TÜRKMEN HALILARINDAN ÖĞRENDİKLERİMIZ

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ÖZET

Batı’da Türkmen halısına karşı gittikçe artan ilgiye rağmen bu halının ancak sanatsal ve teknik özellikleri araştırma konusu olmuştur. Bu makale Türkmen halısının bazı özellikleri dilbilimsel açıdan ele alıyor. Yazında uzun zamandır tartışılma konusu olan halı sözcüğünün nasıl türediği açıklanıyor. Halı terminolojisinde ‘dokumya başlamak’ anlamındaki yiğürt-füi incelenirken Türkmen ağızlarında Türkmen çadırının, toplandıktan sonra yerde bıraktığı daire biçimli izi için yaygın olarak kullanılan yiğürt > yewürt sözcüğünün halı sözcüğünün nasıl türediği ortaya çıkartılıyor. Aynı şekilde Eski Türkçede ‘kokanın kardeşliği’ anlamına gelen yurt sözcüğünün etimolojisi de açıklığa kavuşuluyor. Nikah kıymak (Azerbaijan Türkçesinde kesmek) birlesik fiili konusunda kimse pek kafa yormamış ve bu söz olduğu gibi kabul edilmiştir. Arapça nikah sözcüğünün Eski Türkçedeki karşılığı ‘düğüm’ anlamındaki tügün’dür. Bu yazida nikah / tügün kıymak deyiminin hangi ilgili olduğu açıklanıyor. Ingilizcede evlenmek için to tie the not / düğüm atmak deyimi kullanırken bu deyimin Türkçe karşılığı ‘küçük eşek’ anlamındaki tügün kıymak / düğüm kesmek’tir. Bunun halı ile ilgili olduğunu bir Türkmen eylem ritüelinden öğrendiyoruz: imam nikah kıyarken Türkmen kadın da bir düğümü keser gibi elindeki makası sürekli açıp kapar. Öte yandan Türkmen halısının en önemli desenine göl denir; her Türkmen boyunun kendisine özgü göl’ü vardır. Bu desen ‘Şamanizm’in yir sub kültür ile ilgilidir. Yir kavramı da Şamanizm’de kutsal sayılan dağ ile ifade edilir. Dağda yaşayan hayvanlar, mesela dağ koçu konurbaş da kutsaldır. Türkmen halk müzikinde konurbaş mukamı vardır. Türkmen halısında dağ Kök Türk runik alfabetesinde kullanılan r harfiyle gösterilir. Kutsal olan evi temsil eden x harfi de Türkmen halısının desertler arasında yer alır. İran’da, Türkmen Sahra’da Göcke Dağ eteğinde Halid Nebi mezari civarında bulunan karpuz biçimli mezar taşlarının üzerinde görülün alfabe ve semboller bulunmaktadır. Bunlar Türkmen halısında dezenin motivlerine benzerler. Halının müzikle ilişkisi hakkında çok şeyler yazılmış, ancak şimdide kadar somut bir sonuca varlanamamıştır. Bu yazida halının en eski adına Türklerin en eski müzik aleti olan kopuzdan türediği açıklanıyor. Zaten Türkmen halı tezgahında bir eşek vardır. Türkçede nedense buna eşik denir. Halbuki bu sözçük Farsçada da ‘küçük eşek’ anlamında harek şeklinde kullanılır. Tezgaha telli sazın burgusunun da karşılışı vardır. Arğaç ise sazin tellerini andırır. Farsçada argaca tar denir. Bu isim dutar, sitar gibi müzik aletlerinde vardır. Tezgahın adı

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WHAT WE LEARN FROM TURKMEN CARPETS

ABSTRACT

Despite an ever-increasing interest in Turkmen carpets in the West, little information was available about them until recently. Most studies are about the aesthetic and technical aspects of the carpets and rugs. This article looks at these carpets from a linguistic point of view. Initially, the article deals with the etymology of the word halı meaning ‘carpet’ which has been the subject of an ongoing dispute between Turkic and Iranian carpet experts who are not linguists. While studying the Turkmen verb yügürt- meaning ‘to begin weaving’ in carpet terminology, we found the root of the word yurt originally meaning ‘abandoned tent site’ in the word used as yügürt > yüwürt in Turkmen dialects. This term also helped us find the root of the archaic Türkic word yurç meaning ‘the husband’s brother’. For getting married or tying the knot in some Turkic languages the term nikah kıymak (nikah kısm) is used. Nikah is an Arabic word meaning ‘marriage’ and Turkic words kıymak and kısm mean ‘to cut, to slice’. No one has ever paid attention to this anomaly about nikah being cut. The equivalent of nikah in Old Turkish is tügün which means ‘knot’. Therefore, to get married in Old Turkish is to cut the knot. The fact that the act of cutting the knot is related to carpet weaving, could be observed in Turkmen marriage rituals; when a mullah is conducting the marriage ceremony, a woman constantly opens and closes a pair of scissors as if cutting a knot. The most important pattern of the Turkmen rugs and carpets is called göl meaning ‘lake’. Every Turkmen tribe has its own göl. This pattern is related to the yir sub ‘earth and water’ cult of Shamanism. The concept of earth in Shamanism is expressed by the mountain that is regarded as a sacred place. Animals that live in the mountains are thought to be awliyas or saints. For example, the mountain ram called Konurbaş is an awlya and it bears the name of a mode in Turkmen folk music called konurbaş mukam. In Turkmen carpets mountain is used as a pattern in the form of an Old Turkish runic letter T. For the pattern of home which is also a sacred place, the letter Ç is used. In the Turkmen Sahra region of northern Iran, at the foot of the mountain called Gökçe Dağ, near the historic graveyard of Halid Nabi, there were watermelon-shaped tombstones with symbols on them. These symbols are similar to some of the patterns seen on the Turkmen carpets. Many carpet experts have written about the relationship between carpet and music, but no one has reached a concrete conclusion. This article proves that the name of the carpet in the oldest Turkic texts had derived from the word kopuz, the oldest musical instrument of the Turkic peoples. The Turkmen carpet loom,
like a stringed musical instrument has a bridge and a stick functions as a peg by keeping the weft tight. The weft resembles strings of a musical instrument and in Persian it is called tār, a word that is noticed in the names of musical instruments like dutār, a two-stringed musical instrument and sitār a three-stringed instrument. The name of a carpet loom in Turkmen is gurama/ kurama which denotes setting up and tuning.

Key words: Carpet, gŏl, Shamanism, pattern, music.

INTRODUCTION

The name Turkmen is always associated with rugs and carpets and horses. Carpets woven by nomadic and semi-nomadic Turkmen tribes have been the most admired, studied and collected of all Oriental carpets over the centuries. Despite the interest in Turkmen carpets, little information about them was available until recently in the West because of language barriers. Most studies are about the artistic and technical aspects of carpets and rugs. This paper looks at these carpets from a linguistic point of view.

