) ‘Catholic priest’ (literally, ‘one who writes a lot’ according to Schneider 1985, although this etymology is unclear), and so forth.

## 2.2. Shamanism

Native customs and concepts frequently existed that were compatible with those associated with the new religion(s), particularly, but not exclusively, from the domain of shamanism. Shamanism coexisted with Christianity into the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Greenland (and into the 20<sup>th</sup> in East Greenland),

into the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Aleutians, and up to the present in Eastern Canada (cf. Laugrand & Oosten 2010: 35). It was certainly viewed as a competing belief system by the Christian missionaries, and post-contact meanings associated with some terms from the shamanic lexical domain bear witness to the uncompromising rejection of shamanism within Christian theology. Thus, the shaman's predominant helping spirit, Aleut *qugaĵ*, Yup'ik and Iñupiaq *tuunraq/tuungaq*, Inuktitut *tuurngaq*, Greenlandic *tornarsuk* is redefined as 'devil' in all cases. In Aleut, *qugam ulaa*, literally 'home of the helping spirits', is redefined as 'hell', *tayaĵuliiĵuĵ* 'precontact figurine hung in communal house' becomes a term for 'idol' and the term *qlat-* 'to invoke the spirits' is broadened to mean 'to deceive.' Many English translations of original terms were semantically loaded. Thus, in Baffin Island Inuktitut, *irinaliutiit*, translated as 'traditional words of power' (Laugrand 2010: 62), from *irina* 'voice', was not only not applied to Christian 'prayer', it was commonly translated as 'incantation;' in other words, shamanism and activities related to shamanism were relegated to the domain of sorcery rather than religion. Anecdotally, in the period when Christianity was being adopted, one priest pointed out that the term *angakkuq* 'shaman' was a better translation for 'priest' than the coinage *iksirarjuaq* 'priest', literally 'great writer' (Laugrand 2010: 62, citing Van de Velde).

Christian rejection of the native belief system is only one factor that played into the choice of whether to use existing terms. Native individuals and communities played a major role in the development and acceptance of much of Christian terminology. Furthermore, these groups did not necessarily view shamanism as a system in conflict with Christianity. In the Aleut region, for example, the Russian priest Veniaminov and the Russian/Aleut priest Netsvetov worked together to create adequate *Aleut* terminology and translations *from Russian*. Although there are awkward terms and turns of phrase in early translations, Aleut Biblical language was fairly well-established by the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Interestingly, Aleut relexicalizes many original terms from shamanism in positive ways, sometimes in ways quite obviously integral to the new religion, as in the use of *snga-* and its derivatives, originally from 'taboo, untouchable', for the idea of holiness, or the very term *Aguuĵuĵ* 'Creator' for 'God' (originally referring to a deity apparently not worshipped because he was

too remote, Veniaminov 1984: 217). Other shamanic terms are subsumed into the expression of Christian concepts and include *taxtaaluġ* ‘dance house’ for ‘holy assembly’, and *kuyuudaġ* ‘upper world’ as one of the words for ‘heaven’ (from a pre-contact belief in the upper, middle, and lower worlds).

In the Yup’ik and Inuit areas, there were many early religious movements in which Christianity was in principle adopted but integrated into existing shamanic customs and ideas; in Alaska, some missions actively encouraged this syncretism, although in many cases, it occurred where Christian ideas arrived in advance of actual missionaries. Many shamanic practices were in fact compatible with Christian ones, e.g. the public confession of wrongdoings (Burch 1994: 98, Laugrand 2010: 56) or the idea of symbolic death and rebirth of a shaman (Burch 1994: 90, Laugrand 2010: 54). In some cases, terms associated with these activities were relexicalized; for example, Iñupiaq *anuti-* ‘to confess’ was applied to the religious idea of confession. The Yupik term *apqaurun* ‘interrogation’ reveals a slightly different emphasis of the traditional activity. In general, however, many shamanic terms with meanings compatible with Christian theology never found their way into the Christian semantic domain. Unlike in Alaskan Iñupiaq, for example, the (now rare) Baffin Island Inuktitut term *anianniq* ‘(public) disclosure of hidden things’ from the domain of shamanism was not applied to the Christian idea of confession, despite the facts that an important aspect of confession is the disclosure of knowledge that has previously been kept hidden and that this activity was perceived as similar to the Catholic act of confession (Laugrand 2010: 56, 62). The common term for confession is *qaqialirniq* from *qaqiaq-* ‘to humble (oneself)’ (Mahieu, personal communication 2015). A term found to the west of Hudson Bay for Catholic confession is *natqivik*, from a root meaning roughly ‘giving back life’, a more metaphorical understanding of the purpose of confession. Terms relating to drumming or to correcting someone who is doing wrong (within the context of a shamanic ritual) are never associated with religious expression or activity; a shaman’s means of getting information is never applied to the concept of prophecy, etc. Likewise, almost none of the terminology for the indigenous mythology is used, e.g. Inuktitut *Sanna* ‘Sedna, the Woman at the bottom of the sea, or Iñupiaq *Silam Iñua* ‘Spirit of the Universe’ (however, Yupik *Ellam Yua*

