



The etymology of Karaim *kybyn* ‘pie’

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SUMMARY: The article presents the etymology of Karaim *kybyn* ‘pie’ already proposed by Ananiasz Zajączkowski from a Turkic verb that is evidenced only in Turkish. The Karaim word *kybyn* is unknown in other Turkic languages. The same verb is thought to be a base of another derived word, *kybty* ‘scissors, shears’, which is attested in more Turkic languages from Old Turkic onwards. The etymology of *kybty* was also postulated by Ananiasz Zajączkowski and approved by later researchers. The article gives new evidence, examines the meaning and the history of the Turkish (*göz*) *kıp-* ‘to wink’ and a possible relation of the verb *kıp-* to *kırp-* and *kırk-* ‘to clip, to shear’. It is worth noting that *kybyn* is nowadays one of the best recognizable products of Karaim culture in Lithuania.

KEYWORDS: *Kybyn* ‘pie’, Karaim, etymology, related words

1. Kar. *kybyn* ‘pie’

Karaim *kybyn*¹ ‘pie’ is evidenced in none of other Turkic languages, including the languages of the North-Western group close to West Karaim, i.e. Armeno-Kipchak (Tryjarski 1969, Garkavec 2010) and Lithuanian-Polish Tatar² (Woronowicz 1935), as well as the Turkic languages of the Crimea, i.e. Krymchak (Rebi 2004, Ianbay 2016), Crimean Tatar (Useyinov 2005)³ and Urum (Garkavec’ 2000). It is not attested in the standard dictionaries of other North-Western languages, i.e. Bashkir, Tatar, Karachay-Balkar and Kumuk, either. This word is also lacking in Old Turkic (Clauson 1972), Old Uighur (Wilkens 2021), Cuman (Grønbech 1942) and Middle Kipchak (Toparlı, Vural and Karaatlı 2007). Likewise, *Kybyn* is absent from Budagov (1871) and Radloff (1899), that is the dictionaries which gloss words from many Turkic languages. Zajączkowski (1932: 78), who has examined this word, evidenced it only from West Karaim.

Karaim attestation for *kybyn* is late. Since ‘pie’ does not occur in the Bible, it cannot be evidenced in the translations of the Bible which are the oldest Karaim texts. The first North-West Karaim evidence comes from Kowalski (1929: 228) and Zajączkowski (1932: 78) and the first South-West Karaim evidence from Mardkowicz (1935: 47). This word is listed in the Karaim-Russian-Polish dictionary (KRPS 383) after Kowalski and Zajączkowski. This dictionary also provides the Crimean Karaim form *qibin* (KRPS 377) which is the source of Aqtay and Jankowski (2015: 301). The glossing of *kybyn* and *qibin* is different in the Karaim-Russian-Polish dictionary, the former being ‘пирожное; пироги (чаще полукруглые, начинённые мясом и испечённые на листе) | ciastko; pierogi; (duże, półokrągłe, nadziewane mięsem i pieczone na blasze)’ (p. 383) and ‘печённый пирожок

1 A few different transcription systems are used in this article: a transcription based on the modern Karaim alphabet for West Karaim (but different for historical West Karaim), standard Turkish alphabet for Turkish (and a different standard transcription for historical Turkish), and a conventional Turkological transcription elsewhere.

2 Both Armeno-Kypchak and Lithuanian-Polish Tatar are extinct languages for a long time, thus they are also historical languages.

3 Also Dobruja Tatar (Karahana 2011).

полукруглой формы с начинкой из сырого мяса | *pieczony półokrągły pierożek faszerowany surowym mięsem*' (п. 377), respectively; identically in Aqṭay and Jankowski (2015: 301) with the English translation 'baked pie filled with raw meat'.

An etymology of *kybyn* was proposed by Zajączkowski (1932: 78). According to him, *kybyn* is derived from the verb **kyp-* 'ciąć, zrównać ciasto', i.e. 'to cut, to clip, to even up dough' with the deverbal suffix *-yn* that forms nouns; Zajączkowski also demonstrates the causative verb *kyptyr-*. This etymology has one weakness. The verb **kyp-* is unknown in Karaim and its evidence is based on Turkish as a single language,⁴ see Redhouse (1890: 1504) *kıpmak* '1. to wink (the eye) for a moment. 2. to snip, to dock (a thing) very slightly'. Another evidence comes from Radloff (1899: 840) who provides the verb *qıp-* in two meanings '1. to wink (the eye). 2. to cut off slightly', cf. Özyetgin (2001: 528). Unfortunately, Radloff does not show his sources, but provides this word in Arabic, Armenian and Greek scripts, i.e. also from Armenian and Greek Turkish. However, the modern Redhouse dictionary glosses the verb *kıp-* only as 'to wink, to blink (eye)' (Red. 652) and ignores the other meaning related to cutting or snipping.