The art of carpet weaving developed thousands of years ago. Buddhist and Shamanistic elements that have for centuries been widely incorporated in Turkmen carpets have attracted the attention of researchers. The Turkmens have for centuries reflected their feelings, philosophy of life and environment in the beauty of their carpets, and they have created innumerable designs and motifs in their own characteristic style and with their own technique. The symbolism of these designs reveals a typically Turkmen search for beauty and an aesthetic ideal. For example, from the composition of Turkmen carpets, which is based on a strict but complex set of rules, one can deduce the Turkmens’ poetic perspective on their environment. The colour red has become well established in the artistic consciousness of the Turkmens. It is the dominant colour in Turkmen art today. The dominant colour of Turkmen carpets is also red. The colour of the oldest Turkmen carpets is closer to orange. This is said to be related to the cult of the sun in Zoroastrianism. Today, carpets that are woven to meet particular needs, or are prepared in various shapes and sizes for ceremonial purposes, display through their patterns a number of typically Turkmen hallmarks.

In the steppes of Central Asia, felt, kilim and rugs and carpets are important in the construction and decoration of tents. On the first page of a Persian manuscript called Divan-i Sultan Jalayir written in 1400, there is an ink drawing of a nomadic camp scene where there are decorated Turkmen tents (Mackie, L. W. and Thompson J.: 1980,
14). A miniature painting from the book called *Khamseh* by Nizami written in 1445 in Herat, which shows the presentation of a manuscript to the Samarkand ruler Mirza Barlas, also features a decorated Turkmen tent (ibid, p. 17). In the XIII century, Ibn-i Sa‘îd, an Arab geographer, in his book entitled *el-Busûtu‘-Tîrkânîyye* (البسط التركمانیه) ‘Turkmen Carpets,’ writes that the Turkmen rugs and carpets woven in Anatolia were exported all over the world (ibid, p. 19). Some of the patterns of carpets woven by the thousands of Turkmens who settled in Anatolia were used in carpets produced later in this region. We see an example of these carpets in a XV century Anatolian Turkish rug at the Textile Museum in Washington D. C. (ibid, p. 19). At that time, in paintings in Italy and other European countries, Turkmen carpets were widely represented. These carpets were very valuable assets in the XVI and XVII centuries in Europe – they were recognised works of art. For example, they were well-liked at the palace of Henry VIII and attracted the attention of the rich and the nobility. The picture (below left) shows the 3rd Earl of Dorset, Richard Sackville, posing on a Turkmen carpet brought from Anatolia. The artist has skilfully drawn all the details of the carpet. These carpets, products of the Turkmen “Tent Industry”, were exported to Europe. This picture was painted by William Larkin in 1613 (Thompson, J., 1993, London: 32). The second painting (below right), attributed to Juan Pantoja de la Cruz and painted in 1604, is now kept in the National Portrait Gallery in London. It shows the value attached to a Turkmen carpet – it was preferred as a table cover rather than being put on the floor (Bennet, 1985: 6). In the XIX century painting by Kate Hyllar called *Sunflowers and Hollyhocks* we see a Turkmen Ersary carpet on the floor (Thompson, London, 1993: 36).
Today Turkmen carpets are woven in the areas where the Turkmens live in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and Afghanistan. The carpet known as the Turkmen carpet around the world, in Afghanistan is called the Afghan carpet. Machine-made Turkmen carpets produced in Pakistan are called Pakistani Carpets. Turkmen carpets years ago used to be called Bukhara carpets in Europe, because in olden times they were sold in Bukhara. The most popular Turkmen carpets are Teke, Yomut, Ersary, Chowdur, Saryk and Salyr. These carpets are named after the tribes that weave them. They are differentiated from each other by the shape of their main motif called göl. Every Turkmen tribe has a göl of its own.
About the Word “Halı” (Carpet) Used As “ḵâlî” قالی in Persian and “ḵâlîn/ḵolîn” قالین in Tajik and Dari

There are different views about the etymology of the word “halı.” It is significant that some Turkish dictionaries say that this word is Persian and some Persian dictionaries call ḳâlî a Turkish word. For example, a Turkish-Arabic dictionary from the XIV century, explaining an old Turkish word kōwîr meaning ‘carpet’, says: قالی و هو بالترکمانی مأخوذ من الفارسي (It means ḳâlî [carpet] which is a Turkmen word taken from Persian) (Houtsma, M. T., 1884: 16). A Persian dictionary called Farhang-e Amid (Amid, 1343, H. Sh.: Vol. II, 784) and Haim Persian-English Dictionary (Haim, S. 1354, H. Sh.: 620) say that the word ḳâlî is Turkish. Farhang-e Farsi repeats the etymology given by a XII-XIII century Arab geographer, saying that “qa:li: = qa:li:n = ha:li: = ġa:li:n is taken from Kaligula, the name of a town in Armenia (Moin, M., 1381, H. Sh.: Vol. II, 2624). This sounds like folk etymology.

In an article entitled “Signs of Iranian Carpet Weaving before the Bronze Age”, Ali Hasuri, an Iranian carpet expert who claims that he has studied the etymology of hahl/ḵâlî, writes:

The Persian word for carpet, i. e., qali/qalin was pronounced kalîn in middle Persian being cognate with the word karaydi in the Avestan, and it (is) obvious that the root is kar (to plant) which relates to the age when carpet weaving was comparable to planting rather than weaving, i. e., the Paleolithic age. A verb for ‘weaving’ exists in the Avestan (wap), but it is not used for forming karayaon. (Hasuri A., 2001:92).

Ali Hasuri presented his paper on this subject to the conference held on Oriental carpets in Milan in 1999. He mentioned that wooden carpet-weaving instruments were in use in the Stone Age, adding that these instruments were still used in Iran. To prove this he showed a photograph of a Turkmen woman using a wooden mallet to drive a stake of the carpet loom into the ground.

The word wap which Hasuri quoted from the Avesta, is used in Middle Persian meaning ‘to weave’ (Mackenzie, 2009: 151). This word exists in Modern Persian as baf:ten بافتن also meaning ‘to weave’. The root of this infinitive is baf باف. The English words weave, weft and web seem to be related to wap.

The word for to knit and to weave in Persian today is tan:dan / teni:den تندین (its root is tan- تن) and ta:r means ‘weft’ or ‘string’. Ta:r-ten, a compound structure made by these two words literally
means ‘knitter’, but it is used to designate ‘spider’. Its diminutive form ta:r-teneٌ Também also meaning ‘spider’ is forgotten in Persian, but it is used in Turkmen in the Garrygala region of Turkmenistan. The Persian words ka:r-ten, ka:r-tene and ka:r-tenek, also meaning ‘knitter and spider’, are not used in Persian any more. Kar, the first part of these compound words, today means ‘work’. It seems to have derived from the infinitive ka:sten ‘to plant’. This is the word Ali Hasuri wanted to relate to ‘carpet’ in his explanation above. In Turkmen and some other Turkic languages this concept is explained by etmek ‘to do’, yapmak ‘to do, to build’ and örnek ‘to knit, to build’. These concepts will be explained below.

The word for carpet in Persian is tenbese which seems to have been derived from teni:den ‘to knit’. Tenbese in Arabic has become طنفسه (Amid, 1343 H. Sh.: Vol. I, 320). There is no word resembling halı or ḳaːliː in Middle Persian. In this language the word used for ‘beautiful carpet’ is boːb (Mackenzie, 2009: 281).