‘Spirit of the Universe’ is used in reference to ‘God’). Native terms for concepts such as ‘place where souls reside after death’ (e.g. Iñupiaq *uivvaqsaat*) could have been used to cover ‘heaven’, ‘hell’, or ‘purgatory’, but they have remained in the traditional domain. Similarly, native concepts relating to non-human souls or supernatural spirits were denounced as instruments of the Devil, and were said to be evil, but the terms for these spirits were not assumed in the new religion.

Many shamanic (but not mythological) terms were recast in non-religious contexts, such as in the domains of medicine/healing, of in reference to the relations between people, particularly rivals. This may be partly due to missionary reticence to acknowledge the validity of pre-Christian spiritual traditions or belief systems, but it is almost certainly also due to the pervasiveness of the rubric of shamanism in society. Laugrand (2010: 34) points out that in the Eastern Arctic, most people were considered capable of shamanic powers, and so the spiritual aspects of shamanism may have been reinterpreted as social aspects.<sup>3</sup> For example, Inuktitut *ijuri-* ‘to laugh at someone’ is now used as a reflection of social control, cf. *ijuriqtuq* ‘corrects a person who is doing wrong’, rather than of religious control, such as ‘to show someone the right way of...’;<sup>4</sup> and Greenlandic *kilitsissiaq* ‘shaman’s snuff, helper, something that one has to help deliver a message’ has been relexicalized for the modern term ‘spy, agent’ (Petersen 1976: 181). Some shamanistic terminology ended up in entirely different semantic domains, as in Greenlandic *agiaq* ‘(shaman’s) rubbing stone’ > ‘violin’ (Petersen 1976).

### 2.3. Non-shamanic sources of terminology

Shamanism was one source of religious terminology within the traditional lexicon, but so was much native nonreligious terminology. For example, Iñupiaq *annak-* ‘to escape danger, survive an ordeal’ was used for ‘to save’ in the Christian sense, and the derivations *annakti* ‘savior’ and *annaun* ‘salvation’ were used to translate the Christian concept of saving someone from evil or moral rather than physical peril. Yup’ik *anirtur-* ‘to rescue’ and Central Siberian Yupik *yuguligh-* ‘to save’ is likewise used for ‘to

<sup>3</sup> It is not clear whether this was the case in the Western Arctic or in the Aleut areas.

<sup>4</sup> The application of *ijuri-* to social control noted by Laugrand is not widely attested.

save' in the religious sense (and cf. *Yugulighista* 'Savior'). Another interesting case is the term for 'conversion' in Baffin Island Inuktitut: a specialized hunting term *siqqi-* (referring to movement of caribou from mountain to sea ice) was used by Baffin Island Inuit for the specific idea of being reborn as a Christian. This was done in areas where Christian ideas were known but where no missionaries had yet penetrated, and a native ritual evolved around this idea, called *siqqitiq* (Laugrand: 1997). *Siqqitiq* later came to denote specifically conversion.

In some cases, the original nonreligious sense of a term has become secondary, or the term has developed a separate religious meaning. For example, the Greenlandic root *kui-* 'pour, spill' has many regular forms, some of which refer to the act of pouring, as in *kuivaa* 's/he spilled it out.' The term *kuivaa* is also used specifically to mean 'baptizes someone;' and many of the derivations with *kui-* 'pour, refer specifically to baptism (rather than to the general act of spilling), as in *kuisippoq* 'is baptized', *kuisimasoq* 'baptized person, Christian', *kuisivik* 'baptismal font.'

