

How are Turkish <yapağı> “raw wool,” <yapalak> “owl,” and <lapa lapa kar yağ-> “to snow in thick flakes” related?

Türkçe *yapağı*, *yapalak*, ve *lapa lapa* (*kar yağmak*) sözcükleri nasıl ortak bir kökene dayanıyor?

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Abstract: This paper argues that the Turkish words <yapağı> "raw wool," <yapalak> "owl," and <lapa lapa (kar)> "(snow) in thick flakes" are all etymologically related to Old Turkic *yapaku* "flocks or clumps of sheep wool; tufts or flocks of entangled, matted hair." Old Anatolian Turkish and Ottoman attestations for *yapaıu/yapayı* "dense tufts (of grass); raw wool," *yapalak* "1. feathered, hairy; 2. owl," and *yapa yapa kar* (> Turkish <lapa lapa kar>) are provided and discussed. Departing from the commonly accepted etymological proposal, *yapalak* "owl" has been reanalysed as **yapaıu+lak* "hairy, woolly, feathered (little ball)." **Yapa* in the reduplicated form *yapa yapa (kar)* "(snow) in thick flakes" is proposed to be an irregular development of *yapayı* "flock(s) of wool," corroborated by cognate forms in modern Turkic languages (e.g., Tatar *yapalak kar*, Kazakh *žapalak žapalak kar*). The previously suggested etymologies for *yapaku* and, more recently, *yapa yapa kar*, deriving both from *yap-* "to cover, close" are falsified. Involved processes like irregular sound change (/y-/ → /l-/), metaphorical extension and semantic change, as well as lexical split (Turkish <yapağı> and <lapa lapa (kar)> < *yapayı*) are addressed.

Keywords: Etymology, cognates, Old Anatolian Turkish, metaphorical extension and semantic change, reduplicated form *yapa yapa* > *lapa lapa*, irregular sound change (/y-/ → /l-/)

Özet: Bu çalışmanın temel iddiası, Türkçe <yapağı>, <yapalak>, ve <lapa lapa (kar)> sözcüklerinin Eski Türkçe *yapaku* "yumak ya da öbek hâlinde dökülmüş koyun yünü; birbirine geçmiş saç yumağı" sözcüğü ile eşasılı olduğudur. Sözkonusu kelimelerin Eski Anadolu Türkçesi ve Osmanlıca tanıkları olan *yapaıu/yapayı* "(yeşil ot) öbeği; koyun yapağısı," *yapalak* "1. tüylü, kabarık saçlı; 2. baykuş," ve *yapa yapa kar* (> Türkçe <lapa lapa kar>) örnekleri ortaya konulup incelenmiştir. "Baykuş" anlamındaki *yapalak* sözcüğünün yaygın kabul gören etimolojisi dışında bu kelimeye dair **yapaıu+lak* "kabarık saçlı, yünlü, tüylü (yumak)" şeklinde başka bir köken önerilmiştir. Tatarca *yapalak (kar)*, Kazakça *žapalak žapalak (kar)* gibi çağdaş Türk dillerinde bulunan eşasılı sözcüklere (cognates) dayanarak Eski Anadolu Türkçesi'nde *yapa yapa (kar)* ikilemesindeki **yapa* şeklinin *yapayı* "yün yumağı" sözcüğünün kuraldışı bir gelişmesi olduğu iddiası ileri sürülmüştür. Daha önce *yapaku* için ve yakın zamanda *yapa yapa (kar)* için önerilen < *yap-* "örtmek, kapatmak"dan türediğine dair iddia reddedilmiştir. <Yapağı> sözcüğünün tarihî gelişim sürecinde rastlanan düzensiz ses değişimi (/y-/ → /l-/), mecazi anlam genişlemesi ve anlamsal değişimler ile tek sözcüğün ikiye ayrılması (lexical split) (Türkçe <yapağı> ile <lapa lapa (kar)> < *yapayı*) gibi dil olaylarına da değinilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Etimoloji, eşasılı sözcükler, Eski Anadolu Türkçesi, mecazi anlam genişlemesi ve anlamsal değişimler, *yapa yapa* > *lapa lapa* ikilemesi, düzensiz ses değişimi (/y-/ → /l-/)

This paper was inspired by my ongoing work as a consultant for Turkish and Turkic etymology for the Oxford English Dictionary which primarily involves finding the earliest attestations of (potential) Turkic loans in English in historical Turkish or Turkic sources. About two years ago I was asked to contribute an introductory paper on Turkic etymology for *The Oxford Handbook of Etymology*.¹ In the paper I discussed basic principles and methods used in Turkic etymology, accompanied by illustrative examples. Furthermore, I presented and evaluated available etymological dictionaries and reference works for Turkic languages. My main focus in Turkic etymology has been on the history of Turkish lexemes, focusing on attested words as opposed to hypothetical forms or reconstructions. While preparing the paper I became acquainted with new exciting publications for the study of Turkic etymology, first and foremost Jens Wilkens' concise dictionary of Old Uyghur (2021), which includes hitherto undocumented Old Uyghur lexical material and reliable information on some immediate or remote (e.g., Sogdian or Sanskrit) etymons of Old Uyghur words.² I also came across or revisited many unresolved or disputed issues in Turkish etymology. Hence, I felt motivated to critically reevaluate certain etymological proposals and add some new philological data to the history of words. I hope to explore new connections between cognates based on newly discovered material or new interpretations. Etymology is not only the study of the origins of words, but also the study of the development of words and their meanings. I hope to contribute new insights to Turkic etymological questions, and to point out some basic methodological weaknesses encountered during my work with this. This paper is the first in a planned series of articles with the same objective.

Karakhanid Turkic *yapaḡu* et al. – the oldest attested cognates of *‘yapaḡ’*

In this paper I propose an etymological connection between the Turkish words *‘yapaḡ’* “raw wool,” *‘yapalak’* “owl,” and *‘lapa lapa kar’* “snow in thick flakes.”³ I will claim and try to demonstrate that all three of them are cognates

1 Helga Anetshofer, “Turkic Etymology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Etymology*, ed. Philip Durkin (Oxford University Press, 2023, forthcoming).

2 Jens Wilkens, *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen: Altuigurisch-Deutsch-Türkisch* (= HWAU) (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2021).

3 Actually, Sevortian and Levitskaia have already proposed this connection (Ė. V. Sevortian and L. S. Levitskaia, *Ėtimologičeskii slovar’ tiurkskikh iazykov* (= EstJa), [T. 4]: “Ė, Ž, Y” (Moskva: Nauka,

of eleventh-century Karakhanid Turkic *yapaķu* "refuse of wool; tufts or flocks of entangled, matted hair" (see Fig. 1 and 2). The formation of Old Turkic *ya-paķu* itself is not readily analyzable; its Mongolic parallel *dayaki* "snarl, tangle; combings of hair; shedding of hair; hair of a child before cutting it for the first time"⁴ is generally accepted to be an early loan from Turkic. The often-cited hypothetical derivation from the Old Turkic verbal base *yap-* "to cover, to close" poses multiple morphological and semantic problems, and is not valid.