The word for the concept of carpet was written in a XIII century Turkic manuscript of an interpretation of the Koran as kalınl and it meant ‘(thick) mattress’ (Clauson, 1972: 622). This word has become kalıːn in Tajik, kalıːn in Dari and kaːliː, pronounced ɡaːliː قالین in Persian. In these languages diminutive forms of these words are used: köliːnچ, ɡaːliːین قالینچه and ɡaːliːچе قالینچه respectively, and they mean ‘rug’. The sound of /n/ at the end of kalınl in Old Turkish has changed to /n/ in Tajik and Dari and the word kalınl has become köliːn and kaːliː respectively. The word kalınl also means ‘thick’ in Turkic languages. One may think that the knots of thin threads or weft settling on the warp creates a thickness that in Turkish is called kalınl meaning ‘thick’. In other words carpets are created after knots are settled on warps.

The word ip ‘thread’ used in Turkish today, is used as yıp or yip in old Turkish (Clauson, 1972: 870). This word today in Turkmen has become yıp. In VIII century Turfan Uygur texts the word yıpkē is used to mean ‘thread’ (ibid: 875). This last word, yıpke, reminds us of the relationship between ip/yıp/yıp/yüp meaning ‘thread’ and Turkic yıpka/yuvka meaning ‘thin’. And in a way this makes us think that thin threads pile up to bring about kalınl ‘thick’ (carpet). A thinner and more loosely woven version of the Turkic kilim is called jaːjiːm جاجیم in Persian. In Turkmen and Turkish it is called jijim/cicim. This word comes from çece̱m derived from çeçmek in Old Turkish meaning ‘to undo (a knot),’ hence ‘being loose’. There is no letter for the /ç/ sound in the Arabic alphabet. Therefore, in old Turkic texts, perhaps before the XV or XVI centuries, çeçim in Arabic script was written as چچم.
which could have been pronounced in Persian as *jaːjiːːm* with an open /e/. In Persian there is a tendency to use the letter *alif* for the open /e/ sound in foreign words, i.e. Turkic and Mongolian words. That is why Turkic words like *Türkmen*, *külek*, *çelik* and the Mongolian word *kekül* have respectively become *Türkmaːn*, *kuːlaːk*, *çaːliːk* and *kaːkul* in Persian. And in accordance with this property of the Persian language *çeçim* has become *jaːjiːːm/caːciːm*. In Ottoman Turkish and Turkmen the word *çeçim* has become *cicim/jijim*. The Arabic letter used for the sound of /ç/ or /ʧ/ was improvised possibly after the XV or XVI century as *چ* with three dots. It is used in Persian and Ottoman Turkish. In his book *Türk Dilinin Etimolojik Sözlüğü* Hasan Eren writes that Turkish *cicim* is taken from Persian *caːciːm* (Eren, 1999: 71). The word *sicim* used in Turkish and Mongolian meaning ‘thread’ must be related to *cicim*. If we take into account the thinness of the thread and the fact that *cicim/jijim* is a thinly woven material, and if we accept that the word *haːli* has come about after a phonetic procedure as follows: *kaːlin > haːli > haːli*, it becomes clear that the concept of carpet denotes an idea that is the opposite of thinness.

The word *kaːlin* used in Old Turkish meaning ‘bride price’ must also be related to the carpet. In *Dede Korkut*, a Turkish epic story from the XIV century, there is a sentence which says: *kiːziː uc canver kaːlinliːgɪ ⏯ vardi* meaning ‘the bride price of the girl amounted to three animals…’ (Tezcan, 2001: 242). Here the word *kaːlinlik* means ‘the equivalent of *kaːlin* (carpet)’ which is worth three animals. According to a tradition of the Turkmen, which seems to have been continued since the Oguz period (before X century), the bride initially stays in the groom’s house for the time allowed for the wedding ceremony one day, three days, a week or forty days whichever is affordable to the groom. After that the bride goes home and together with other female members of her family or relatives weaves a carpet (*kaːlin*) and prepares other decorative items for her house, as an exchange for the bride price. This tradition still continues among the Turkmen in rural areas. The word for ‘bride price’ exists in Turkic languages as words like *kalıŋ, kalin, kalym* and *kalim*. The word *kalym* meaning ‘bride price’ in Tatar is used in Russian (Şipova, 1976:155-156). There is a sentence in *Divanu Lagat-it-Türk* which says: *kaːlin birse kiz alır – Kerek bolsa kiz alır* (If he pays the bride price he will have the girl – If need be he can pay dearly) (Atalay, 1999: Vol. III, 371).

In his book *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen* Doerfer studies the word *kaːlin* and comes to the
conclusion that it is a borrowed word in Persian but does not say where the word comes from (TMEN, 1963: 399).

The word ka:li: (pronounced ġa:li: in Persian) cannot be a Persian word, because there is no /k/ sound written with the Arabic letter qaf ق in Persian. Here, we must mention a phonetic property of the Turkic languages of the Oguz group like Turkmen, Azerbajani and Turkish. In these languages the change of the /k/ sound to /h/ takes place only in Turkic words: kani > hani/hani (in Turkish) ‘where’, kanda ise > handiyse ‘nearly’, katar ‘a row of… , a train of…’ > hatar (in Turkmen) … The word kalın meaning ‘bride price’ has become halım or halıň in Hakas, halım in Yakut and in Chuvash hulam and hulan. All these examples show that the /k/ sound can easily change to /h/. This rule does not apply to Arabic words. For example words like kabi:le قبيله ‘tribe’ and kalem قلم ‘pen’ cannot become habi:le and halem especially in the the Oguz group of the Turkic languages.

On the basis of this information, we may say that kalıň > kalin > kalt has become halı in accordance with the above-mentioned rule. In other words, the fact that /k/ has changed to /h/ shows that halı is a Turkish word.

Hasan Eren believes that kilim is a Persian word (Eren, 1999: 243). However, in Middle Persian there is no word resembling kilim. Furthermore, Turkic words like kalım and halım remind us of kilim. This could be investigated separately.

The Word “Yurt” Is Related to A Carpet-Weaving Term

The verb yügürtmek > yüwürtmek in Turkmen means ‘to start weaving a carpet’; it can also mean ‘to kick off or start an action’. This verb and its derivatives play an important role in defining significant aspects of Turkic and Turkmen cultural life. This verb comes from the Old Turkish verb yügür- which itself comes from yüg meaning ‘feather’ or ‘wing’. Yügür- also means ‘to move fast, as if flying’. This verb is made from the noun yüg by the suffix {+ür-}. Normally, such a suffix does not make a verb from a noun. It is the auxiliary verb ur- ‘to hit, to strike’ that has turned into a suffix, hence yüg ur- ‘to move the feather’ > yügür-. Turkic kep/gep meaning ‘a word, or something which is said’, when used with the auxiliary verb ur- becomes gap/gep ur- > gapir-/gepir- in Uzbek meaning ‘to talk, to have a chat’. This usage has passed into the Persian language with the same meaning as gap zadan/ gep zeden گپ زدن. The equivalent of the Old Turkish
The Turkish compound verb yügur- (yügürmek) means, as mentioned above, ‘to move fast, as if flying’ and its Persian equivalent is par zadan/per zeden, or ba:l zadan/ ba:l zeden, meaning respectively ‘moving the feather’ and ‘moving the wing’, denoting the action of flying. The concept of “feather” is used to show the speed of the movement. In Arabic ijtanaḥi’ n-na:ḳatu, اجتنحت لناقه means ‘The camel (as if it had wings) went really fast’. In this sentence the verb is related to janaḥi’ which means ‘wing’.