Just as with shamanic terminology, the adoption of existing non-religious terminology often went hand-in-hand with the re-interpretation and integration of existing cultural practices into the new religion. For example, in areas of Alaska first missionized by the Russian Orthodox Church, e.g. the Aleut and southern Alaskan Yupik areas, old feast houses served as churches; the assignment of godparents after baptism was reminiscent of the existing social system for assigning relationships with mutual obligations (e.g. people with the same birthday/month, etc.), and so forth (Mads Lidegaard 1991: 25). Relexicalization or extension of existing terminology may have something to do with the relative ease with which Russian Orthodox practice could overlay previous practices. However, this cannot be the only explanation, since such relexicalization also happened in Moravian controlled areas such as villages along the Kuskokwim River, where old practices were systematically downplayed and rejected. And although the Iñupiaq region lay outside of the area of Russian influence, the Iñupiaq experience of Christianity shows some syncretism with the traditional cultural practices, resulting in the relexicalization of precontact

terms relating to the feasthouse (e.g. *utuqqaqtuun* ‘ancient traditional performance; ceremony held during Christmas week’, MacLean 2014).<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the development of Christian religious language has also had profound effects on other aspects of language use. For example, the Christian understandings of the concepts of mercy, pity, and love did not translate directly, and seem to have been fit into the native system of social obligations within a hierarchically organized set of community and family relationships. Briggs (1970: 319) points out that the (actually pan-Eskimo, but here in reference to Inuktitut) term *nagligi-* ‘to love protectively’<sup>6</sup> (*naklik-* ‘to be protective’ in Briggs 1970) was chosen by the missionaries as the one most appropriately approximating the idea of God’s love: *nagligi-* assumes that someone is in need of protection and awakens in someone the desire to protect that person; it reflects the uneven relationship between a protector and protectee, i.e. between God and humans.<sup>7</sup> The same term is the basis for the concepts of ‘mercy’ and ‘pity’ in Iñupiaq, and the same concept is the basis for Aleut *ituġniisali-* ‘to have pity on’, from the root *ituġ-*, with derivatives variously meaning ‘poor, humble, quiet, gentle, meek, an orphan, to be persecuted, to be an object of worries’ and likewise ‘to be merciful, charitable, having affection, to treat (a wife) affectionately, to pity.’ The native terms imply social bonds derived from obligations to take care of someone, e.g. an orphan, and they are specifically unidirectional. Whereas the term ‘love’ is used in Christian contexts not only for God’s love, but also for the obligation of humans to love God, in the Eskimo-Aleut world, a quite different set of terms is used for the latter, e.g. Aleut *qaġax̄talix-* ‘to be glad, thankful, grateful, to like/love (e.g. God, husband).’ Love of those higher up is based on the expectation that one owes them gratitude. It can be argued that the same distinctions exist in English, Russian, French, and Danish, but the term ‘love’ covers a broader semantic field in the European

<sup>5</sup> Lidegaard (1991: 42) mentions the following in reference to Alaskan Iñupiaq: *ajuqituiji* ‘preacher’, originally ‘the one who brings order in the feasthouse’, *inngiutoq* ‘church service’, originally ‘songs, stories told in the feasthouse.’ These forms are not listed in MacLean (2014) for Iñupiaq. They appear to be Canadian words, the former means ‘one who teaches’ and is used for Anglican pastors, and the latter is incorrect.

<sup>6</sup> *Nalligi-* is generally found in more eastern dialects and means ‘to love, show affection for’.

<sup>7</sup> See Fortescue (2001) for a discussion of West Greenlandic terms for love of God used by early Lutheran missionaries, particularly *naglik-/nallit-* and *asa-*.

languages (albeit with different boundaries in each), including love of God, love of fellow, and romantic love. While these distinctions are still regularly made in the Eskimo-Aleut languages, as Christianity and Christian ideals spread, the scope of the term ‘love’ broadened. In Aleut, for example, as a result of Russian (and later English) influence, even the heart, formerly simply a bodily organ, is associated with love, and it is used in both religious and nonreligious contexts: *kanuuû* ‘heart’, *kanuuûtu* ‘to have a big heart, to love’ (Berge: 2004).

