Kalaallisut: Eskimo-Aleut

Selected from Qillarsuakkunik oqalualaaq (Qillarsuaq’s Saga)

Passage 1: Flight from Canada (pp. 13–14)

Qillarsuaq & Co: Migration, led by a mighty sorcerer Qillarsuaq, from Canada to Greenland, described by a Thule descendant who had heard the saga directly from one of the participants. Selected passages from: Ulloriaq, I. 1976. Qillarsuakkunik oqalualaaq. Kalaallit-nunaanni naqiterisitsarfik, Nuuk.

TRANSCRIPTION, GLOSSES & TRANSLATION by Maria Bittner (9/2007): Kalaallisut has a great deal of fusion. For clarity, line 1 is in the modern Kalaallisut orthography minus allophonic variants (e, o, f of i, u, v); line 2 is the morphological analysis; line 3 are the glosses; line 4 is a free English translation. Derivational morphemes are glossed in lower case (e.g. ‘prf’ for perfect aspect), inflectional and other functional morphemes, in small caps (e.g. IND, RPT). Glosses for:

- **matrix moods:**
  - IND = indicative, IMP = imperative, NEG = negative, OPT = optative, QUE = interrogative

- **dependent moods:**
  - ELA = elaborating, FCT = factual, HAB = habitual, HYP = hypothetical, NON = non-factual

- **case:**
  - ABL = ablative, DAT = dative, EQU = equalis (‘like, as’), ERG = ergative, LOC = locative, MOD = modalis (modifier), VIA = vialis (path)

- **centering:**
  - T = topic, ⊥ = background, IV = property of topic; TV = relation of topic to background

- **derivation:**
  - prf = perfect aspect, iv = intransitive verb, tv = transitive verb, cn = common noun, m = relational noun, a\b = suffix that attaches to category a to form b)

- **clitics:**
  - ALT = alternative-sensitive operator (‘or’, ‘even’, ‘any’)
  - RPT = reportative evidential

Paragraphs (§) as in the original.

TOPOLOGY: if initial field, ib initial boundary, mf middle field, fb final boundary, ff final field. Kalaallisut uses these fields roughly as follows:

- **if:** anaphoric link to prior discourse and/or set up the primary topical referent (T);  
- **ib:** elaborate T and/or:
  - (i) set up a secondary topical referent (T’), or (ii) set up a backgrounded referent (⊥);  
- **mf:** background information about main verbal comment;  
- **fb:** main verbal comment about current topic(s) (if- T & ib- T’ if present; otherwise T from last S)  
- **ff:** elaborate and/or set up a new backgrounded referent (⊥’) to be picked up by the upcoming if. Only fb must be instantiated (by the main verb or complex predicate NV); all other topological fields are optional and, if instantiated, may be multiply instantiated (unlike syntactic nodes).
§1. (p. 13)

(1) Qillarsuakkut nunarsuarminniikkallaramik if, ib
    Qillarsua-kku-t nun- rsaq-mik-ni=it-kallar-ga-mik
    Qillarsuaq-&co-PL homeland-big-3PL.T,SG-LOC=be-for-FCT_T-3PL.T

When Qillarsuaq and his people were still in their native land,

iqqissimasimangillat, fb
iqqissi-sima-sima-ngit-la-t,
calm.down-prf-prf-not-NEG-3PL
they never had a moment of peace

akiralissuugaminnguuq. ff
akiraq-liissu-ga-mik=guuq.
enemy-have.many-FCT_T-3PL.T=RPT
for, I’m told, they had many enemies.

(2) Ilqqurli taanna Qillarsuup if, ib
    iliqqu-q=li taanna Qillarsuaq-p
    habit-SG=but this Qillarsuaq-SG.ERG

This custom [i.e. bloodfeud], Qillarsuaq

nuannariinggilaa fb
nuannari-ngit-la-a
like-not-NEG-3SG.3SG
did not like (at all).

§2. (p. 13)

(1) Ilaaanni Qillarsuakkut angalaartillutik if, ib
    Ilaaanni Qillarsuaq-kku-t angalaar-tit-llu-tik
    once Qillarsuaq-&co-PL travel.around-state-ELA_T-3PL.T

Once, when Qillarsuaq and some others were on a hunting trip

akiqqaminnit saassunniqarpit mf, fb
akiraq-mik-nit saassu-niqar-pu-t
enemy-3PL.T,PL-ABL attack-passive-IND.TV-3PL
they were attacked by their enemies

piqqamilu annaqqarsimallutik. ff
pi-qqar-mik=lu annag-qqar-sima-llu-tik.
do-barely.manage-SG.MOD=and survive-barely.manage-prf-ELA_T-3PL.T
and barely managed to come out alive.