The above-mentioned Persian compound verbs are not very old while their Turkish equivalents have a long history. The auxiliary verb ur- has changed to become a suffix. Today we see this suffix in verbs like çağır- ‘to call’, çı:kır- ‘to scream’, hapsır- ‘to sneeze’ and others. They have all come about from onomatopoeic words like ça:ḳ, çı:ḳ and hapsur followed by auxiliary verb ur-: ça:ḳ ur-> ça:kur-> ça:kür > ça:𝑔ür > ça:𝑔ür- > ça:kır- > ça:kur-> ça:kür-> ça:𝑔ür-> ça:𝑔ür-; haps ur-> hapsur-> hapsur-> (for detailed information see: Youssef Azemoun, “A Study of A Suffix Used after Turkmen Onomatopoeic Words Ending in /ḳ/ or /ňḳ/,” Belleten, 2013/ Winter: 167-181), also see Yusuf Azmun, Söz Kökümüz, Öz Kökümüz, 2016: 48-54).

The suffix -(U)t which makes a noun from the stem of a verb, sometimes makes nouns which define a location: the verb ge ç- means ‘to pass’ and geç-(i)t means ‘passage’; the Turkmen word uç- (u)ıt ‘cliff, abyss, precipice’ which literally means ‘the place one flies’ is made from uç- ‘to fly’ and from the verb kavuş- > Tkm. gowş- ‘to meet, to come together’ the noun gowş(u)t > gowşut is made which means ‘the place where two things come together’. From the verb yügür- ‘to take off, to start moving’ yügürüt > yüg-ür-(ı)t > yügürt has derived ‘the place left behind after residents of a yurt dismantle the yurt and take off.’ This word in the Yomut dialect of the Turkmen language becomes yüwürt after the sound /g/ changes to /w/ between two vowels. This word (yüwūrt) is used for a circle-shaped space on the ground after a tent is dismantled, in other words, a place where a caravan takes off after the tent and belongings are placed on camels. This word today in Turkmen literary language is used as yurṭ, in Turkish and Azerbaijani it is used as yurt/yurd meaning ‘country and homeland’. The word yurṭ in Old Turkish meant ‘abandoned camping site, ruins,’ but in the medieval period it came to mean ‘dwelling place, abode’. In Divanū Lugat-it-Türk, an XI century Turkish-Arabic dictionary, the meaning of the word yurṭ is given as ‘ruins of a camp, a dwelling, traces of old buildings’. (Atalay,1999, Vol. III:7) This
The word *yu:rt* is defined in *Turkmen Diliniň Sözlügi* as follows: 1. *The place where villagers get settled and move away (seasonally)*; 2. *A state, a country*. It is significant that the first meaning of the word *yu:rt* has more to do with people living in tents. Here we define only two idioms related to *yu:rt/yüwürt*: *yurdunda yeller öwüsmek* literally means ‘the wind is blowing in the place where he lived’ and figuratively it means ‘he is left with no belongings or relatives’; *yu:rtda ğa:lan* is a curse literally meaning *may you be left in the yu:rt*, and figuratively it means *may you be an orphan*; because, a child who was somewhere else when her/his family dismantled the tent and took off to go to another location, would feel like an orphan when he returned and saw the *yu:rt*, the abandoned camping site.

Today the word *yurt* in Anatolia means ‘the place where Yörüks are settled in the winter or summer;’ it also means ‘a place to live’ (*Derleme Sözlüğü*, 1993: Vol. XI, 4321). Furthermore, the compound verb *yurt olmak* literally meaning ‘turning into a yurt’ is used to mean ‘to turn into a ruin, to be destroyed;’ *evi yurt oldu* means ‘his house is destroyed’. From these examples we understand that *yurt* is an abandoned place. It is a place where residents of a tent take off to get settled in another location.

The word *yügürt > yüwürt* as explained above means a place where the action of *yügür -* taking off or flying away takes place. The word *köç* meaning ‘moving from one place to another’ denotes being lifted. Often *köçmek* meaning ‘to move to somewhere else’ is completed with the verb *konmak* which denotes *perching* (like a bird). In other words, when the caravan takes off it eventually lands somewhere.

The verb *yügürt-* in Turkmen means ‘beginning to weave (a rug or carpet)’. In *Divanü Lugat-it-Türk* the sentence *ol böz yügürdi* has been translated by Besim Atalay as: ‘He prepared the weft (for the carpet)’ (Atalay, DLT, 1999: Vol. III, 68), but Clauson translates it as: *He wove the woof of the cotton cloth* (Clauson, 1972: 914). These examples show that the verb *yügür-* can mean ‘to take off, to begin an action,’ and *yügürüt > yügürt* means ‘the location where the action of moving takes place.’

The word *yügürt* has been preserved in dialects of the Turkmen language as *yüwürt*. As a result of a phonetic contraction /w/
is dropped and the remaining two vowels have turned into a long /u/ sound and the word yügürt > yüwürt has become yu:rt. Because of the long vowel, the final unvoiced /t/ sound always changes to voiced /d/ when followed by a vowel. The word yurt, a contracted form of yügürt, is used in the VIII century Kök Türk runic scripts, the writing system used by Kök Türks from 6th to 8th century AD in what today is Mongolia. The process of the change may be demonstrated as follows: yügürt > yüwürt > yu:rt.

Yurt is not the only word that has gone through phonetic contraction. There are many words in Kök Türk scripts that have changed and shortened as a result of contraction: bu ödke > bödke ‘at this time’; am teg > anteg ‘like that’, bunı teg > bünteg ‘like this’...

There is another contracted word also derived from the verb yügür- in Kök Türk scripts – yurç ‘younger brother of bride’s husband’. Another meaning of the yügür- is ‘to run’ and yügürici means ‘one who runs around for a service’. This word has become yügürici/yügurci in Çagatay. In Turkmen it has become yüwürci. It was contracted in Old Turkish to become yu:rç with the same meaning as yüwürci.

In his article published in Makaleler I-Altayistik, Talat Tekin compared yurt with its Mongolian equivalent nutug, but he did not deal with the etymology of yurt; he only mentioned that the vowel of this word was long (Tekin, 2003: 377).

The roots of words used in dialects are usually searched for in archaic texts. We have found the root of the archaic words yu:rt and yu:rç in the dialects of the Turkmen language (for details see Youssef Azemoun, “Değişen Bazı Sözcükler ve Türkmence Yüwürci ve Yüwürt’ün Eski Türkçe Yurt ve Yurç ile İlişkisi Hakkına” (Some Changed Words and the Relationship between Turkmen yu:würci and yu:würt and Old Turkish Yurç and Yurt), Tofiq Hacıyev Armağanı (Festschrift), 2016: 227-234 and Ýusup Azmun, Söz Köküüm Öz Köküüm, 2016: 48-54).

Yüwürt is used in a poem by Kemine (1770-1840), a Turkmen classical poet: İ:1 göçer ga:lar yu:würdede, di:ri çıyrä:ndir ğar:;p (A poor man rots alive after being left behind [like an orphan] in the yurt [when nomads move away]).

Today yurt in English means a Mongolian and Turkic nomads’ circular skin- or felt-covered tent, with collapsible frame, and is believed to have been borrowed from Russian yurta (Collins English Dictionary, 1992:1784). The word yurt is believed to be
borrowed from Russian, because it was used in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, old republics of the Soviet Union.