Before evaluating hitherto proposed etymologies of *yapaķu*, it is useful to reference the oldest attested cognates of the word:

(i) – Karakhanid Turkic, 11th century, from Mahmud al-Kashgari's *Diwan Lughat al-Türk*:

يَافُو *yapaķu* al-qarda min aš-šūf wa-š-ša' r 'alā r-ra's

yapaķu is "the refuse (Ar. qarda) of wool or the hair on the head" (i.e., soft hair or wool that falls off or is shed)

idā iltabada yuqālu يَافُو بُلْدِي *yapaķu boldı*

when it (the wool or hair) "becomes dense, entangled and compacted in clumps (Ar. iltabada)" you say *yapaķu boldı* (i.e., it turned into *yapaķu*).⁵

Kashgari also glosses the words *yap* and *yapyut* with the same Ar. word *qarda* "the refuse of wool": يَپ al-qarda wa-minhu yuqālu يَپ يُونَك *yūy yap* ay qarda wa-šūf "*yap* means the refuse of wool; thus they say *yūy*⁶ *yap*, that is, the refuse of wool (*qarda*) and wool (*šūf*);"⁷ يَپْ يَتَغْت *yapyut* al-ḥašiyya wa-l-qarda min

1989), 125-126). However, they did not include Common Turkic *yapalak* "owl," or mention Turkish *dapa lapa kar* "snow in thick flakes." Regrettably, their important contribution went widely unnoticed. I agree with most parts of Sevortian and Levitskaia's proposal.

4 Ferdinand D. Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary* (Routledge, 1960), 217.

5 Robert Dankoff and James Kelly, eds., Maḥmūd al-Kāšġarī: *Compendium of the Turkic dialects (Dīwān luyāt al-Turk)* (= DLT) (Harvard University Printing Office, 1982), vol. 2: 460; here I opted for a slightly different translation than Dankoff and Kelly's. Kāšġarlı Mahmud, *Dīwānū Lāġati't-Türk: Tıpkıbasım/Faksimile* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990).

6 In the modern Turkic languages many cognates of OT *yūy* "wool" – with a back vowel – exist, including Azeri *yūn*; whereas Türkmen has *yūy* 'yūñ'. It is difficult to determine when *yūy* developed into *yūy* with a front vowel in Ottoman. Meniški 1680 has *yoy* (Franciszek Meniški, *Thesaurus linguarum orientalium Turcicae-Arabicae-Persicae* (İstanbul: Simurg, 2000), vol. 3, 5628); Turkish dialects record *yūy*/*yūn*, and *yūy* (*Türkiye'de Halk Ağzından Derleme Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1963-1982), "yūn, yūñ," "yūñ").

7 Dankoff and Kelly, DLT, vol. 2, 445. Kāšġarlı, *Faksimile*.



Figure 1. Raw sheep wool, Old Turkic *yapaķu*.⁸

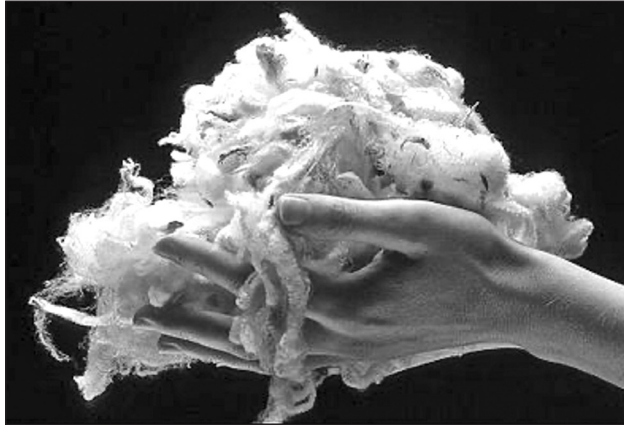


Figure 2. Raw sheep wool, Old Turkic *yapaķu*.⁹

⁸ Photograph from Alibaba.com: https://www.alibaba.com/product-detail/Mongolian-Cashmere-Fabric-Top-Raw-Sheep_60563784977.html?spm=a2700.7724857.normal_offer.d_image.7ae719b48COHHr (15.05.2022).

⁹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wool> (15.05.2022).

aš-ša‘r wa-š-šūf “*yapyūt* means pillow (*hašiyya*), and the refuse of hair or wool.”¹⁰

(ii) – Old Uyghur, undated text (manuscript copy probably from the 13th or 14th century):

yam yapakular “filth and tangles (i.e., confusions or distortions [of the *dharma* teachings])”

Yapaku was only recently detected in Old Uyghur sources. Arzu Kaygusuz (2021) corrected an earlier reading attempt of Peter Zieme’s, and identified the word *yapaku* in the phrase *kirliḡ münliḡ kadaylıy tātürü yam yapakular*, which she translated as “der Schmutz und die Raufwolle der besudelten und sündhaften₂ häretischen Lehre” (the filth (*yam*) and the refuse of wool (*yapaku*) of the dirty (*kirliḡ*) and sinful (*münliḡ kadaylıy*) heretic (*tātürü*) teachings).¹¹ Wilkens has subsequently included the word *yapaku* with the meaning “refuse of wool” (“Raufwolle || yapaḡı”) in his *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen*.¹² Although Zieme (2014) misread the phrase *yam yapaku* (as **yam vapxau* and **vam-vapxau*), I prefer his context-based tentative translation as “confusions of the Indian *dharma*s” to Kaygusuz’s literal “filth and refuse of wool.”¹³ Apparently, *yapaku* means “snarl, tangle, i.e., a confused mass of something twisted together” here, and

¹⁰ Dankoff and Kelly, DLT, vol. 2, 460. Kâşgarlı, *Faksimile*. *Yapyūt* was borrowed into Persian via a Kipchak intermediary form. Steingass lists the Persian variants *jabūt*, *jubūt* “cotton or wool used for quilting; an old counterpane torn in pieces” (the latter meaning is seen in the Turkish cognate *çaput*); *jaybat* “raw cotton; quilting; stuffing;” *jaybūt* “a gut-pudding; raw cotton for quilting;” *jaynūt* “cotton used in lining” (Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (London: Allen, 1892), 355, 364-365). See also Hungarian *gyapot* “cotton” in Fn. 19. This Turkic loan in Persian is not included in Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1963-1975). Also see Karakhanid Turkic *yaptač* in Fn. 55.

¹¹ Arzu Kaygusuz, *Buddhistische Bildersprache in alttürkischen Texten: Eine literaturwissenschaftliche und philologische Analyse* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021), 308. Kaygusuz also has an article forthcoming in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 172 (2022) 2: “*Yapaku* “geschorene Schafwolle, Raufwolle bzw. Abfall von Wolle” in der alttürkischen Metaphorik.”

¹² Wilkens combines the meanings “Hengstfohlen || tay [colt, foal]; Raufwolle || yapaḡı” in the same entry (Wilkens, HWAU, 865, “*yapaku*”) – just as Clauson did in his Old Turkic dictionary (see below). I think these should be two distinct entries. I would like to thank Jens Wilkens for all the information and material he generously provided.

¹³ Peter Zieme, “Collecting of the Buddhist scriptures: Notes on Old Uigur “annals,”” *Annual Report of The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 17 (2014): 412-413. I am grateful to Peter Zieme for helpful comments and material.

yam yapaku translates as “filth and tangles (i.e., confusions or distortions [of the *dharma* teachings]).”

(iii) – Old Anatolian Turkish, 14–15th centuries,

from the undated *Kitab-ı Dede Korkut* (manuscript copies date probably from the 16th century):

*Yapaḡulu göğčä*¹⁴ *čämān güzä kalmaz*

(Ms. Dresden 3b: *یپاغلو yapaḡulu*; Ms. Vatican 59a: *یپا غولی yapaḡuli*)

“the green meadows (*göğčä čämān*) with thick tufts (of grass) (*yapaḡulu*) do not last into the fall” (describing the nomads’ summer pastures); Boeschoten translated “das fette Grün der Weide bleibt nicht bis zum Herbst.”¹⁵

Thus, the oldest attested data for *yapaku*/*yapaḡu* show the meaning “refuse of wool” as well as (metaphorically) “tangle; entangled, matted, flocks or thick tufts or clumps (of hair, grass, etc.),” corroborated by the Mongolic parallel *dayaki* “snarl, tangle; combings of hair; shedding of hair,” etc.; the (formally irregular) Anatolian Turkish dialect variant *yapık* “dolaşık saç; dolaşık, karışık, birbirine girmiş iplik, saç vb.; tarakta toplanan saç döküntüsü” (entangled, matted hair; entangled wool, etc.; combings of hair).¹⁶

‘Yapaḡı’ in previous etymological studies

The Turkish word *yapaḡı* and its cognates in modern Turkic languages and in Old Turkic (Karakhaniid) have long been documented and discussed in the common etymological dictionaries.¹⁷ Clauson (1972) gives the correct original meaning “matted hair, or wool” (based on the DLT Karakhaniid data above),

¹⁴ I read OAT *گۆگچه göğčä* (and not *gökčä*) because I have seen the rare diacritic notation of both K’s with three dots in OAT manuscripts; and subsequent Azeri *göy* “sky, blue, green, etc.” and *göyçək* “pretty.”