Some of seventeenth-century dictionaries list this verb, but only in the meaning 'to wink', usually as collocation with the word *göz* 'eye', e.g. Molino (1641) *göz kıpmak* [Ghios capmak] 'to wink' (Molino 1641: 7), Carradori (1650) *güzleri kıp-* [ghiuźleri qapparum] and *köz ile kıp-* [chiosileh capparrum] 'id' (Rocchi 2011: 214), Meninski (1680) *göz kıpmak* [göz kypmak] 'id' (Meninski 1780: 961). The verb *kıp-* (*kıp-*) in the meaning 'to snip, to dock, to cut, to shear' etc. as well as the verb *kırp-* (*kırp-*) are absent from these dictionaries, also from Argenti, Megiser, Ferraguto, etc. The verb *kıp-* (*kıp-*) is also wanting in one of the most reliable compendia of the 18th century, Viguier's "Elements", which only contains the verb *kırpmak* 'to cut' [qerpmaq 'découper'] (Viguier 1790: 373). Neither is it evidenced in other 19th-century dictionaries. Bianchi and Kieffer (1837: 438) provide only [qypmaq] (*kıpmak*) with *göz* [gueus 'cligner les yeux'] 'to wink'. Also Zenker (1876: 691 and 690) gives only [kypmak] (*kıpmak*) and the derived [kypymak]

4 Räsänen's (1969: 265) alleged Shor *kyp-* is probably a mistake, for Shor like Khakas has only the verb *qıpla-* 'to shear, to cut' (Radloff 1899: 842, Kurpeško-Tannagaševa and Apon'kin 1993: 31).

(*kıpırmak*) in the meaning ‘to wink’ [eligner | blinzeln]. Like Viguier, Zenker (1876: 697) also evidences the verb *kırp-* (*kırp-*) ‘to shear’ [kırpmak ‘tendre | scheeren’], referring it to *kırkmaq*. This is also the case with Sāmī’s (1317/1901: 1053 and 1062) dictionary which glosses the verb *kıp-* as ‘to wink’ and the verb *kırp-* as ‘1. to cut off, to snip. 2. to clip. 3. to wink (the eye)’.

Moreover, the verb *kıp-* in this meaning and the verb *kırp-* are absent from historical (Tarama) and dialect (Derleme) dictionaries. Modern standard Turkish dictionaries also gloss the verb *kıp-* only as ‘to wink’, e.g. *kıpmak* ‘göz kapaklarını çabucak açıp kapamak, kırpmak’, i.e. ‘to open and close quickly the eyelids’ (TS 1156) and *kıpmak* ‘gözleri hızlı hızlı açıp kapamak’, i.e. ‘to open and close the eyes very quickly’ (Kardaş et al. 2000: 1657). In addition, the authors of the latter dictionary qualify this verb as provincial. On the other hand, both of these dictionaries gloss the verb *kırp-* as ‘to snip, to dock; to shear’ and ‘to wink’, etc. (TS 1164 and Kardaş 2000: 1668), thus also translating it as *kırkmaq* ‘to shear’.

According to Erdal (1991: 300), the Old Turkic suffix {-Xn} forms object nominals from transitive stems and subjects nominals from intransitive ones and can be illustrated by many examples.

Therefore, although the verb **qip-* is attested in one language only and its attestation is late and problematic, Zajączkowski’s etymology may be accepted as correct, but not entirely certain for the lack of the sound attestation of the base verb. However, there is another, much older word that seems to be derived from the same verb **qip-*, it is *qipti* ‘scissors, shears’.

2. Trk. *qipti* ‘scissors, shears’

The etymology of this word was also proposed by Zajączkowski (1932: 86). He derives it from the same verb as *kybyn* and the suffix *-ty* which in Karaim forms one more word, *jarty* ‘half’. Although the etymology of *jarty* (*yarti*) is not without problems, see, e.g., ÈSTJa IV 145, and the suffix is rare, the suffix was recognized by Räsänen (1957: 120) and it forms at least one certain derivative, the Tatar *yaqti* ‘light’ ← *yaq-* ‘to burn’ + {-tI}.