**Carpet Knots**

The concept of the *knot* in some languages expresses an agreement with or loyalty to a situation. For example ‘ākd ʿaad in Arabic is related to a *knot*: ‘ākade ʿākedetan means ‘he tied a knot’. The determinative construction ‘ākd-i ʿizdiva:c means ‘marriage agreement’, and in English *to tie the knot* means ‘to get married’. This idiom was first used in the XVIII century (Oxford Dictionary of Word Histories: 290). The Persian word *girih/gereh* is derived from Sanskrit *grath* meaning ‘to tie the knot’. The word for knot in Middle Persian is *grah*. A knot is perceived as round. The Turkish word *dürme* means ‘button’; it is used in Persian as *togmeh/dogmeh*. A button is usually round and its name in Turkish is derived from the archaic verb *tīg*-meaning ‘to tie (a knot)’. The word for ‘round’ in Persian is *gird*; it seems to be related to *girih*. The English verb *gird* means ‘1. To put a belt, girdle etc., around (the waist or hips); 2. To bind and secure with or as if with a belt, and it is related to Old Norse *garth* (see also *garth* meaning ‘1. A courtyard surrounded by a cloister; 2. Archaic. A yard or garden’ from Old Norse *garthr* and *girth* meaning ‘circumference’, from Old Norse *gjörth* meaning ‘belt’) (Collins Dictionary: 652-653 and 636). The root of this English word seems to be similar to that of *girih/gereh*. The equivalent of this Persian word in Kurdish is *gi:ri:* which means ‘knot and marriage’. During the traditional Persian picnic on the 13th day after Nowruz (the New Year), young girls tie a knot in grasses in the hope of finding a husband! Bulgarian priests when marrying a couple say *virüzka vam* which means ‘I tie you (like a knot) to each other’ (source: Rosa Hays, former BBC Bulgarian Broadcasting producer). As mentioned above, in many languages *knot* refers to a vow like marriage. In Christianity some nuns who call themselves “brides of Christ” wear girdles (this word is related to *gird* and Old Norse *gyrthill* [Collins Dictionary: 653]) which have three knots each representing a vow: * chastity, poverty and obedience*. In the Turkmen marriage ceremony, the bride and groom hold hands (which resemble a knot) while an elderly woman recites a poem about how the groom should treat his wife. Shaking hands after an agreement too resembles a knot. In English the verb *to wed* comes from Old English *wedlian* and Proto-Germanic *wadjōjanan* both meaning ‘a pledge’ (Chambers Dictionary of Etymology, 2003: 1225).

The equivalent of *to tie the knot* in Turkish and many other Turkic languages is *nika:h ıkymak* which literally means ‘to slice *nika:h*’; in Turkmen it is *nika: gyzmak* with the same meaning and in
Azerbaijani it is nika:h kosmak (kæsmæk) meaning ‘to cut the nikah’. Nika:h is an Arabic word meaning ‘marriage’ and it is derived from nekehe/ nækæh which is related to ‘sexual desire’ (Sarı, M., 1984: 1556). This word entered the Turkic languages after Turkic-speaking peoples became Muslim. In Old Turkish the word for marriage was tügün which originally means ‘knot’. Therefore, the idiom nikah kıymak/kesmek was originally tügün kıymak/kesmek meaning ‘to slice/cut the knot’. So, if we replace nikah with tügün, the afore-mentioned expression will mean ‘to cut (slice) the knot’. Thus, the equivalent of to tie the knot in Turkish is ‘to cut the knot’. The archaic word tügün in Modern Turkish has become dügün meaning ‘wedding’ and its equivalent in Turkmen is düwün and in Azerbaijani düyün. Dügün meaning ‘wedding’ is also used in Dede Korkut, a XIV century Turkish epic story.

Nobody has shown any curiosity about why the knot is tied or cut in Turkish or English. The explanation for cutting or slicing the knot can be found in a Turkmen marriage ritual that reflects certain aspects of carpet weaving. Traditionally, among the Turkmens, when a mullah is conducting a marriage ceremony a woman constantly opens and closes a pair of scissors. This is believed to be done to fend off (or cut away) evil spirits (or Satan) which might be present. However, the action with the scissors shows that a knot or tügün is being cut or sliced. The action of closing and opening a pair of scissors by the woman is related to the fact that all through history women wove the carpets. Otherwise, to fend off the evil spirits a young man with a white Turkmen sheep-skin hat and red robe would be wielding his sword! Among the Turkmens men who weave carpets are given the nickname ğı:z meaning ‘girl’. A man named Sapar, who wove carpets in the 1940s in Turkmenistan, was called Sapar ğı:z (source: İşan Azmun, my late eldest brother).

Two strings of different colours, warp and weft, that are tied to each other and cut to make a knot, resemble a young male and female that are tied to each other after the tügün ‘knot’/nikah is cut and they are married to begin a colourful life together. The verb for marrying a girl to a young man in Turkmen and some other Turkic languages is çatmak, meaning ‘to tie’. The newly wed in Turkmen is ya:ş çatıncə meaning ‘the young ones that are tied to each other’. This verb is also used as çitmek and çitmek. For example, Turkish kaş çatmak in Turkmen is ğa:ş çitmek, meaning ‘to frown’ and literally it means ‘to tie the eyebrows to each other’. In Turkmen dialects this idiom is also used as ğa:ş çitmek. In carpet weaving the verb for tying
the knot and cutting it is çitmek, and it is the same as çatmak which means marrying someone to someone else. So nikah/ tüğün kıymak, literally meaning ‘cutting/ slicing the knot’, is related to carpet terminology.

The Turkmen carpet, as will be explained, is a symbol of a beautiful life. At the two ends of a Turkmen carpet there is a white part with no design on it which is called toprak, meaning ‘earth, soil’. The design above and below this at each end is called âlem, meaning ‘world’. This shows that man is created from the soil and settles in the soil when he dies. The surface of the carpet reflects the colourful and harmonious beauty of life. As the knots settle in the beautiful surface of the carpet, the married couple start a beautiful life after their marriage ceremony nikah/tügün kıymak - ‘cutting the knot’ - is completed.

We mentioned above that a knot could be perceived as round in shape and the Persian girih/gereh meaning ‘knot’ was related to gird/gerd, meaning ‘round’. The concept of roundness is also noticeable in English gird and girdle. The words garden and yard which are related define an enclosure around something. These words come from Old German gart which means ‘surrounded by a wall’ (for details see Azemoun, 1998:108-109). Generally speaking gardens are beautiful enclosures. In Arabic the word cennet means both ‘garden and ‘paradise’ (Sari, M., 1982:284). It seems that in olden times people created their own paradise. It is said that a Persian king set up in the yard of his palace the most beautiful rose garden with the most beautiful flowers available in the region. This garden was called pairi daeza meaning ‘a closure’. Pairi means ‘surrounding’ and daeza ‘round-shaped wall’. Pairi also resembles the Greek prefix peri- which means ‘enclosing, encircling, around, adjacent or near’ (Collins, 1992: 1158). The Old Persian word daeza has later become diz/dez meaning ‘castle’. This word is preserved in the word kohendez < kohen/kohen (old) + dez (castle) and it was the name of many old castles including the ones in five towns in the Khorasan region to the east of Iran and west of Afghanistan today, namely Samarkand, Bukhara, Balkh, Marv and Nishapur. Kohendez has later become kondoz meaning ‘old castle’ in Persian. In the Ottoman administration the dizdar was in charge of guarding and protecting the castle. The word dez/diz has become dezh جه in Modern Persian. The image of the garden of the Persian king has later been reflected in Persian carpets. In Turkish it is called Acem Bahçesi, ‘Persian Garden’. This garden was a source of inspiration for the Russian poet Yesenin, who called the collection of his poems Persiskiy Motivy
(Persian Motifs). The reason for the motifs of gardens and flowers repeating in Persian carpets might be related to the story of the Persian king and his garden. Old Persian pairi daeza has in English, French and some other European languages become paradise. The word paradise in Arabic has become firdews/ firdows and it is used in Persian as a reborrowed word. Perdi:s پردنیس or perdese پردنسه meaning ‘rose garden’ are forgotten words in Persian.