### 3. Coinages

The term ‘coinage’ refers to the invention of a new word using native morphology. Many religious terms across the Arctic were invented, as in Inuktitut *tamuasuk*- ‘to take holy communion’, invented by the Royal Canadian missions from *tamuaq* ‘mouthful of food, what is being chewed in the mouth’ (Schneider 1985: 393). However, since Eskimo-Aleut languages are polysynthetic, and since new word formation occurs constantly, we also take the term ‘coinage’ to refer to the lexicalization or at least habitual use of a particular root-morpheme combination in reference to a new concept. For example, the Inuktitut *piuli*- ‘to make good, put back in use’ is the basis of a morphologically unexceptional word *piuliji*, which has become associated with the meanings ‘savior’ and Jesus Christ<sup>8</sup> and the Iñupiaq term *umialik* ‘boat captain’ is the basis of the word *umialiñnaq* ‘church elder’, literally ‘like a boat captain.’ Coinages are therefore sometimes indistinguishable from native terms that have been semantically modified, and the distinction may not always be important. It is also not always clear whether a derivation was common before its application to Christianity, although some coinages which were most likely uncommon, as in Aleut *Aguuûguûaasiû* ‘Deity, the fact of being God’, became lexicalized with the introduction of the new religion. Thus, the term *Aguuûguûaasiû* ‘Deity, the fact of being God’, is first attested in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; it is derived from the native term *Aguuûguû* ‘God, creator’ (ultimately from *agu-lix*- ‘to make, build’), a productive verbalizing affix *-ûga-* ‘have as’, and a productive applicative affix *-Vsi-* with irregular meaning and/or syntactic requirements:

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<sup>8</sup> Schneider lists *piuliajuq* ‘she looks after an orphan child’, which may be related.

*Aguuġu-ġa-asi-x̂*

God-have.as-way.of.doing/means.for.doing-ABS

‘have as a means of being God’ (Bergsland 1994: 29; cf. also *Aguuġuġaasim tanaa* ‘Kingdom’, literally ‘God’s land.’)

Likewise, the pairing of *orpiġ* and *-liaq* ‘(willow) tree-made’ in Greenlandic was likely uncommon prior to the introduction of Christmas trees in a largely treeless landscape and the consequent coinage of *orpiliaq* ‘Christmas tree’, literally ‘a tree that is made’ (Petersen 1976: 180). The Kobuk Iñupiaq coinage *sivuniqsriqiri* ‘prophet’, based on *sivuniq*, literally ‘that which is ahead’ which was given the metaphoric meaning ‘future’, is also unlikely to have been common in a culture that does not emphasize the future.

The use of coinages for activities connected with the new religion occurs throughout the Arctic and reflects a more general tendency to prefer, where possible, native word constructions for the coining of new terms (Berge & Kaplan 2005: 300). The Yupik, Iñupiaq, and Inuktitut groups in particular show a marked preference for coinages over relexicalizations and borrowings that predate today’s widespread bilingualism. Both Aleut and Greenlandic have a comparatively large number of borrowings (about which more below) in addition to coinages.

At first glance, the coinages might suggest that there was no previous compatible framework for understanding the activities of the missionaries and these activities necessarily had to be reframed within a quite different contextual system; e.g. Inuktitut *piuli-* ‘make it good, sort, put to good use’ for ‘to save (in the religious sense)’. As we have seen, this is an inaccurate and overly simplistic understanding of traditional Inuit society and philosophy. The coinages may, however, suggest something about the way the concepts, rituals or practices were viewed. Inuktitut *kakiatsivik* ‘purgatory, place where you purify (lit. whiten) yourself.’ Hell is conveyed by a variety of coined terms: Iñupiaq *nagliksaagvik* (lit. ‘place of suffering’), *tammaġvik*, lit. ‘place of loss, where one gets lost’. Schneider distinguishes between Catholic and Protestant usage for Inuktitut, the former being *kappianartuvik*, lit. ‘very fearsome place’ and the latter *ikumaaluk* ‘great fire.’ In West Greenlandic, the root *oqaluC-* ‘to talk’, has a large and productive set of derivatives, including *oqaluffigi-* ‘to talk to’ and the lexicalization *oqaluffik* ‘church’, and the preacher’s lectern, which

is an *oqaluttarffik* ‘place where one usually talks’, and similarly for Iñupiaq, *Uqalugiksuat* ‘Bible.’ Significantly, ‘to go to church, to be in church’ is *naalagiar-* ‘to go to hear, to set out to hear’, from *naalaar-* ‘to listen to, to obey, be well-behaved.’ While the root is used in many other derivations in nonreligious contexts (e.g. *naalagaq* ‘inspector’, *naalagaasaq* ‘foreman’, etc.), the stem *naalagiar-* and its derivatives seem restricted to religion (*naalagiarneq* ‘church service’, *naalagiartarfik* ‘place to hold a church service’, etc., cf. Berthelsen & al. 1997), and a church is *tutsiarvik* or *tuksiarvik* ‘place to ask for something, supplicate’ (*tutsiavik* in Quebec and Labrador).<sup>9</sup>