¹⁵ Semih Tezcan and Hendrik Boeschoten, eds. *Dede Korkut Oğuznameleri* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001), 30 und 198. Hendrik Boeschoten, *Das Buch des Dede Korkut* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2008), 8. Facsimiles in Muharrem Ergin, *Dede Korkut Kitabı I: Giriş, Metin, Faksimile*, 4. baskı (Ankara: Yükseköğretim Kurulu Matbaası, 1997).

¹⁶ *Derleme Sözlüğü*, “yapık.”

¹⁷ See Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-thirteenth-century Turkish* (= EDPT) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 874–875, “yapaku.” Sevortian and Levitskaia, EstJa, 125–126, “yap, yapak,” etc. Hasan Eren, *Türk Dilinin Etimolojik Sözlüğü* (= TDES) (Ankara: Bizim Büro Basım Evi, 1999), 441: “yapaḡı.” Marek Stachowski, *Kurzgefaßtes etymologisches Wörterbuch der türkischen Sprache* (= KEWT) (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2019), 351, “yapaḡı.”

but he also incorporates the homonym *yapaku* “foal, colt” in the same entry, which should be kept separately.¹⁸ As for the etymology, Clauson acknowledges that *yapaku* is “morphologically obscure,” but nevertheless proposes that it may be a verbal noun in **-kU* (again, acknowledging that “*-ku* is not a recognized suffix”)¹⁹ of a hypothetical verbal base **yapa-*. He then connects **yapa-* with both the verbal base *yap-*²⁰ (without mentioning that a deverbal verbal suffix **-A-* does not exist), and the nominal *yap*, which is synonymous with *yapaku*, but not attested in any other historical or modern source than DLT. If the hapax legomenon OT *yap* “matted hair, or wool” in DLT is not a corrupt form, it is certainly related to *yapaku*. However, it is not my aim to hypothesize about the nature of the relationship between *yap* and *yapaku*.²¹ Rather, my aim is to

18 See cognates in modern Turkic languages of the Siberian, Kipchak, and Chuvash branches: Kirghiz *jabagī* «жабагы»; Tatar *yabaya tay* «ябага тай» and Bashkir *yabayı tay* «ябағы тай» (M. R. Fedotov, *Ėtimologičeskii slovar' chuvashskogo iazyka* (Cheboksary: Chuvashskii gos. in-t gumanitarnykh nauk, 1996), vol. 2, 498); Khakas *čabaya* «чабаза» (V. Īa. Butanaev, *Khakassko-russkii istoriko-ėtnograficheskii slovar'* (Abakan: Khakasiiā, 1999), 204); Tuvan *čavaa tay* (Mehmet Ölmez, *Tuwinischer Wortschatz: Mit alttürkischen und mongolischen Parallelen = Tuvacanın Sözcvarlığı: Eski Türce ve Moğolca Denkleleriyle* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 112). The Chuvash form *yapaх* «йопах» (Fedotov, *Slovar'*, vol. 2, 498) is apparently a loan from a Kipchak Turkic language because it does not exhibit the regular sound correspondence Turkic *y-* : Mongolic *d-* : Chuvash *ś-* (e.g., OT *yal* / OAT *yal/yali* / Turkish «yele» : Mongolic *dāl* : Chuvash *śilxä* ‘(horse) mane’). Fedotov erroneously cites Turkish **yapak* for “colt, foal” — a Turkish word with this meaning is not attested in any historical, modern, or dialect dictionary of Turkish (Fedotov, *Slovar'*, vol. 2: 498).

19 The rather rare OT verbal noun suffix *-gI* has no rounded allomorph, and the allomorph *-kI* only appears when the base ends in /n/ or /r/. Furthermore, all *-gI* lexemes have two syllables (see Marcel Erdal, *Old Turkic Word Formation: A Functional Approach to the Lexicon* (= OTWF) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991), vol. 1, 320-323).

20 Clauson treats the three separate meanings of OT *yap-* “1. to build; create; 2. *to stick (sth.) onto, press (sth.) onto; 3. to shut (a door), cover” in one entry (Clauson, EDPT, 870-871), and does not explicitly mention which meaning of *yap-* he has in mind. Subsequent studies that have perpetuated Clauson’s etymology connect *yapaku* to the meaning “to cover, to shut (a door);” with the idea of the “matted hair, or wool” (*yapaku*) “covering” the body of the sheep. For the three distinct verbal stems *yap-* see Anetshofer, “Turkic Etymology.”

21 Róna-Tas has identified Hungarian *gyapjú* “wool” and *gyapot* “cotton” as loans from “Eastern Old Turkic” **yapayu* and *yapyut*, and plausibly proposed to derive **yapayu* from *yap* with the denominal suffix + (A)gU (András Róna-Tas, “Etymological Notes on Hungarian *gyapjú* ‘wool,’” in *Florilegia Altaistica: Studies in Honour of Denis Sinor on the Occasion of His 90th Birthday*, ed. Elena

demonstrate that Turkish ⟨yapağ⟩ “raw wool,” ⟨yapalak⟩ “owl,” and ⟨lapa lapa kar⟩ “snow in thick flakes” are cognates of Old Turkic *yapaku*.

Despite the obvious weakness of Clauson’s proposal, the invalid etymology (*yapaku* < *yap-* “to cover, to close”) is still widely repeated; e.g., by Eren (1999) and Stachowski (2019). Eren only partially acknowledges that *yapaku* “seems to be an irregular form,” but nevertheless whole-heartedly accepts the (hypothetical) verbal stem **yapa-* “(∼ yap-)” “to cover, to close” as the “obvious” base of *yapaku*.²² Stachowski attempts to explain the irregular *-*a-* in the hypothetical form **yap-a-* as an “intensive” formative.²³ I regard the hypothesis of the existence of an “intensive” deverbal verbal marker *-*A-* in the Turkic languages as baseless.²⁴

Sevortian and Levitskaia (1989) correctly connect *yapaku* with the synonymous *yap* in the DLT, as well as the modern Kirghiz cognate of Turkish ⟨lapa lapa kar⟩ “snow in thick flakes,” and modern Turkic cognates of *yapalak* “very hairy; with tangled, matted hair” (see below).²⁵ I fully support Sevortian and Levitskaia’s etymology. However, I do not agree that *yapaku* should be derived from **yap+a-* from the nominal “imitative” base *yap*, even if the denominal verbal suffix +*a-* is a regular Old Turkic formative.

Usage of ⟨yapağ⟩ in modern Turkish

Before turning to the Ottoman data on ⟨yapağ⟩ I would like to clarify the definition and usage of the word in modern standard Turkish. The Turkish lexicon

V. Boikova and Giovanni Stary (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 366-369; Erdal, OTWF, vol. 1, 93-97). See *yapyut* and Turkish ⟨çaput⟩ in Fn. 8.

²² Eren, TDES, 441.

²³ Stachowski, KEWT, 351, “yapağı.”