From these examples one may recognise things that are round in shape. The word gird گرد meaning ‘round in shape’ in Persian also means ‘town’. This might have to do with the fact that in ancient times fortified cities were built inside round walls. In the centre of such a fortification was the administrative headquarters equidistant from the city walls on all sides. We notice this name today in the names of towns like Destgird and Su:xengird in Iran. Gird in Arabic has become cird/jird جیرد. Old Gurga:ngird (in the north of Turkmenistan) after becoming Gurga:ncird in Arabic has shortened to become Gurga:nc which has turned to Urgenc and eventually Ürgenç in Turkmen. The word gradu means ‘town, castle’ in Old Slavonic (Collins, 1992: 1778). This word has become grad and just like gird in Persian follows certain names such as Leningrad, Stalingrad and Volgograd. In Albanian, gardh means ‘hedge, fence, wattle’ which is a round enclosure (Dişçi, R, 1994: 211).

In Old Turkish, the word for “town” was balık. This word has three meanings in Divanü Lugat-it-Türk: 1. mud (Atalay, 1999: Vol. I, 248 and 379) 2. castle, town (Atalay, 1999: Vol. I, 379) 3. fish (Atalay, 1999: Vol. I, 73 and 379, Vol. II, 216, 231 and 349). In DLT, Mahmud Kasgari explains the word balık meaning ‘town’ as follows: Long before Islam, in Turkish castle meant ‘town’. In the Uyghur language too it is the same. One of the largest towns of Uygurs is called “Biş Balık بيش بالق”. This place is one of the largest towns of the Uygurs. Another of their towns is called “Yengi Balık ينگي بالق: this means ‘New Town’ (Atalay, 1999: Vol. I, 379).

From these explanations we understand that in Old Turkish the concept of “roundness” is noticeable in the word castle used for town. Talking about the etymology of the word balık meaning ‘fish’, Ord. Prof. Dr. Reşit Rahmeti Arat in one of his classroom lectures said that this word came about in Uygurs’ fish farms, where they bred fish in pools surrounded with a wall built from mud (1964).
The Göl Motif in Turkmen Carpets

The most important motif in Turkmen rugs and carpets today is called the göl. The shape of the göl was originally octagonal. It has changed lately. Today the göl is divided into four parts. In every part there are pictures of three birds. Each part symbolises a season and the birds resemble the three months of a season. Today, Western carpet experts call this motif gul, meaning flower in Persian. They write the name of a special type of göl called gülli göl meaning ‘göl decorated with flowers’, as gulli gul which means ‘flowery flower!’. In fact, göl in Turkmen means ‘lake,’ and it seems to be related to the cult of water in Shamanism which will be discussed below.

Soren Neergaard, a Swedish carpet specialist, has found a similarity between the göl of Turkmen rugs and carpets and a pattern in a Mayan carpet. When the weaver was asked about this pattern, she explained that it was a picture of the dream world or heaven where old Mayan gods lived. Neergaard later explains that corresponding with a Shamanist world outlook, the surface of the Turkmen carpet is divided into three parts - upper world, middle world and lower world. These could also be interpreted as upper life, middle life and lower life (Neergaard, 2001: 232).

Some carpet specialists believe that göl depicts the reflection of the stars on earth. It is possible to think that a göl might have come about from the shape of a pattern similar to a star. This Turkmen carpet pattern was originally octagonal. The shape of a symbol used by the Oguz people, the ancestors of the Turkmens was a star with eight wings. Star patterns on a 2500-year-old Pazyryk carpet also have eight wings. When the tips of the wings of stars are connected to each other, an octagon in the shape of a göl comes about. The shape of a star has always been used in various forms of art as an element of decoration. In Kutadgu Bilig, an XI century book of didactic poetry, there is a verse about the ornamental aspect of stars: Bu kökteki yıldız bir anca bezek ‘Those stars in the sky are (valuable) ornaments’ (Arat, R.R, 1979: line 128).

With time the pattern of the star in Turkmen carpets must have changed to become a göl. As mentioned above, göl meaning ‘lake’ is related to the cult of water in Shamanism. Toprak ‘earth, soil’ and göl remind us of yir sub in Old Turkish which identifies the cult of water and soil in Shamanism. In relation to ideas about toprak, the mountain – dağ – is also very important. For this reason in Turkmen carpets there is a pattern that resembles a mountain. This pattern is shown in the form of the letter ş used in the Kök Türk runic alphabet.
Mountains in Shamanistic culture and Altay mythology are reckoned to be the place where light, which is a symbol of the power of God’s creation, reaches first. That is why in Old Turkish names like Dağ Baba, Dağ Ata ‘Mountain Father’ and Dağ Tanrı ‘Mountain God’ are given to mountains. Prof. Dr. B. Ögel has given the following explanation:

“Hazar Baba” is the name of a mountain near a small lake in Elazığ. In Anatolia too there are many mountains which bear the names of awliyas (saints) and sages. This belief is also widespread in Central Asia and the Altay region. However, in Central Asia the word “Ata” is used instead of Baba, for example Buz tağ- Ata literally meaning ‘Ice Mountain Father’ (Ögel, B., 2002:437-438).

Since mountains are regarded as sacred places, some animals living in the mountains are believed to be saints in Shamanism. One of these animals is a mountain ram called konurbaş. A mode of old Turkmen music is called Goňurbaş mukamy. Ögel writes on this subject as follows:

From the prayers of half-muslim Kyrgyz “baksis” (folk singers) we learn about examples of these mountain awliyas (saints) and their musical modes:... Kız Awliya at the top of Kızıl Dağ; Öküz (Ox) Awliya at the top of Öküz Dağ, Konurbaş (Ram) Awliya at the top of Koçkar Dağ (koç also means ‘ram’)… (Ögel, B., 2002: 438).

The eagle as a mountain bird may also be an awliya. The coat of arms of the Seljuk dynasty (XI-XIII century) was a two-headed eagle. This pattern is seen in the Älem/æ:lem aspect of the Yomut Turkmen carpets, which will be discussed later.

The shape of the horn of the mountain ram konurbaş is a widely used pattern in carpets and felts as well as other works of art. The shape of the old Turkic saddles and bows resemble the shape of a ram’s horn. Even nowadays one can see remnants of Shamanism, the shape of a ram’s horn, in Turkmen mosques.
Ram’s horn pattern on a column and wall of a Turkmen mosque (Kasraian, 1994: 101)

In Old Turkish this motif was called ümzük (Clauson, 1972: 165). Today the name of the pattern of two-sided ram’s horn in Turkmen felts has phonetically changed and is called emzik which means ‘pacifier’. The surface of a felt is divided into square-shaped panels and there is an emzik in each square. The number of the emzik in the lengths of the felt determines how long it is – three emzik, four emzik … The longest felt is usually five emzik long.