(2) Akiqqaminnit ikinniruqigamik if
    akiraq-mik-nit ikig-niru-qi-ga-mik
    enemy-3PL.T,PL-ABL be.few-more-emph-IND.TV-3PL.T

Being a much smaller group than their enemies,
http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~mbittner/ktxt.html

iluliaq purtuvalaannqitsuq sinaa tamarmi innaasuq ib
ilulia-q purtu-pallaar-ngit-tuq-q sina-a tama-rmi inna_u-suq-q
iceberg-SG high-too-not-IV\cn-SG side-3SG,\SG all-SG T cliff-be-IV\cn-SG
qimarravigaat
qimaa-rrat-vik-gi-pa-at
flee-together-loc.of-rn\tv-IND.TV-3PL.3SG
they fled together onto an iceberg, not too high [and] with a sheer drop all around,
tassanngaanniillu akiqqatik akiurlugit.
tassa-nngaanniit=lu akiraq-tik akirLu-git.
there-ABL=and enemy-3PL,PL fight.back-ELA T-3PL T
and from there they fought their enemies.

(3) Tamarmik

tama-rmik
al-PL T
They [were] all
pisissimik sakkuqarput.
pisissiq-mik sakku-qar-pu-t.
bow-SG.MOD weapon-have-IND.IV-3PL
armed with a bow.

(4) Qillarsuakkut ajugaasimapput
Qillarsuaq-kku-t ajugaa-sima-pu-t
Qillarsuaq-&co-PL win-prf-IND.IV-3PL
[Qillarsuaq and his men] T won
akiqqatik qarsuiruttuurmata ajugaavvigigamikkik
akiraq-tik qarsuq-irut-tuur-mm-ata ajugaa-vik-gi-ga-mikkik
enemy-3PL T,PL arrow-run.out.of-happen-FCT T-3PL T win-loc.of-rn\tv-FCT T-3P T-3PL T
defeating their T enemies when they T happened to run out of arrows
massa tuqusurtaqaraluaqalutik.

§3. (p. 13)

(1) Tamatuma kinguninnguagut Qillarsuaq if, ib
tamatuma kinguni-nnguaq-a-kut Qillarsuaq-q
that.ERG after/behind-little-3SG,SG VIA Qillarsuaq-SG
Shortly afterwards, Qillarsuaq
piarirsalirpuq
piarir-sar-lir-pu-q
be.ready-try.to.cause-begin-IND.IV-3SG
began to make preparations
qimaaniarluni
qima-niar-lu-ni
flee-intend-ELA$_T$-3SG$_T$
to flee (lit. intending to flee)

iqqissiviqarani
iqqissi-vik-qar-na-ni
calm.down-loc.of-have-NON$_T$-3SG$_T$
person-be-v

if

qatsukkamiuk
qatsug-ga-miuk
tire.of-FCT$_T$-3SG$_T$.3SG$_⊥$
because he had got tired of living without a moment of peace.

(2) Taama uqaluttalirmat
Taama uqalut-tar-lir-mm-at
thus talk-habit-begin-FCT$_⊥$-3SG$_⊥$
homeland-have-fellow-big-3SG$_⊥$.PL.ERG
When he started talking that way, his countrymen

sujuillirmik
suju-lliq-mik
front-most-MOD belief-have.same-not-first-but-IND.TV-3PL.3SG
at first disagreed with him

unissartarlugulu.
unig-sar-tar-llu-gu=lu.
and repeatedly tried to persuade him to stay.

(3) Qillarsuarli
Qillarsuaq=li
Qillarsuaq.sg=but persuaded-prospective-be-not-NEG-3SG
But Qillarsuaq was not to be persuaded

pimmiurluni
pimmak-liur-lu-ni
experience-make-ELA$_T$-3SG$_T$
shaman-big-be-FCT$_T$-3SG$_T$
[and] being a great shaman with much experience

imaannaq
ima=innaq
so=just

pisassaasimanginnami.
pi-saq-ssaq-u-sima-ngit-na-mi.
he could not to be killed [lit. gotten] just like that.

§4 (p. 14)

(1) Imaminnguuq
ima-mi=guuq
[and]

agakkutigaaq:
agakkuq-u-tigi-pu-q:
shaman-be-so.much-IND.IV-3SG
This is how great he was as shaman, I’m told:
(2) iliarsunguauq piqatigalugu
iliarsuk-nnguaq-q pi-qaqiti-llu-gu
orphan-little-SG do-with-ELA$_T$-3SG$_L$

piniarniarnirit ila-an-ni
pi-niar-niar-niq-t ila-at-ni
kind-hunt-intend-v$n$-PL.ERG part-3PL$_L$.SG-LOC
Once when he was on a hunting trip, with a little orphan,
sikumi saavitausimapput.
siku-mi saavit-taq-u-sima-pu-t.
ice-LOC [breaking.ice] carry.off-tv
be-prf-IND.IV-3PL
they were carried off by breaking ice.

(2) Allatut sapirami
alla-tut sapir-ga-mi
other-EQU unable.to.do-FCT$_T$-3SG$_T$
Unable to do anything else,

immaq sikutut iliisillugu
imma-q siku-tut it-lir-tit-llu-gu
sea-SG ice-EQU be-begin-cause-ELA$_T$-3SG$_L$
he turned sea into ice,

nanunngurluni qimmiminut malittilluni
nanu-nngur-llu-ni qimmiq-mi-nut malig-tit-llu-ni
bear-become-ELA$_T$-3SG$_T$ dog-3SG$_T$.PL-DAT follow-cause-ELA$_T$-3SG$_T$
[and] himself, into a bear, making the dogs follow him, [and thus]
anassimapput.
anag-sima-pu-t.
survive-prf-IND.IV-3PL
they survived.