²⁴ This hypothesis goes back to older Turcological reference works, and is repeated in Lars Johanson, *Turkic* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 582. Johanson calls “{-A-}” an “old marker” that expresses “frequently or constantly” performed actions. He provides two Middle Kipchak verbal stems (i.e., *ač-a-* “to open frequently or constantly,” *käs-ä-* “to cut frequently or constantly”) without source or context. I suspect that these examples occur in the form *ač-ayan* and *käs-ägän*. The habitual participle -(A)GAn carries the meaning of “frequent or constant action.” The form -AGAn is an allomorph of -GAn (as in OAT *käs-ägän* versus *kišnā-gän* or *ısrı-yän*). See Helga Anetshofer, “-(A)GAn in Old Anatolian Turkish and Beyond,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 35 (2018): 229-284.

²⁵ Sevortian and Levitskaia, EstJa, 125-126.

definition is usually “ilkbaharda kırılan koyun tüyü” (sheep hair shorn in the spring) (Türk Dil Kurumu), or “kırpılmış koyun yünü” (shorn sheep wool).²⁶ In Turkish everyday language use and in the literature ‘yapağı’ and ‘yün’ “wool” were apparently not consistently differentiated, and could be used synonymously. In modern Turkish agricultural and livestock research publications ‘yapağı’ is defined as “wool (‘yün’) or hair (‘kıl’), as it is shorn straight from the sheep”; that is, “raw, untreated wool” or “greasy wool.” Also in a broader sense, “the fleece or coat of a sheep” (‘gömlek hâlinde çıkarılan ... tüm kıllar’). ‘Yün’ “wool” here is defined as the washed and cleaned form of ‘yapağı’. The sheep shearing process is called ‘koyunun yapağını kırmak’ “to shear the sheep’s wool.”²⁷ Pathological hair loss in sheep is expressed as ‘(koyun) yapağını dökmek’, “(of a sheep) to shed its hair.”²⁸ Thus, in Turkish ‘yapağı’ has developed into the meaning of 1) “raw hair or wool of the sheep (which can be shorn by humans); fleece” or 2) “clumps of shed sheep hair or wool.” The second meaning reflects the meaning of the Old Turkic cognate *yapaku* best, which is the basis for semantically linking the Turkish words for “wool,” “owl” and “(snow) flake.”

The “Ottoman” data for ‘yapağı’ in texts and Ottoman dictionaries

Generally, modern Turkish dictionaries list ‘yapak’ as a dialect variant (“halk ağzı”) of the commonly used standard ‘yapağı’ (e.g., *Derleme Sözlüğü*; Ayverdi, Kubbealtı). However, references of the variant ‘yapak’ in historical texts have not yet been found. *Tarama Sözlüğü*, the most comprehensive historical dictionary of Anatolian Turkish,²⁹ has no entry for ‘yapak’ (or *yapağı/yapay* – although attested in the *Kitab-ı Dede Korkut* and Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatname*, see below).

26 İlhan Ayverdi, *Misallı Büyük Türkçe Sözlük* (= Kubbealtı) (İstanbul: Kubbealtı Neşriyatı, 2005), “yapağı.”

27 Hacer Tüfekçi and Mustafa Olfaz, “Yapağının Alternatif Kullanım Alanları,” *Bahri Dağdaş Hayvancılık Araştırma Dergisi* 1-2 (2014): 19.

28 A. Altıntaş et al., “Yapağısını Döken ve Dökmeyen Akkaraman Koyunlarda Karşılaştırmalı Serum ve Yapağı Mineral Durumu,” *Lalahan Hayvancılık Araştırma Enstitüsü Dergisi* 31, no. 3-4 (1991): 48. See also Tatar *yapağasını koy-* «ябагасын кой-» (*Tatarsko-russkii slovar*’ (Moskva: Izd-vo “Sovetskaiia entsiklopediia,” 1966), 698), Chuvash *yopağ tük-* «йопах тӱк-» (Fedotov, *Slovar*’, vol. 2, 498), and Mongolic *dayaki xaja-* (Lessing, *Dictionary*, 217), all “to shed hair, molt.”

29 Ömer Asum Aksoy and Dehri Dilçin, *Tarama Sözlüğü: 13. Yüzyıldan Beri Türkiye Türkçesiyle Yazılmış Kitaplardan Toplanan Tanıklarıyla* (= TarS), 8 vols (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1963-1977).

In contrast to Evliya's exclusive usage of *yapayî*, *yapak* is the only variant that Evliya's contemporary, the imperial interpreter and lexicographer Meniński, records in his dictionary, published in 1680. Meniński also includes a couple of derivatives of *yapak*, i.e., *yapakçı* "wool worker, wool seller" and *yapaklı* "woolly," as well as the collocations *incā yapak* "fine wool," *alçak yapak* "coarse wool," *yapak işlā* "to process wool," and *yapayî tara-* "to comb the wool" (*yapayî* here apparently represents an accusative object of *tara-*, and not the lexeme *yapayî*).³⁰

This discrepancy between the 17th century evidence found in Evliya's work (*yapayî*) and that found in Meniński's work (*yapak*) reminds us that we need to combine philological work on authentic texts with using dictionaries, wordlists, and transcription texts, when researching the history of words. The "Ottoman" data used in the etymological studies above are extracted from either Meniński's dictionary (1680), or the Chagatai historical dictionary *Sanglax* (18th century), and do not seem to correspond to actual usage in Ottoman texts. Radloff's (1911) Ottoman data for *yapak* is verbatim copied from Meniński,³¹ Clauson's reference for "Ottoman" *yapak* is taken from *Sanglax*.

A search of the full text of Evliya Çelebi's ten-volume monumental work *Seyahatname*, from the second half of the 17th century, detects around ten occurrences of the word *yapayî* in the meaning "sheep wool (before processing)." In his famous description of the Istanbul artisans and merchants parading before Sultan Murad IV (in 1638) displaying their craft and products, Evliya records that the feltmakers (*kāčāji* «keçeci») and the spinners (*mutāf* ← *Pe. موط* *mū-tāb*) use *yapayî* for their craft. The feltmakers demonstrate how they felt by fulling, i.e., pounding woolen cloth (*kāčā dāp*- lit., to pound felt); and how they card wool, *yapayî hallāčla*-.³² The spinners (*mutāf*) in Evliya's account, spin wool, *yapayî ğazl*

30 Meniński, *Thesaurus*, vol. 3, 5558. Joseph von Preindl, who certainly used Meniński 1680 as a source for his *Grammaire turque, avec un vocabulaire* (1789), also lists *yapak* "toison" (fleece) (Osman Demirci, "Preindl'in Türkçe Grameri: İnceleme, Sözlük" (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Kırklareli Üniversitesi, 2015), 387). Preindl additionally has *āgrilmış yapak* "laine fillée" (spun wool) (Demirci, "Preindl," 220).

31 Wilhelm Radloff, *Versuch eines Wörterbuches der Türk-Dialecte* ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1960 [1911]), vol. 3, 261.

32 Evliya Çelebi *Seyahatnâmesi: Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304 Yazmasının Transkripsiyonu, Dizini* (Beyoğlu, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1996-2007), vol. 1, 194a. The «hallaçlama» technique of carding, i.e., separating and untangling fibers, was used for cotton or wool, and involved a wooden mallet

et-, by operating spinning wheels (دولاب دولاب *dollāb čāvir* ← Pe. *dol-āb*). They depend on the tanners (دبّاغ *dabbāy* ← Ar. *dabbāy*) to obtain *yapayī*, wool, for their craft.³³ Furthermore, among other things,³⁴ Evliya mentions sheep wool (*yapayī* or *koyun yapayisi*) as a trading good, shipped on sea vessels or stored in merchant facilities at the harbor, often together with cowhide, fabrics, or cotton.³⁵

How is Turkish «yapalak» “owl” related to «yapağ»?