Coinages may also reveal something about concepts deemed important or not in pre-contact times. For example, in Aleut culture today, both the Aleut term *adalulix* and its English translation ‘to lie (to tell an untruth)’ have broader application and are more semantically loaded than ‘to lie’ in normal English usage; they can be used in reference to statements that are not strictly true but are not meant to deceive, as well as in reference to statements perceived as boasts. This is most likely an inheritance from pre-contact Aleut culture (Bergsland 1994: 12 lists early 19<sup>th</sup> century attestations for all meanings). In the adoption of Christianity, the term *adalulix* was extended to mean ‘evil’, and the derivative *aad(a)luudaâ*, literally ‘liar’, was one of the terms applied to the devil (‘the Evil One’, attested by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century).

Finally, coinages probably reflect the native experiences of the different Christian denominations and their approaches to proselytizing. As we have seen, some denominations were more tolerant of Eskimo-Aleut practices (e.g. the Russian Orthodox and Catholics in Alaska), while others (e.g. many of the Protestant denominations) were less so. Some emphasized the human tendency to sin while others emphasized salvation; some emphasized education while others emphasized an ethic of work and good deeds; etc. Without further study, it is difficult to attribute particular coinages to the effects of a set of experiences and imparted values; however some terms may be suggestive. The Inuktitut term *piuliji* ‘savior’ suggests, in its etymology, the association of the church (in this case

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<sup>9</sup> Harnum 1989: 108 gives *angaajjurvik* ‘place to wail, as an *angakkuq*’ for church, although we have not been able to verify this term.

Catholicism) with social welfare. Again in Inuktitut, *kuvviri-* ‘to sprinkle, baptize’ (from the original meaning ‘pour a liquid over’) contrasts with *nalunaikkusir-* ‘to mark something with a sign to make it known, to baptize (of an Inuit minister)’ and the English loan *patti-* ‘to baptize’, which appears to relate more to Protestantism than to Catholicism (Schneider 1985: 119).<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. Borrowings and calques

Borrowings and calques (borrowed ideas expressed through native morphemes), continue to increase in number in probably all Eskimo-Aleut languages, largely because of growing bilingualism among indigenous people, who learn English, Danish, Russian, and now even French in addition to their native language. In situations where indigenous languages are declining in use, such as Alaskan Iñupiaq, borrowing from a European language may be very extensive and not necessarily regular, so that English words, for example, may occur randomly in Iñupiaq speech. We concentrate here on well-established borrowed vocabulary that can be found in dictionaries and has been phonologically adapted to the borrowing language. New borrowings may or may not replace old borrowings, which, when very well integrated in the language, are treated like any other vocabulary. Such is the case for Alaskan Aleut, where Russian words remain in use, despite widespread use of English and a sharp decline in knowledge of Russian.

A very cursory review of borrowings does not suggest a straightforward link between either period of colonization and number of borrowings or religious affiliation and number of borrowings. Thus, languages like Aleut and Greenlandic, both of whose populations were colonized and missionized relatively early, appear to have a comparatively large number of borrowings and calques; however, some early borrowings and calques were later discarded in favor of native coinages, as in early Greenlandic *synd* ‘sin’ (discussed further below), and conversely, some were incorporated relatively late, e.g. Aleut *sudilix-* ‘to judge’ (Russian

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<sup>10</sup> In some cases, terms may reflect the tensions between the various denominations. According to Harnum 1989:109, Catholic Inuit refer to a Pentecostal Christian as *tammaqsaiji* ‘one who makes people err (i.e. leads them away from the other Church)’.