A pattern in the woven materials of the indigenous people of the Central and South America resembles the göl of Turkmen carpets. This pattern is called Keno-Mayo and koha and can be interpreted in a number of ways. For example, keno means ‘very old’, ‘sacred’ or ‘astonishing’. Keno-Mayo pattern which means ‘a meandering river’ results in the depiction of a place decorated with flowers. The centre of the pattern depicts a lake, spring or the eye of the spring. The springs, in connection with the cult of water, are regarded as “the eye of Mother Earth”. In the Sacred Water Festival held every year in September near the eye of a spring by a mountain, the local people sacrifice an animal and, bathing in the water, they clean their body and purify their soul (Owsu, 2004: 27).

The sacred property of the water explained above is noticeable on the surface of the carpet in a pattern called göl meaning ‘lake’. As is known, every Turkmen tribe has its own göl. Five of them are shown on the flag of Turkmenistan today. All through history Turkmen tribes have accepted their göls as their tribal coat of arms. According to some stories, when Turkmen tribes clashed, the winner used to force the loser to change their göls to their own pattern. In a way the göl in the carpets of Turkmen tribes was also tantamount to their flag.
Old Turkic Alphabets and Letters That Have Turned into Carpet Patterns

Like many other carpet-weaving peoples, the Turkmens have tried to reflect their favourite subjects in their carpets. Above we discussed the Kök Türk runic letter fel that symbolised the mountain. This confirms the importance of the mountain being sacred in the life of Shamanist Turks in ancient times. The sacred entity of the human being and the sacred atmosphere a home provides for us, are also reflected in the carpet in the shape of letters r and w in the Turkish runic alphabet. The word er in Old Turkish means ‘human being, man’ and eb means ‘home, house’. The shape of the letter r has changed in the carpets woven in the Caspian region to symbolise the flow of water and in the figurative sense it depicts the continuity of life. The letter k in the shape of a bow is also used as a pattern. Here we assume that the letters are used as patterns, it could be the opposite; the letters might have been taken from carpet patterns. However, it is not possible to establish which one came about first. There are innumerable ornaments in Turkmen carpets that could be letters or Old Turkic tribal signs.

For centuries administrative and legal documents were always written in Arabic script. Even tombstones were written either in Arabic script or in the Arabic language. The education of the Turkmens and other people of Central Asia in madrassas was carried out in the Arabic language. Literary works were written in either Arabic or Persian. Despite this fact, Arabic script with its highly artistic properties were not used in Turkmen carpets.

Only after the XVII century did the Turkmens begin to produce literary works in their own language, because previously the rulers of Turkic origin always attached more importance to the Persian and Arabic languages. The Seljuks especially helped Persian language
and literature to develop and flourish. Under these circumstances, Mahmud Kaşgari presented the books he had written about Turkic languages, not to the Seljuks, but to the Arab rulers. The most productive period of Turkmen language and literature were the XVII and XVIII century. During this period Turkmen poets not only tried to avoid Persian and Arabic languages, they also strove to bring the national language and literature closer to ordinary people. Only four poems by Şakendi, who is believed to be a XVII century Turkmen poet, are known to us today. He wrote his poems in the form of a “Chista:n”, meaning ‘riddle’, to avoid the anger of fanatical Muslims who believed that Arabic letters were divine. The poet believes that the Arabic language is not structurally compatible with the Turkmen language. In a poem with the epistrophe / redif (the word repeated at the end of stanzas) of yilan ‘snake’ he expresses his protest by comparing the Arabic language with the hiss of snakes:

\[
\text{Bir ağızdan yiğım sekiz ses çykar,} \quad \text{‘Twenty eight sounds come out of one mouth,}
\]
\[
\text{Orarı: n tatuk birbirinden pes çykar,} \quad \text{They are so muffled that each is worse than the next}
\]
\[
\text{Gözi kö:rdür, yene jahana çykar,} \quad \text{It (snake/Arabic) is blind, yet it still looks at the world,}
\]
\[
\text{Sözlä:bilmä:n waz waz etdi ol ýylan} \quad \text{Could not be uttered properly and hissed around that snake’}
\]

The “twenty eight sounds” in this poem denotes the twenty eight letters in Arabic script (Bekmyradov, A., 1987: 57).

The mullahs at the time of this poet seemed to believe that the Arabic script descended from heaven. The poet expresses his bewilderment in another poem as follows:

\[
\text{Bu görneti:n bize asma:ndan indi} \quad \text{‘People argue with us, saying “It is obvious that they}
\]
\[
\text{Diýişip cedel edýär millet biz bilen} \quad \text{descended for us from heaven.”}
\]

In his book Oguz-n:ama the XVIII century Turkmen classical poet Anadlip remembers the alphabet that disappeared or stopped being used in Central Asia after this region was conquered by Arabs. The poet highly appreciates the service this alphabet had provided to people and feels sorry for what has happened to it. The distinguished Turkmen linguist Hydyrov writes the following about this subject:

Although some writers have hesitated to write about the alphabet that disappeared because of Arabs, they have expressed this disappearance in different ways. We notice this in the following lines in Oguz-na:ma.

Hydyrov then quotes the following lines from Oguz-na:ma:
Oğuz owağynyň ruhy-rowany.
And embodied the soul of the descendants of Oğuz.

Ýasyň üç müňden aşyp dörtge m indi,
Your age surpassed 3000 and entered 4000,
Bu ýaşda çekmediň renji, yzany.
But you never suffered ill-treatment or cruelty.
Oğuz owladydan aýryldyň indi,
Now you have left the descendants of Oğuz,
Ke bizlerge goýup matem gazany.
Leaving us with our destiny of mourning.

Seni asman əldarhasy şweotdy,
The heavenly dragon swallowed you,
Sen anyň karnyda tutdyň mekany.
And you settled in his stomach.
Jemalynyň jahan köňlün sowutdy,
The world found peace in your beauty,
Men oldym Andalyp waspyň ýazany.
And I, Andalip, became the recorder of your quality.
(Hydyrov, M. N. 1962:16)

In the first stanza of another poem in the form of a puzzle that became a folk song, the poet writes:

Atasy akyl, enesi nakyl,
Her father is wisdom and her mother is a proverb,
Bir gyz dogulmyş yigrimi dört şekil.
A girl is born in twenty four shapes.
Şu ýaňlyq gözel milletiň yary,
She is so beautiful, the beloved of the nation,
Bul bizden owal bolsa-da zary.
Although she had suffered cruelty before us.

In this poem “the girl with twenty four shapes” seems to define 24 letters.

The XVIII century Turkmen classical poet Şeýdaýi not only protested against the Arabic alphabet and language, he also wrote an elegy to the “twenty-five” which is obviously the name of 25 letters that had disappeared. Like Şakendi, Şeýdayi too wrote this poem in the form of a Chistaːn or riddle as the Arabic alphabet was sacred to the Turkmen community at that time. Here we present parts of this poem that are more expressive:

Seýle gulaga ýakymly,
It was so pleasant to my ear,
Sözdledim gözel ýigrim baş.
I enjoyed uttering it, O beautiful Twenty Five,
Niçe owazy çekimi,
So harmonious they sound,
Ýazlym gözel ýigrim baş.
I followed (you) O beautiful Twenty Five.