In general, it is difficult to determine exact meanings of archaic animal names because they often referred to more than one specific species, and the meaning of cognates of the word in modern languages may differ from the earlier usage(s) and therefore can be misleading. Ingeborg Hauenschild has done the most extensive research on the historical Turkic fauna and flora. *Yapalak* as the name of an owl species is found in many modern Turkic languages, e.g., Azeri «yapalak», Tatar *yabalak* «ябалак», Uzbek *yapalâk kuş* «yapaloqqush», Kazakh *žapalak* «жапалак», Kirghiz *žapalak ükü* «жапалак үкү», et al. In the modern languages *yapalak* usually designates a larger owl with pronounced ear tufts, such as the Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo Bubo*), or others.

«Yapalak» “fluffy-feathered, hairy” in Yunus Emre’s *Divan*

In the earliest OAT reference for *yapalak* from Yunus Emre’s *Divan*, first half of the 14th century, *yapalak* does not mean “owl” but is an attribute of a bird of prey. The verse reads:

(Turkish «hallaç tokmağ») and harp-shaped bowstring («yay»). As remainders of a by-gone era, a handful of masters of the «hallaçlama» technique, were reported in online media to continue their craft at the beginning of the 21st century in Anatolia (e. g. in Manisa, Osmaniye, and Van).
33 *Seyahatnâme*, vol. 1, 194a.

34 *Seyahatnâme*, vol. 6, 169b: on İzvornik (Zvornik in modern-day Bosnia and Herzegovina) ... *erigi ve elması ve kirazı ve çam ve pelid/palid* (بلید ← Ar. *ballūt*) *ve meşe tahtası ve sığır göni ve koyun yapağısı meşhûrdur*; vol. 10, Y 362a: on the city of Benī Seyf (Banu Sayf) in Egypt ... *maşnū ‘âtının meşhûri koyun yapağısı ipliği*; vol. 8, 349b: of the Greek and Albanians of Yanya (Ioannina) ... *libâsları cümle koyun yapağısından şâllardır*; vol. 6, 173a: *yetmiş biç çuvâl yapağı*.

35 *Seyahatnâme*, vol. 2, 264b: *gemi üstünde ‘azîm yapağı çuvalları ve papır haşırları ve balık тұrsusu fiçıları ve gemi kerâsteleri var idi*; vol. 6, 163b: *yigirmi bir ‘aded esîr ve bu kadar duz ve sığır göni ve yapağı ve çuka ve قوماش kumaş ve biber ve zencebil ve envā ‘i eşyā metā ‘lar ile leb-ber-leb memlû bir fırkate*; vol. 5, 149b: *limân kenârında ‘azîm bâzergân mahzenlerinde koyun yapağısı, ve çuka ve atlas ve kāmha ve خارا ḥārā ve şığır gönleri ve nice yüz biç elvân metā ‘lar ile māl-ā-māl mahāzinlerde*; vol. 8, 305b: ... *yetmiş mahzen kettân ve yapağılar*.

Boz yapalak dävlingäjä ämäk yemä ertä-gejä
Anuñ işi gözsäpäkdür salup ördäk alur dägül

“Don’t invest too much time (lit., day and night) in the gray-brown fluff-feathered (?) *Milvus* kite (?) (*boz yapalak dävlingä*) / It is like a mole and will not catch the duck.”³⁶

It is not exactly clear which raptor the OAT word *dävlingäc*³⁷ designated, but it is generally thought to be a *Milvus* species. The black kite (*Milvus migrans*) is known to be more interested in scavenging than hunting. *Yapalak* probably means “fluffy-feathered, or with big messy feathers (of a bird)” here.³⁸ In his glossary Tatçı assigns the meaning “tüylü” (feathered) to the entry “yapalak,”³⁹ but confusingly he has a second entry “boz yapalak” which he glosses as “boz tüylü; boz renkli bir tür baykuş” (with gray-brown feathers; a gray-brown species of owl). I have no doubt that the meaning “owl” for *yapalak* was known to Yunus Emre, but that is not what he uses in his verse, so it should not show up in the glossary. *Yapalak* as the distinctive feature “with entangled, ruffled, messy hair, feathers, or fur” is also attested in Anatolian Turkish dialects as *yapalaç*, *yapalak* “kabarık saçlı” (having big messy hair);⁴⁰ and modern Turkic Noghay *yapalak* йапалак “curly haired; shaggy, tousled.”⁴¹ For Ottoman Turkish *yapalak*

36 Mustafa Tatçı, *Yunus Emre Divanı* (Yunus Emre Külliyyatı II), (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2005), no. 157).

37 Other recorded variants of the name are *dävlangäc*, *däglügäc*, *dävligäc*, *dävlägüc*, *dävlungäc*, *dölängäc*, *dülängäc*, *dävligäc* (see Aksoy and Dilçin, TarS, “devlengeç”; Tatçı, *Yunus Emre*, 417).

38 Nişanyan cites the Middle Kipchak form *yabovli* with the supposed meaning “feathered, woolly,” based on Riddle 10 of the *Codex Comanicus* (Sevan Nişanyan, *Nişanyan Sözlük: Çağdaş Türkçenin Etimolojisi* (2020), “yapağı,” <https://www.nisanyansozluk.com/kelime/yapa%C4%9F%C4%B1>). The incorrect reading *‘apac jabovli’ which Nişanyan translates as “apak tüylü/yünlü” (with snow-white feathers/wool) (based on Julius Nemeth’s 1913 reading attempt ‘ap-ak elli, yabovli’) has since been reconstructed by Tietze (followed by Garkavets) as *al paçeli*, *yabovli* “having red legs, having a horsecloth [on its back] (describing a crane)” (Andreas Tietze, *The Koman Riddles and Turkic Folklore* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1966), 41). The word *yabov* “horsecloth” is a derivative of *yap-* “to cover, close,” and not related to ‘yapağı’ (see Aksoy and Dilçin, TarS; and Eren, TDES, 442, “yapık”).

39 Tatçı, *Yunus Emre*, 463.

40 *Derleme Sözlüğü*, “yapalah, yapalak.”

41 Sevortian and Levitskaia, EstJa, 126.

"owl," we only have four attestations from three Persian-Turkish dictionaries of the 16th century, but no examples from narrative texts.⁴² According to these dictionaries *yapalak* translates as Pe. *čuyd* "owl" — which is also synonymous with [Turkish] *baykuş* and *ügi/ügü*, [Arabic] *būm* and [Persian] *kūf-i juğd* —; and Pe. *čuyna* "owl." *Čuyna* is not mentioned in A'lam's (1989) historical overview of Persian names for owls,⁴³ but Dihkhudā lists *čuyna* with the two meanings "owl" (*čuyuk*, *čuyū*, *čuyūk*), and "sparrow."⁴⁴ The Ottoman gloss for "sparrow" in the same *Tarama Sözlüğü* entry is *kāfir kırlayuŋi*, lit. infidel's swallow.⁴⁵

⋄*Yapaqulak* ~ *Yapalak*⋄ "owl" in Old Turkic and Middle Kipchak

Again, Mahmud al-Kashgari provides us with the earliest attestation (11th century) of the owl name *yapalak* in the Karakhanid Turkic form

يَافَاكُلَاكُ *yapaqulak* al-hāma mina ṭ-ṭayr bi-luṭatihim

yapaqulak is "the owl (*hāma*)" among the birds; in their dialect (i.e., of the Turkic tribes Yabaku and Yemäk, who were associated with the Kipchaks).⁴⁶

The next attestation is from the Latin-Persian-Kipchak Turkic vocabulary, aka the "Interpreter's Book," of the *Codex Cumanicus* (1303), where the name has already developped into the contracted form *yapalak*:

Latin <ciuetora> ["owl"] = Pe. <baygis> [i.e., *baykuş*] = Turkic <yabalac> [i.e., *yapalak*].⁴⁷

Kashgari translates the Turkic owl names *yapaqulak* and *koburya* with Ar. *hāma*, which Lane defines as "an owl: a certain night-bird, that frequents the

⁴² Aksoy and Dilçin, TarS, "yapalak."