*sudit* ‘to judge’), first attested only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. And although both the Aleut and some Yup’ik areas are Russian Orthodox, Aleut appears to have borrowed many more Russian terms for religious terminology. That having been said, there are noticeably more borrowings and calques recorded in the Aleut and Greenlandic dictionaries than in Yup’ik and non-Greenlandic Inuit ones, and there are differences in numbers of borrowings and calques between the different religious denominations within an area.

In Aleut, Russian borrowings include the names of theological beings and church functionaries, as in *Arxaan’gilax* ‘archangel’ and *prutuiyaliiyax* ‘archpriest;’ names of ritual objects, such as *ultaarax* ‘altar’ and *kriistax* ‘cross;’ and religious activities or holidays, as in *ubiidnax* ‘mass’ (Russian *obednya*) and *Puustax* ‘lent’ (Russian *Post* ‘fast, Lent’); and some religious doctrinal concepts, e.g. *blagislaayalix*<sup>11</sup> ‘to bless’ (Russian *blagaslavyat* ‘to bless’) and *sudilix-* ‘to judge’ (Russian *sudit* ‘to judge’). Calques include *cha[a]gamudaġan* ‘justice’, literally ‘to the right hand’ (Russian *pravatá* ‘just, right and *praviy* ‘right handed’) *agnamiġtax* ‘gentile, pagan’, literally ‘tale, gossip’ from *agnaġ* ‘tongue’, Atkan *umsumiġtax* ‘pagan’ from *umsu-x* ‘tongue’ (Russian *yazychnik* ‘tale, gossip’). A number of the relexicalizations may be viewed as calques, as in the use of *adaġ* ‘father’ for ‘priest;’ this particular term has been similarly calqued in languages across the Arctic (e.g. *ataata* ‘biological father, Catholic priest’, Harnum 1989: 119).

In Greenland, early Bible translations contained large numbers of borrowings from Danish, e.g. Greenlandic via Danish *synd* ‘sin’, and failed coinages (coinages that never came into general use). As the linguistic knowledge of the missionaries improved and as more native Greenlanders assumed roles in the local parishes many of these terms were then replaced with native coinages, sometimes in a multistep process; for example *synd* ‘sin’ was replaced with the coinage *ajortulliaq* ‘bad that is done’, and later still with *ajorti* ‘what makes one bad’ (Petersen 1976: 182; Berge & Kaplan 2005: 293). Today, names for members of the church hierarchy and parts of the Bible are borrowings from Danish, as in *palasi* ‘priest’, and these borrowings are adapted to the native phonological system. Many

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<sup>11</sup> This word is not recorded in Bergsland (1994); it is in common use on the Pribilof Islands (Berge fieldnotes).

ritual objects and religious activities are coinages; cf. the borrowed Aleut term *ultaarax̂* ‘altar’ with the Greenlandic coinage *tunisivik* ‘place one gives something, sacrificial altar’. Greenlandic is still subject to Danish influence and it continues to borrow Danish terms, unlike Aleut, where Russian influence was greatly diminished with the purchase of Alaska by the United States in 1867. Petersen (1976: 199) suggests that borrowings may replace actual coinages if the latter are overly long or complicated.

The Yup’ik and non-Greenlandic Inuit areas appear to have fewer borrowings from the period before rapid language shift, at least according to published sources. Borrowings include names of Biblical and theological entities, names of major holidays, and some religious ritual activities, such as Central Alaskan Yup’ik *aan’gilaq* ‘angel’ from English, or *ugaspataq* ‘God’ from Russian *gospod’* ‘God’, *Paaskaq* ‘Easter’ from Russian *Páskha* ‘Easter’ and *Alussistuaq* ‘Christmas’ from Russian *rozhdestvó* ‘Christmas’ alongside the coined term *agayunerpak* ‘big Sunday’, literally ‘big act of praying.’ For Northern Quebec and Labrador Inuttut, Harnum (1989: 102), sometimes in non-standard orthography, lists *Jiisusi* (also *Giisusi*) ‘Jesus’, *Saatanasi* (also, *Saattanasi*) ‘Satan’, *Guuti* ‘God’, *kuraisima* ‘Christmas’, *haalatair-* ‘to have a holiday’, *kummuniunir-* ‘to take communion’, and *baaqtitaaq* ‘baptized person’, among the borrowings and blends (words that contain borrowed elements), although she does not specify the religious denomination(s) that use(s) these terms.<sup>12</sup>

Borrowings are found across the Arctic; nevertheless, coinages predominate in the Yupik and Inuit languages of Alaska and Canada, although the reasons are perhaps diverse. Coinages include various Inuktitut terms in reference to God, as in *Nunaliuqti* ‘maker of the earth’, *Naalagaq* ‘one who must be obeyed’, and *Anirniialuk* ‘great breath, great spirit.’ The latter is derived from *anir-* ‘to breathe’ and similar coinages from this root are found throughout the Arctic.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, coinages predominate in the Yupik and Inuit languages of Alaska and Canada,

<sup>12</sup> Some of the borrowings listed by Harnum may be old and no longer in common usage.