The word *qipti* can be shown in several historical and modern languages. Firstly, it is attested in Old Turkic as *qiftu* (*qiftu* in Dankoff and Kelly

1985: 139) and Middle Turkic, e.g. *Codex Comanicus qybty* (Grønbech 1942: 207), Middle Kipchak (e.g. *Tarğumān Turkī va 'Ağamī va Muğalī* and *At-Tuḥfa az-Zakiyya fī al-Luġa at-Turkiyya*) *qiptī* 'id' (Atalay 1945: 198, Fazylov and Zijaeva 1978: 341–342, Toparlı, Çögenli and Yanık 2000: 118), for more examples and forms, see Räsänen (1969: 265), ÈSTJa (VI, 224) and Toparlı, Vural and Karaatlı (2007: 143, 144). Secondly, it is known in such modern Turkic languages as Khak. and Shor (Radloff 1899: 843), for the present-day forms see Khak. *χiptī* 'scissors' Subrakova (2006: 893) and Shor *qiptī* 'id' (Kurpeško-Tannagaševa and Apon'kin 1993: 31), and Turkish dialects (Derleme VIII, 2814).

3. Related verbs and some questions

As said above, **kyp-* 'to cut, to shear, to clip' is not evidenced in Karaim, but there is historical evidence for a verb which seems to be derived from it. It is *qypčy-* 'to cut out, to cut in pieces', attested in a North-West Karaim Torah translation from 1720 (Németh 2020: 1073). Németh (2020: 1074) also evidences the SWKar. equivalent *qypcy-*. Although, as we will see below, the suffix {-čI} raises many problems, the meaning of this derived verb is a new support for the reconstruction of Trk. **qip-* 'to snip, to dock, to cut, to shear' etc.

However, at this point it should be stressed that the Kir. verb *qipčī-*, indicated by Németh (2020: 1074) as a parallel from Radloff and Judaxin is either unrelated to WKar. *qypčy-* or has changed its meaning substantially, which is possible, see below. According to Radloff (1899: 845), the Kir. verb *qipčī-* means 'раздавить | auseinanderdrücken', i.e. 'to crush, to squash; to push apart' and according to Judaxin (1965: 492), it means 'ущемить, защемить, зажать', i.e. 'to pinch, to squeeze, to clutch'.

The suffix {-čI-} is unproductive and most examples shown in the studies on Kirghiz are unclear or uncertain (e.g. Qudaybergenov 1980: 309, Zaharova 1987: 218). Probably the only correct example is provided by Kasapoğlu Çengel (2017: 148). She demonstrates the verb *čapčī-* 'to hit the ground with its forelimb or hoof (the horse)', which may really be derived from an existing verb, in this case *čap-* 'to strike, to hit, to kick' (cf. Judaxin 1965: 847

and 846). The situation is similar in Kazakh in which only two sound examples can be provided, one *šapsī-* ‘to jet, to spurt’ ← *šap-* ‘to run’ and *könši-* ‘to be satisfied, to calm down’ ← *kön-* ‘to agree, to consent’ (Žanpeyisov 2002: 390), though the latter is used only in an idiom. Therefore, the suffix {-čI-} in most cases occurs in verbs of unclear structure and etymology. However, it is nothing strange, for derived verbs are formed from nominals and non-valency changing or non-diathetic suffixes that form verbs from verbal bases are rare. They mostly express intensity and iterative or multiplicative action. This is what the suffix {-čI-} expresses. Since the Turkic languages followed another way of development and preferred expression of these types of action with auxiliary verbs, most of the suffixes either became obsolete or the meanings of the verbs they derived changed.

Németh (2020: 1074) demonstrates that other NWKar. manuscripts use the verb *kes-* ‘to cut’ in the translation of Exo 39:2 in which the 1720 manuscript has *qypčy-*, and one SWKar. manuscript uses *kypcy-* in the translation of Deu 25:12, while another has *kes-*. Therefore, the meanings of WKar. *qypčy-* ~ *kypcy-* and *kes-* must be similar.

SWKar. *kypty-* ‘id’ is a *hapax legomenon* and is only provided by Mardkovicz (1935: 48), later also in KRPS (387), but after Mardkovicz’s dictionary. Németh’s (2020: 1074) reference to Trk. *kypty-* ‘to cut’ in ÈSTJa (VI 224)⁵ is inexact, for ÈSTJa demonstrates this verb only in SWKar.