⁴³ Hūšang A'lam, "BÜF [owl, commonly called joğd]," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (1989), <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/buf-owl-commonly-called-jogd>.

⁴⁴ 'Alī Akbar Dihkhudā, *Lughatnāmah* (Tihṛān: Sāzmān-i Lughat'nāmah, 1372-1373), "*čuyna*," <https://www.parsi.wiki/fa/wiki/211568/%da%86%d8%ba%d9%86%d9%87>.

⁴⁵ The last example in Aksoy and Dilçin, TarS, "yapalak," from a 16th century Arabic-Turkish dictionary, is not clear. The Ar. headword "lebād" is probably corrupt, a word such as لَب (for a bird or animal name) is not recorded. The Arabic root l-b-d relates to "felt." The closest bird name that I could find is لَبَد *lubad*, albeit not an owl, but a legendary vulture from the pre-Islamic sage Luqmān's life story. The Ottoman gloss says: *yerä yumulur yürür ve uçurmayınja uçmaz, aya yapalak derlär* "it digs itself into the ground, and moves there; if you don't make it fly it will not fly, they call it *yapalak*."

⁴⁶ Dankoff and Kelly, DLT, vol. 2, 468. Kâşgarlı, *Faksimile*.

⁴⁷ A. N. Garkavets, *Codex Cumanicus: polovetskie molitvy, gimny i zagadki XIII-XIV vv.* (Almaty: Baur, 2015), 328-329, 658.

burial-places, of small size.”⁴⁸ Hauenschild (2003) acknowledges that *hāma* designates a small owl, as opposed to other Turkic owl names which Kashgari translates with Ar. *būm*, the general name for owls of all sizes.⁴⁹ Among the pre-Islamic Arabs, the *hāma* was “believed to represent or embody the soul of a dead person,” and according to A‘lam, it has a “bad reputation among superstitious people in Persia down to our time.”

Scholars have usually analyzed *yapaḵulak* as a contraction of an (attested or unattested) form of *yapaḵu* “refuse of wool; matted, entangled hair” and *ḵulak* “ear.” This association with *ḵulak* “ear(s)” has led to the identification of *yapaḵulak* with an owl with pronounced ear tufts, such as the Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*), which is a very large owl. Sevortian and Levitskaia, Hauenschild, and Stachowski all follow Menges’ 1955 proposal (< **yapaḵu ḵulak*); Eren’s variant of the same proposal (< **yapak ḵulak*) is unjustifiable because *yapak* is a late development.⁵⁰ Hauenschild – commenting on Menges’ translation “mit Ohren aus verfilzten Haaren” (with ears from matted hair) – points out that the feathers of the owl’s ear tufts are not matted or entangled. I think Menges’ proposal is a strong etymology, and it might be correct.⁵¹ However, my first objection concerns the process of contracting **yapaḵu ḵulak* to *yapalak*, involving the loss of two /ḵu/ syllables. While the loss of a final syllable of a formally non-transparent word (*yapaḵu*), especially in its voiced development /ḡu/ (*yapayū*), seems plausible, the loss of the first syllable of the basic lexical item *ḵulak* “ear,” which is the defining part of this etymology,

48 Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863-1893), “h-w-m: *hāma*.”

49 Ingeborg Hauenschild, *Die Tierbezeichnungen bei Mahmud al-Kaschgari: Eine Untersuchung aus sprach- und kulturhistorischer Sicht* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 135, “qoburya;” and 232-233, “ūhi.”

50 Sevortian and Levitskaia, *EstJa*, 129-130; Hauenschild, *Tierbezeichnungen*, 238-239; Stachowski, *KEWT*, 351; Eren, *TDES*, 441.

51 Among Radloff’s Siberian Turkic data, only Shor *čabāḵulak* and Altay (Teleut) *yabīḵḵulak* might be considered evidence for this etymology (< *ḵulak* ‘ear’) – as opposed to Shor *čabāḵulak*, Khakas (Koibal) *yabāḵulak*, Baraba *yapḵulak* (cited after Hauenschild, *Tierbezeichnungen*, 239; note that Altay (Teleut) *yabīḵ* is not a derivative of *yap-* “to cover, close,” as in *yap-īḵ* “covered, closed,” but an irregular variant of *yapaḵu* (see Anatolian Turkish dialects < *yapīḵ* > above). However, I consider Shor *čabāḵulak* and Altay (Teleut) *yabīḵḵulak* a sort of back formation or associative etymology, maintaining that the association with the pronounced ear tufts of certain owls was a later development. Shor *čabāḵulak* can also be analyzed as **čabāḵu+lak*.

is much more unlikely. The other objection is of a semantic nature: I claim that the prominent feature describing the owl is not its “(hairy, fluffy) ears” but the “furriness, hairiness, or fluffiness” of its whole body. The primary meaning of *yapalak* is “with big, messy hair; curly, hairy, feathered,” which is attested in Old Anatolian Turkish where it refers to a bird of prey, the *dāvlingāc* “Milvus kite” (?); and in modern Noghay (see above). Secondarily, the same *yapalak* came to designate a certain small owl, as a “hairy, woolly, feathered (little ball).” This owl may have looked like the Eurasian Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*), which is of medium size and hunts almost entirely at night, just like the Ar. *hāma* (see Fig. 3).



Figure 3. The “fluffy-feathered, woolly” Tawny owl (*Strix aluco*).⁵²

⁵² Source: Heimo Mikkola, “Owl Beliefs in Kyrgyzstan and Some Comparison with Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Turkmenistan”, in: *Owls*. IntechOpen, 2020. Photo: Courtesy of Heimo Mikkola and Jeff Martin.

Thus, for formal and semantic reasons, I consider Erdal's (1991) cautious suggestion to analyze *yapalak* "(small) owl" as *yapaku+lak* (> **yapayu+lak*) preferable to Menges' etymology.⁵³ Erdal calls the Old Turkic denominal suffix +*IAk* a class marker, used in the creation of bird names. His prime examples are OT *bayir+lak*, lit. the bellied (bird),⁵⁴ "sand grouse (*Pteroclididae* or *Syrnhaptes*)" (Turkish <bağırtlak>); and *köti kızlak*, lit. the red-butt (bird), "the name of a red-tailed bird" (< **köti kızıl+lak*). I think +*IAk* is a general formative to describe humans or animals with their most prominent (in humans usually negative) feature, which can be a basic or extended body part (see Turkish <diş+lek> "toothy, buck-toothed"; <öd+lek> "coward, chicken-hearted" < OT *öt* "gall (bladder)," which was the ancient Turkic locus of fear; Anatolian dialects <göt+lek> "kalçası büyük ve düşük (kimse)" (someone with a big, saggy butt)⁵⁵). Hauenschild rejects Erdal's etymology *bayir+lak* "the bellied (bird)," with the valid argument that in bird names the body part is described by an adjective, as in *köti kızlak* "the red-tailed (bird)."⁵⁶ However, I think the examples above prove that this is not always the case. The sand grouse *bayir+lak* is "the bellied (bird)," meaning that its most striking feature is its belly, possibly the Black-bellied sandgrouse (*Pterocles orientalis*); and the owl *yapaku+lak* (> **yapayu+lak* > *yapalak*) is a "hairy, woolly, feathered (little ball)."