(3) Qillarsuaq taamaakkami
Qillarsua-q taama=it-ga-mi
Qillarsuaq.SG thus=be-FCT$_T$-3SG$_T$
Because Qillarsuaq was such [a shaman],

nunaqqassuarminit tatiginiqarsimavuq.
nuna-qar-qatsuaq-mi-nit tatigi-niqar-sima-pu-q.
homeland-have-fellow-big-3SG$_T$.PL-ABL trust-passive-prf-IND.IV-3SG
he had become trusted by his countrymen.

§5 (p. 14)
(1) Kiisa tamarsuarmik
kiisa tama-ruaq-mik
at.last all-big-PL$_T$
In the end, the whole lot of them
began to make preparations to flee [lit. intending to flee].

(2) Ikirsuaq taanna
ikiq-rsuaq-q taanna
That great strait
unippiarniq ajurumik sikusartuq
unig-piar-niq-q ajur-tuq-mik siku-tar-tuq-q
where the ice never gets quite stable,

(3) Qularnnangilaq
qulari-nar-ngit-la-q
No doubt
apriili qaammataagaa.
apriili qaammat-ut-qa-a.
April month-be-ELA₁-TV-3SG₁-3SG
the month was April.

(4) Qammammimi tassani sumilunniit
qammam-mi=mi tassa-ni su-mi=luunniit
For during that month anywhere
imaq sikuunmisarpuq
ima-q siku-u-imi-tar-pu-q
the sea is [at least] partly frozen

angalaniartunut iluartaqaluni.
angala-niar-tuq-nut iluar-tar-qi-llu-ni.
which is very good for those who intend to travel.
(5a) Ikiq ikaagassaat
ikiq-q ikaar-gaq-ssaq-at
strait-SG cross-tv\m-n-prospective-3PL↓.SG
The strait they were going to cross,
tuluttut Barrow Straitimik atilik
tuluk-tut Barrow Strait-mik atiq-lik-q
Englishman-EQU Barrow Strait-MOD name-with-SG
— called the Barrow Strait in English —
sukkurpiaq ikaarsimassaniraat
su-kkut=rpiaq ikaar-sima-ssa-nir-ga-at
what-sg.VIA=exactly cross-prf-prospect-x.wonder-ELA↓.TV-3PL↓.3SG

naluara,
nalu-pa-ra,
not.know-IND.TV-1SG.3SG
I don’t know where exactly they would have crossed it.

(5b) ilurpasissukkulli ikaarsimanissaat
iluq-pasig-tuq-kut=li ikaar-sima-uniq-ssaq-at
interior-be.far.toward-iv\cn-VIA=but cross-prf-v\n-prospective-3PL↓.SG
ilimanarniruvuq.
ilimagi-nar-niru-pu-q.
expect-make.one-more-IND.IV-3SG
but it is most likely that they would’ve crossed it on the inner (landward?) side.

§6 (p. 14)
(1a) Sila naatsursurlugu naammagiliramikku
sila naatsursur-llu-gu naammagi-lir-ga-mikku
weather-SG calculate-ELA↓-3SG↓ judge.adequate-begin-FCT↓-3PL↓.3SG↓
When they decided, based on their calculations, that the weather was adequate,
kiisami aallarput
kiisami aallar-pu-t
finally set.out-IND.IV-3PL
they finally set out,
qimussirpassuullutik,
qimussiq-paa-rsuaq-u-llu-tik,
driven.sled-group-big-be-ELA↓-3PL↓
a big group of sleds travelling together,
Qillarsuaq sujulirssurtiliullugu;
Qillarsuaq-q suju-lirsur-ti-liut-llu-gu;
Qillarsuaq-sg lead-provide-agt-make-ELA↓-3SG↓
with Qillarsuaq as their leader.
(1b) sunavvami
sunavva=mi
turn.out=FOC
As it turned out,
angalaniq taama sivisutigisuq
angala-niq-q taama sivi-su-tigi-tuq-q
travel-vn-SG so duration-have.big-to.that.degree-iv\cn-SG
throughout that long trip
aqquullu taama isurartutigisuq
aqqu=lu taama isurartur-tigi-tur-q
route.SG=and so long.distance-to.that.degree-iv\cn-SG
that whole distance
sujulirsurtaajualissasuq.
suju-lirsur-ti-u-juar-lir-ssa-su-q.
lead-provide-agt-be-constantly-begin-prospect-ELA⊥IV-3SG⊥
he was to be their constant leader.

(2) Tamannaminnguuq
tamanna=mi=guuq
that=FOCRPT
For that, I am told,
Qillarsuup namminiq piumasarigamiuk.
Qillarsuaq-p namminiq pi-uma-saq-gi-ga-mi-uk.
Qillarsuaq-SG.ERG self do-want-tv\rn-have.as-FCT⊥3SG⊥-3SG⊥
was Qillarsuaq's own wish.