<sup>13</sup> Other religious derivations of *anir-* include *anirniq* ‘spirit, supernatural being’, *Anirniq Piujuq* ‘Holy Spirit’, *anirnisiaq* ‘angel’ and *anirniialunnguaq* ‘idol’ (the latter from Mahieu, personal communication, 2015).

although the reasons are perhaps diverse. There are significant gaps in the documentation of the various dialects and languages, and there is at least some evidence that documentation has been selective. For example, many religious terms were purposely not included in the first edition of the *Yup'ik Eskimo Dictionary* (Jacobson, personal communication 2005), precisely because they were assumed to be borrowings or inventions by missionaries.<sup>14</sup>

Many Inuit areas were missionized relatively recently in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sometimes first by Inuit who had spent time in areas with missions. Many of the new ideas were thus filtered through native lenses before the arrival of official church representatives, and this fact may play a role in the use of coinages rather than borrowings. This happened especially in Canada, as, for example, described by Laugrand (2010) in regards to Baffin Island Inuit.<sup>15</sup> Significantly, many of the Inuktitut coinages are equivalent to borrowings in Labrador Inuttut. Labrador was missionized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and many words used in religious contexts were created by missionaries, often with an imperfect understanding of the language and of the sounds of the language; however these words are still maintained in church functions.

Although the spread of Christian ideas prior to the arrival of the missionaries also happened to some degree in Alaska (e.g. among the Nunamiut of Anaktuvuk Pass, Lidegaard 1991: 82), the Alaskan Iñupiat were often directly and rapidly missionized, sometimes under traumatic conditions (e.g. periods of famine, a gold rush with an influx of outsiders bringing ready access to liquor, Lidegaard 1991: 40). The Iñupiat were also more thoroughly indoctrinated into the Christian belief system before they went out themselves to missionize others (Burch 1994), somewhat like the early experience in Greenland. However, in Greenland, only two major denominations, the Lutherans and the Moravians, had a substantial presence during the formative years of Christian missions, whereas in Alaska, most missionary activity took place in the twentieth century and

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<sup>14</sup> Although still not a comprehensive source of religious terminology, Jacobson (2012) includes significantly more information on this topic.

<sup>15</sup> The same happened in a number of places in Greenland, cf. the Habbakuk rebellion in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Gad 1982: 325ff, Lidegaard 1993: 98ff), but the ensuing years have displaced many of the effects of this experience.

often involved numerous competing denominations. Whether or not such differences had an effect on the development of religious terminology remains to be studied.

Finally, as we have mentioned before, there may be differences between the denominations in terms of the number of borrowings vs. the number of coinages or relexicalizations. A quick glance suggests that in some places, Protestant denominations have more borrowings (e.g. in Inuktitut), but this may have more to do with other factors, such as relative recency of missionary activity, previous exposure to Christian ideas, competition with and differentiation from other missions, and so forth.

## 5. Concluding remarks

The full scope of all of these observations needs to be studied in greater detail. It is clear that none of these vocabulary items originate from simple processes in linguistic development, nor is it always clear what led to certain choices in some communities and different choices elsewhere, or to what extent the religious vocabulary has become integrated or accepted into the language, at least in areas with recent and competing proselytizing efforts.

Areas requiring further investigation include the following:

- a) How and why did old words get relexicalized as new terminology or not?