From "woolly, feathered ball" to "thick snow flakes" – Old Anatolian Turkish *yapa yapa kar* ~ Turkish <lapa lapa kar>

The metaphorical connection of "snow flakes" with *yapaku* "wool shedding; tufts or flocks of entangled, matted hair" is apparent, but it is more difficult to explain the formal development. The original form of <lapa lapa kar yağ-> "to snow in thick flakes" is first attested in Old Anatolian Turkish: The same passage in the *Kitab-ı Dede Korkut* that has *yapayu* in the phrase *yapayulu göğcä çämän* "green meadows with thick tufts of grass" (see above) also has *yapa yapa kar yağ-*:

Yapa yapa karlar yağsa yaza kalmaz

(Ms. Dresden 3b: *yapa yapa*; Ms. Vatican 59a: *yapa yapa*)

⁵³ Erdal, OTWF, vol. 1, 89-90.

⁵⁴ OT *bayir* means "liver" and "belly" (see Wilkens, HWAU, 137); and not "breast" as in modern Turkish.

⁵⁵ *Derleme Sözlüğü*, "götlek."

⁵⁶ Hauenschild, *Tierbezeichnungen*, 48-49, "bayirraq."

“Even if it is snowing in thick flakes, (the snow) will not last into the spring.”⁵⁷

The sound change /y-/ → /l-/ (*yapa yapa* → *lapa lapa*) is interesting because /l/ is a consonant that cannot appear in the onset of indigenous Turkic words. We see the opposite sound change /y-/ → /l-/ — in order to avoid the “foreign” /l/ in the onset — in Anatolian Turkish dialects, e.g., ⟨yibate⟩ “a jacket” ← Ar. *lubbāda* “a garment of felt, worn on account of rain, to protect one therefrom”;⁵⁸ and ⟨yavaşa⟩ “barnacles (an instrument for pinching a horse’s nose, and thus restraining him)” ← Pe. *lavāša* id.; the Turkicized form *yavaša* is already attested in historical Persian-Turkish dictionaries from the 15th century onwards.⁵⁹ However, there is another well-known example for the /y-/ → /l-/ sound change in Turkish, that is, Turkish ⟨lâdes⟩ or ⟨lâdes kemiği⟩ “wishbone, *furcula* (a forked bone in front of the breastbone in a bird)” ← Pe. *yād ast* “it is remembered, it is on one’s mind.”⁶⁰ Evliya Çelebi does not mention the ⟨lâdes⟩ game in his *Seyhatname*, but he repeatedly uses the word “wishbone” in the figurative phrase “to be as thin as a wishbone”: *yādās kāmiginā dön-*, lit. to turn into a wishbone “to get very thin, to become emaciated.” Evliya spells “wishbone” in five instances as *yādās*; one of the non-autograph copies (vol. 10) has *yādāst* once.⁶¹

57 Tezcan and Boeschoten, *Dede Korkut*, 30 and 198. Facsimiles in Ergin, *Dede Korkut*.

58 Lane, *Lexicon*, “l-b-d: lubbāda.” See Andreas Tietze, “Direkte arabische Entlehnungen im anatolischen Türkisch,” in Jean Deny *Armağanı: Mélanges Jean Deny*, ed. János Eckmann, Agâh Sirri Levend, and Mecdut Mansuroğlu (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1958), 259. Interestingly, the same Arabic word *lubbāda* is used by Kashgari to translate Karakhanid Turkic *يَبْتَا* *yaptaʿ* “a small felt cloak (*lubbāda şağīra*)” (Dankoff and Kelly, DLT, vol. 2, 460; and Kâşgarlı, *Faksimile*; Dankoff and Kelly cautiously propose to correct the word to *yapyuʿ*). Erdal, OTWF, does not list denominal suffixes **+tAč* or **+gUč* among his Old Turkic word formation suffixes.

59 See Aksoy and Dilçin, TarS, “yavaşa.”

60 Apparently, the bone takes its name from the popular Turkish *Lâdes* game, in which two people try to break a wishbone (*forcula*). In order to win the game, the player who has the larger part of the broken wishbone tries to trick the other one into accepting an object from their hands. If the player does not say “aklımda” (i.e., Pe. *yād ast*) “it’s on my mind, I remember” when taking the object, they lose. The origins of the game still need to be researched.

61 *Seyahatnâme*, vol. 4, 227b: *seksen yıllık bir za’if ü nahif yâdes* (the YKY edition erroneously has **lades* here) *kemigine dönmüş bir berş-nâk ve afyon esiri herif* “a weak, frail, emaciated opium and *berş* (opium in a liquid form) addict of 80 years”; vol. 6, 29b and 132b; vol. 7, 61a: *nâne (!) çöpine ve yâdes kemigine dönmüş arık . . . kâfirler* “feeble . . . infidels, that have turned into peppermint twigs and *yâdes* bones (i.e., *ruhbân râhibler* priests and monks)”; vol. 9, Q 9a: *nâne (!) çöpi gibi ve yâdes kemigi-mişâl*

İsa Özkan (2011) has identified the phrase *yapa yapa kar yağ-* in the *Kitab-ı Dede Korkut* with Turkish *lapa lapa kar yağ-* “to snow in thick flakes,” and pointed to modern Kazakh and Kirghiz cognates of the expression.⁶² Although he cites the Kazakh cognate *žapalak žapalak* “in thick flakes,” Özkan analyzes OAT *yapa yapa* as **yap-a yap-a*, a reduplicated converb form of the verbal stem *yap-* “to cover.”⁶³ I do not agree with Özkan’s analysis, and claim that *yapa yapa* is a reduplicated nominal; and that (the irregular development) *yapa* is a cognate of *yapaku/yapayü* “refuse of wool, flocks of entangled hair.” Sevortian and Levitskaia have already pointed to Kirghiz *žapañ župañ* and *žapalakta-* as cognates of Karakhanid Turkic *yap* (the potential synonymous base of *yapaku*).⁶⁴ Note also the following formally and semantically similar expressions with duplicated base nominals meaning “piece, little ball, cotton ball,” such as Turkish *tane tane kar yağ-* (< *tane* “piece,” *kar tanesi* “snow flake”), or *yumak yumak kar yağ-* (< *yumak* “little ball”);⁶⁵ as well as Uzbek *paya paya kâr yâ-y-* ‘pag’a-pag’a qor yog’- (to snow in thick flakes)’⁶⁶ from *paya* ‘pag’a’ “a ball of cotton placed on a distaff (i.e., a stick or spindle used for spinning); ball, puff (of cotton, smoke, snow, etc.).”⁶⁷

arık âdamlar “men fragile like peppermint twigs and *yâdes* bones” (i.e., *tiryâkiler* opium addicts); vol. 10, Y 419b (not Evliya’s autograph): *yâdest kemigine benzer bir kadîd* “a man thin as a *yâdest* bone.”

62 İsa Özkan, “Yapa Yapa Karlar Yağsa Yaza Kalmaz,” in “*Dede Korkut ve Geçmişten Geleceğe Türk Destanları*” *Uluslararası Sempozyumu: Bildiriler Kitabı*, ed. Yılmaz Yeşil (Ankara: Türksoy Yayınları, 2011), 23-30.

63 Özkan further splits up the verbal root *yap-* into **ya-p-*, “a hypothetical verbal root **ya-*” with “the deverbal verbal suffix *-p-*” (Özkan, “Yapa Yapa”). A “deverbal verbal suffix *-p-*” is not known in any historical or modern Turkic language, and splitting the first syllable from known verbal or nominal bases is not a valid etymological procedure. I believe Erdem Uçar is correct in analyzing the unrelated Old Uyghur word *yapa* “all, completely” as *yap-a*, a petrified and lexicalized converb form from *yap-* “to cover, to close”; but at the same time he accepts Özkan’s invalid etymology for *yapa yapa* “in thick flakes” and relates it to Old Uyghur *yapa* (Erdem Uçar, “Eski Türkçe *Yapa* ‘Tamamen’ Kelimesinin Kökeni Üzerine,” *Türük: Uluslararası Dil, Edebiyat ve Halkbilimi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 5, no. 9 (2017): 118-127).