From the meanings of the Tur. verbs *kıp-* and *kırp-* it is clear that they are correlated. If we take the verb *kırp-* and the meaning ‘to snip, to dock, to cut, to shear’ of *kıp-*, we can think of two relations, (1) *kıp-* ← *kırp-* (*qırp-*) with the drop of *-r* or (2) *kıp-* → *kırp-* with the epenthesis of *r*. Preference is given to the former case for a few reasons. The first is similarity in form and meaning of the verb *kırp-* to *kirk-* ‘to clip, to shear’ (Red. 655). Both are probably derivatives of *kır-*, Turkic *qır-* ‘to strip (hair)’ (Clauson 1972: 643, 651, ÈSTJa VI 236, Stachowski 2019: 221). The second is the fact that *qırp-* is evidenced in Middle Turkic, though probably only in *Kitāb al-Idrāk li Lisān al-Atrāk*, see *qırbdı* ‘tüyün uclarını aldı’ i.e. ‘he sheared off the ends of hair’ (Caferoğlu 1931: 76), i.e. it seems to be older than *qıp-* (*kıp-*). It has survived in modern Turkic, but only in Azerbaijani (Äzizbäyov 1984: 106)

5 In Németh (2010: 1074) 225–226.

and Turkish (see above). The third reason is purely linguistic, that is the drop of /r/ in languages is much more frequent than its addition, in this case the supposed epenthesis.

However, if we accept the change *qirp-* → **qip-*, we will have to answer the question why Middle Turkic 'scissors, shears' is always *qipti* and never **qirpti*, as, e.g. *kırpındı* [qerpende 'retaille' and 'rognure'] 'clipping' (Viguiier 1790: 429, 430). Since there are no reasons to doubt the evidence of *qipti*, and *kybyn* is probably later, the answer must only be one: the change *qirp-* → **qip-* must have occurred a long time ago and for some time these two forms existed as two variants.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Zajączkowski's etymology of *kybyn* (and *kypty*) ← Kar. **kyp-* seems to be sound. In fact, the name of a food derived from the verb that means 'to cut, to clip' is nothing strange. There are at least two names of food derived from *kes-* 'to cut', e.g. Dobruja Tatar *dörtkesken* 'pastry filled with cheese and cut into rectangular pieces' (Karahana 2011: 541) and Kaz. *kespe* 'pasta; noodle' (KRPS 376). The verb *qiy-* 'to chop' is also the base of a widely known Turkic derivative *qiyma* 'chopped meat', e.g. Tur. *kıyma* (Red. 661).

Kybyn is not the only dish in the Karaim cuisine that does not have parallels in other Turkic languages. As is known, the name of foods and dishes are typically cultural words that reflect cultural contact and there are many loanwords among them. However, in the traditional cuisine of the Karaims some types of foods and dishes were not allowed by the religion and this is the reason why the Karaims invented their own dishes and names in addition to those shared with the Jews. For instance, in North-West and South-West Karaim there is *tymbyl* 'matzah' (KRPS 556)⁶ and in CKar. *qaburtiq* 'id' (KRPS 356, Aqtay and Jankowski 2015: 282). A characteristic Karaim dish was once NWKar. *b'ok*, SWKar. and CKar. *bek* 'bladder filled with greasy dough, sometimes also with grated potatoes and meat' (KRPS 114, 148, Aqtay and

6 KRPS and, following it, Aqtay and Jankowski (2015: 399) also evidence this word in Crimean Karaim, but this word is unknown in the texts available.

Jankowski 2015: 76). Although the dishes themselves are known elsewhere, the CKar. names *ayaqlaq* ~ *ayaqliq* ‘pasty filled with raw mutton’ (KRPS 51, Aqtay and Jankowski 2015: 59) and *kete* ‘pie with sweet filling’ (KRPS 394, Aqtay and Jankowski 2015: 210) seem to be used only by the Karaims. However, it is *kybyn* that is nowadays one of the most recognizable products of the Karaim material culture in Lithuania. Although there are similar pies in the cuisine of the Turkic peoples, the Karaims coined their own name for one of them. A tourist who visits Trakai and wishes to know something about Karaims will probably visit the Karaim house of prayer *kenesa* and taste *kybyns* (Lithuanian *kibinas*, the plural *kibinai*) in a Karaim restaurant called *Kybynlar* or another called *Kibininė*.

Abbreviations

| | | |
|----------|---|--|
| CKar. | = | Crimean Karaim |
| Derleme | = | NA 1963–1979 |
| ÈSTJa IV | = | Levitskaja 1989 |
| ÈSTJa VI | = | Blagova 2000 |
| Kar. | = | Karaim |
| Kaz. | = | Kazakh |
| Khak. | = | Khakas |
| Kir. | = | Kirghiz |
| KRPS | = | Baskakow, Zajączkowski and Szapszał (eds) 1974 |
| KRS | = | Syzdykova and Xusain 2001 |
| NWKar. | = | North-West Karaim |
| Red. | = | Alkim, Antel, Avery et al. eds 1991 |
| SWKar. | = | South-West Karaim |
| Tarama | = | NA 1963–1972 |
| Trk. | = | Turkic |
| Ts | = | Akalın ed. 2005 |
| Tur. | = | Turkish |
| WKar. | = | West Karaim |

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