What led to some original vocabulary being used for Christian concepts, even when the Native activities were rejected,<sup>16</sup> as with ‘dancing’ or ‘messenger feast’, while other terms were ignored, as with *uivvaqsaat*? One term – the only one we know of involving a supernatural entity in the traditional religious system – was not rejected or ignored, but came to stand for the denunciation of Native beliefs, namely West Greenlandic *torngaq*, Inuktitut *tuurngaq*, Iñupiaq *tuungaq*, Yup’ik *tuunraq* used almost

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<sup>16</sup> Some denominations discouraged and put an end to traditional practices like dancing and potlatches and some did not.

universally for ‘devil’.<sup>17</sup> Despite the tendency to assume dominance by missionaries in the development of religious terminology, it appears that native Aleut, Yupiit, and Inuit had a great deal of input, and native speakers ultimately made the choice as to which terms to use and perpetuate, and which terms to discard. Answers to these questions might provide fresh insights into the power dynamics of the period of contact and indicate some fruitful directions for future research.

b) How are new terms developed and how do they become integrated into the language?

We have covered several methods for creating new terminology, including spontaneous production within a community on the one hand and deliberate language planning, often by committee work for specific translation tasks, on the other.

Some of the religious terminology was apparently developed either through consultation of missionaries with native speakers or by missionaries alone struggling with an unfamiliar language philosophy and lacking terminology for expressing this philosophy. Terms created especially in the latter way, did not always become well-integrated into the language. Listing them in a dictionary is one way to promote them, but leaving them out of dictionaries can also downplay the importance of newer religious terminology (Jacobson, personal communication, 2005) since often it is not widely known or applies only to a particular denomination. It would be worth looking into which terms are widely used and known, which are known by only a few and which are still at the proposal stage, because our list surely includes examples of all three categories. Further, it is not yet clear what differences result from different Christian sources (e.g. Catholic, Orthodox, or the various Protestant denominations). At first glance, the source seems not to matter greatly, but this question bears further investigation. In many cases, modern documentation of specifically religious language has not been done.

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<sup>17</sup> Although *tuunraq* and related forms are widespread, other words for ‘devil’ do crop up, such as Inuktitut *uivirrisiji*, literally ‘deceiver, clever one’ collected by Mahieu in Kangiqsualujjuaq, although this may be a circumlocution of the sort that is also found in English, e.g. ‘the evil one’.

### c) Resulting differentiation of languages and dialects

Relexicalization, coinage, and borrowing of religious terminology have contributed to the differentiation of the modern languages (Berge & Kaplan 2005), even where the coinages or relexicalizations involve similar roots. For example, Inuktitut *mirnguisirvik* originally ‘feast day, holiday’, is derived from *mirnguisiq-* ‘to rest’ (although it now means a ‘park’). The equivalent term in Iñupiaq is *Minguiqsigñiq* and means ‘Sunday’, whereas in Iñupiaq ‘holiday’ is rendered as *quviasugvik*, literally ‘time of happiness’, from *quviasuk-* ‘to be happy.’ *Quviasuvvik* refers to Christmas in Arctic Quebec and Labrador Inuttut and Qitinnuq is the entire holiday period around Christmas, probably from *qitiq* ‘middle’ referring to the middle of winter. Whereas native vocabulary may be based on the same root in related dialects and languages, created words more often show no morphological relationship in terms of their origin. Thus, cognate terms for ‘father’, such as Aleut *adaġ* or Inuit *ataata* are extended to mean ‘priest’ in a number of languages. Likewise, words for ‘baptize’ in Greenlandic, and (Catholic) Inuktitut use native words derived from cognate roots meaning *kui-* ‘spill, pour’ or *kuvviri-* ‘sprinkle’, respectively, whereas (Protestant) Inuktitut uses the coinage *nalunaikkusir-* ‘to mark something with a sign to make it known, to baptize.’ Again, illustrating the language differentiation that results from the different choices for vocabulary expansion, Iñupiaq along with Arctic Quebec and Labrador Inuttut have borrowed the English word ‘baptize’, albeit with different results – *paptaiq-* in Iñupiaq and *baaqtit-* in Labrador.

Finally, this work has outlined a number of questions and problems that bear further investigation, in addition to those given just above. 1) Have different dialects or languages and different denominations varied in their handling of religious terminology? 2) Have some words been so changed by Christian usage that their original meaning has become unclear or no longer applies (also the case with common vocabulary that has taken on new meaning)? 3) Were some native semantic areas considered particularly “fertile ground” for adaptation to religious terminology?

As we see, there are many significant variables at play in this discussion, all potential subjects of further investigation, including various forms of Christianity, differences in Native cultures, different experiences

of colonization and conversion, along with individual missionaries and their proselytes and how they differed in their approach to developing new terms.

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