64 Sevortian and Levitskaia, *EstJa*, 126.

65 Evliya Çelebi does not use the expression *yapa yapa/lapa lapa kar yağ-*, but he says *serçe başı kar yağ-* lit. to snow sparrows’ heads (*Seyahatnâme*, vol. 9, Y 260b). *Serçe başı*, sparrow’s head, apparently is related to the name of a plant, Turkish *Rize serçebaşı* (*Centaurea phrygia* subsp. *salicifolia*) which in popular perception got associated with “(snow) flakes.” The German name of the genus *Centaurea* is “Flockenblume.”

66 Ė. A., Begmatov and A. P. Madvaliev, *Ўzbek tilining izohli lughati* (Toshkent: Ўzbekiston millii entsiklopediiasi, 2008), vol. 5, 335.

67 Zangori Kema, “pag’a.” Attaching cotton or wool fiber on a distaff or spindle, i.e., a wooden stick (in Uzbek *paya çip* [paya çöp] or *paya-mâl*; Zangori Kema, “pag’acho’p” and “pag’amol”) was an

Cognates of Turkish <lapa lapa kar yağ-> “to snow in thick flakes” in historical and modern Turkic languages

OAT *yapa yapa kar yay-* “to snow in (thick) flakes” (from the *Kitab-ı Dede Korkut*)

Turkish *lapa lapa kar yağ-* “to snow in (thick) flakes”

Azeri *lopa-lopa qar yağ-* “to snow in (thick) flakes”

lopa-lopa “in flakes”; “lopalar şəklində; topatopa, parça-parça” (in (thick) flakes, flocks)

lopa “flake, flock”; “az-çox yuvarlaq, yumru, dairəvi (şəkildə) olan yumşaq şey” (a soft round thing)

‘*qar lopsı*’ “snow flake”; ‘*pambıq lopsı*’ “flock of cotton,” ‘*yun lopsı*’ “flock of wool”; ‘*palçıq lopsarı*’ ((tiny) globes of mud)⁶⁸

Tatari *yapalak kar* «ябалак кар» “снег хлопьями” (snow in (thick) flakes)⁶⁹

Kazakh *žapalak žapalak kar žaw-* «жапалақ-жапалақ кар жай-» (to snow in (thick) flakes)

kar žapalakta- «кар жапалақта-» (to snow in (thick) flakes)⁷⁰

Kirghiz *jarapj jarapj* «жапан-жупан» “хлопьями” (in (thick) flakes)

jarapktar kar jaar turat «жапалактап кар жаап турат» “снег падает хлопьями” (it is snowing in (thick) flakes)⁷¹

The complex lexical evidence above displays several phonetic variants (or derivatives), i.e., *yapa*, *lapa/lopa*, *jarapj*, *yapalak/žapalak/žapalak*, of a word with the basic meaning “fluffy ball, flock, flake, etc.” The base nominal of all of them is a

ancient method of spinning cotton or wool (see the archaeological evidence from ancient Sasanian Turkmenistan in Dominika Maja Kossowska-Janik, “Cotton and Wool: Textile Economy in the Serakhs Oasis during the Late Sasanian Period, the Case of Spindle Whorls from Gurukly Depe (Turkmenistan),” *Ethnobiology Letters* 7, no. 1 (2016): 107–116). Uzbek *paya* must be related to Persian *پاغنده* *pāyund*, *pāyunda* “carded cotton” (Dihkhudā, *Lughatnāmah*, <https://www.parsi.wiki/fa/wiki/172528/%d9%be%d8%a7%d8%ba%d9%86%d8%af>).

68 O. I. Musafiev, *Azərbaycanca-İngiliscə Lüğət* (Bakı: Azərbaycan Dövlət Dillər İnstitutu, 1998), 395, “lopa,” “lopa-lopa,” and “lopabığ” “with a long, bushy moustache.” *Obastan: Onlayn lüğətlər və ensiklopediyalar*, <https://obastan.com/lopa-lopa/1002006/?l=az>, and <https://obastan.com/lopa/27727/?l=az>.

69 *Tatarsko-russkii slovar*, 698.

70 X. Makhmudov and G. Musabaev, *Kazakhsko-russkii slovar* (Almaty: Öner, 2001), 150.

71 K. K. Īudakhin, *Kirgizsko-russkii slovar* (Moskva: Gos. Izd-vo inostrannykh i natsional’nykh slovarëi, 1940), 231.

proto-form of Karakhanid Turkic *yapaku* “flock(s) or clump(s) of wool.” Some of the developments are irregular or unusual, others are formally analyzable: I have already commented on the rare /y-/ → /l-/ change (exhibited in Turkish *lapa* ← OAT *yapa*); Azeri *dopa* (*lāpa*) apparently corresponds to Turkish *lapa*, however the vowel change a → ā ⟨o⟩ seems uncommon for Azeri (this sound change is a regular feature of Uzbek, though). Irregular OAT *yapa* may have dropped the ending /yi/ of *yapayı*, or may be a backformation of *yapalak*. On the other hand, Turkish ⟨yapağ⟩ is a direct cognate with Karakhanid *yapaku*. Thus, modern Turkish ⟨lapa lapa⟩ (< *yapa yapa*) and ⟨yapağ⟩ is a case of lexical split, two words of the same origin with a distinct development and distinct meaning. OAT *yapalak*, also from the same origin, is not an inner-Anatolian Turkish development, but a reflex of a Central Asian Middle Turkic form. As for the Kirghiz and Kazakh cognates, the sound change /y-/ → /j-/ and /ž-/ is absolutely regular. Kirghiz *ǰapaŋ* is a phonetic variant of **yapayū* with a seemingly irregular ending. However, forms of /ɨ/ ~ /ʏ/ variation can be observed within and across the Turkic languages. Labializing reduplication as in Kirghiz *ǰapaŋ ǰupaŋ* is a common feature of Turkic languages (see Karakhanid *yaş yuš* “greens or herbage”; and Turkish examples like ⟨abidik gubidik⟩).⁷² The basis of the Tatar, Kirghiz, and Kazakh forms *yapalak*/*ǰapalak*/*žapalak* is the derivative *yapalak* which I have analyzed as “a hairy, woolly, feathered (little ball)” (< **yapayū+lak* < *yapaku+lak*), which also has the secondary meaning “owl” (attested already in 1303 in the *Codex Cumanices*). Kirghiz and Kazakh use reduplicated forms of *ǰapalak*/*žapalak*, and the denominal verbal base *ǰapalak+ta-/žapalak+ta-* (Common Turkic +*LA-*).

Conclusion

To paraphrase Philip Durkin (2016), the history of words is complex and often messy. Words cannot always be traced back to their origins in a linear way.⁷³ The historical and modern evidence for *yapaku*/*yapayū* in narrative sources and dictionaries shows that it is an old word in the Turkic languages which has developed in complex formal and semantic ways. The specific appearance and consistency

72 Dankoff and Kelly, DLT, vol. 2, 446, “yaş.” Andreas Tietze, *Tarihî ve Etimolojik Türkiye Türkçesi Lugati* (Ankara: Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi, 2016), vol. 1, “abidik gubidik.”

73 Philip Durkin, “Etymology, Word History, and the Grouping and Division of Material in Historical Dictionaries,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Lexicography*, ed. Philip Durkin (Oxford University Press, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhnb/9780199691630.013.15>.

of "flocks or clumps of shed sheep hair or wool," which was a familiar part of life in a pastoralist society, has led to the association with "matted hair" (*Diwan Lughat al-Türk*), with "thick tufts of grass" (*Kitab-ı Dede Korkut*), with a "small owl" (*Codex Cumanicus*), and with "thick snow flakes" (*Kitab-ı Dede Korkut*).

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