Ýedisinden owaz çykar,
Seven of them produced a voice,
On sekizin tartar çekip,
Pulling along the remaining eighteen,
Üç müň ýaşda ömürin ýakyp,
When your life ended after three thousand years
Bozładym gözel ýigrim baş
I cried as loudly as a camel, O beautiful Twenty Five
Matem, mersive Şakendi,
Şakendi left behind a few stanzas
Yazyp geçmiş niçe bendi,
of lamentation and mourning he had written.
Okyň ýad ederler şindi,
Now people read them and remember you,
Oezledim, gözel ýigrim baş.
And I miss you, O beautiful Twenty Five.
(Aşyrpur Meredov, N.,1978: 12)

In another poem the poet writes about the tragedy of the Turkmen language, blames the Persian and Arabic languages for interfering in other languages and explains that his language, which had been harmonious and pleasantly in tune, had turned into a perplexed and dumb entity in the house of religion. He also expresses his anger, saying:
Arap dili boldy sözler güýesi. Arabic became the moth of words. (ibid: 13)

The Arabic language is compared to a moth that eats up the words of other languages.

From these poems we understand that the Turkmen/Turkic people had an alphabet before Muslims conquered Central Asia. It had seven vowels and 18 consonants. Şeydayi believed that this alphabet was three thousand years old and Andalip says that it had existed for more than three thousand years. Both poets write that Arabic had played an important role in the disappearance of that alphabet. Some Turkmen scholars believe that the alphabet these poets describe might be related to the symbols of the 24 Oguz tribes. The pre-Islamic tomb stones in Central Asia should be studied. There is no text extant in the alphabet that the Turkmen poets mention. Broken pieces of old tomb stones have been found in northern Iran where Turkmens live. Symbols on these stones perhaps signify the tribe of the deceased. Some of the symbols on the broken tomb stones resemble some of the runic characters of the Kök Türk alphabet.

In the Turkmen Sahra region in northern Iran at the foot of the mountain called Gökce Dağ, near the tomb of Halid Nebi, there were water melon-shaped tombstones with various patterns or symbols on them. These stones have either been destroyed or have completely disappeared. Mahmud Paydar, an Iranian Turkmen, has been carrying out extensive research on such tombstones both in Iran and other places. The result of his studies was published in the journal Yaprak in Turkmen Sahra, Iran (Paydar, M., 2001: 11-16). Paydar has seen water melon-shaped stones in Mangistau, Kazakhstan similar to those in Gökce Dağ. However, there were no patterns on them; they might have been erased.
When Paydar received information about the existence of a complete watermelon-shaped stone, he went to see the owner of this stone. The owner, thinking that there might be treasure inside, had cut the stone into two. He could not find anything in it and stuck the two pieces back together. It is not known if he stuck them correctly. When Paydar classified the pictures on this ball according to the properties of their shapes, six groups came about. The second group consisted of seven pictures. This reminds us of Şeydayi’s poem where the poet says “Seven of them are voiced”.

These symbols (or characters) are also seen in Turkmen carpets:
Inside the pattern on the right above, on the two dark-blue backgrounds, there are four white patterns that represent the letter Ç in the Kök Türk runic alphabet.
In Shamanism the plus sign symbolises God. In the Turkmen art of knitting and embroidery the plus symbol is frequently used. This symbol can be seen on a Koran cover (above centre), on the top of a scull-cap (above left) and on two prayer rugs (above right). In mosques too this symbol and the symbol of ram’s horn are still used. Below, the plus sign symbolising God can be seen in the middle of a Shaman’s drum.
As mentioned before, some of the characters in Kök Türk runic scripts are used as patterns in Turkmen rugs and carpets. Some of these, for example the letter 'arrow' shows an arrow in the Kök Türk runic scripts; this pattern also exists in the Öguz tribal symbols. These patterns usually represent sacred values. One of these letters is in Kök Türk scripts. As was mentioned before, this letter represents a mountain, which is sacred in Shamanism. The symbol of a bow and arrow seen on the front part of the Karatay Mosque in Konya has been used for centuries as a symbol of the Öguz Turks.
On the Yomut carpet above, inside the pattern called *Gabsa göl*, ten Turkish runic letters called GetString(65) are visible. Inside the white part – the *toprak* – at the end of the Turkmen carpet coloured threads called *alaca yüp* ‘the colourful thread’ are placed to protect the owner from the evil eye. In the *älem/æ:lem* part of the carpet above or below the *toprak* there is the pattern of the *two-headed eagle* which was the coat of arms of the Seljuks. The symbol of the *two-headed eagle* is used as the *Tuğra* (the state monogram) of Turkmenistan today.

There are *bow and arrow* patterns at the very left edge of the carpet above at the perpendicular position. Between the two lines next to those patterns, directed towards the left edge, there are patterns resembling the Kök Türk GetString(371) which symbolise human beings. These patterns are also seen between the two lines surrounding the main göl.

**The Relationship between Carpets and Music**

Carpet experts frequently write about the relationship between carpet and music by stressing the harmony of colour and ornaments in carpets. They believe that carpets should not be separated from music. Dr. J. Thompson, the distinguished carpet expert, expresses his view on this subject as follows:

In trying to think and talk about carpets I find myself constantly comparing them with music. The warp and weft of their underlying structure are, like the musical stave, the vehicle for the
pattern and impose upon it a basic order. The visible surface is covered with thousands, sometimes millions, of tufts of wool and the resulting minute points of colour are arranged like the individual notes of a melody into motifs and patterns. There is a musical quality in the combination, inversion, repetition and rhythm of their patterns, and in their colour harmony and texture (Thompson, J., 1993: 16).

Dr. Thompson quotes A. U. Pope, one of the greatest scholars in the field of Persian art, who wrote the following comment in 1926:

The elements of the design are like notes in a melody or words of a poem. Rhythmical repetition, inversion and the varying combination of patterns give carpets a quality akin to that of music (ibid.).

In fact, knots that resemble notes create through the interpretation of the carpet weaver an order peculiar to itself. This order, just like folk music, changes from region to region. Because, carpet-weaving, like music, is an art that relies on interpretation.

An article published about the relationship between carpets and music stresses the fact that there is a physical relationship between carpets and the Azerbaijani musical mode called mugam, and compares the Şahnazar carpet of Azerbaijan with the Azerbaijani folk-music mugam called Rast. The author explains that in mugam and in carpets there are parallel repetitions, inversions, symmetry and asymmetry, but the mugam is performed by men and the carpet is woven by women (Naroditskaya, 2005: 25-57).

From these explanations we understand that there are certain parallelisms between carpets and music, but there is no concrete proof for both being the same thing. Therefore, we will study this subject in old and contemporary Turkic languages and will try to prove linguistically that the word for carpet in Turkish was originally the same as the name of the oldest Turkic musical instrument called kopuz.

The oldest word for carpet is mentioned in two places in Divanü Lugat-it-Türk. One of them is kwız and means ‘carpet or kilim’ (Atalay, 1999: Vol. I, 366), the other is kwüz and means ‘something spread out as a mattress on the floor (Atalay, 1999: Vol. III, 164). Clauson writes that this word is used in the Codex Cumanicus, the XIV century Kipchak dictionary, as kowüz meaning ‘a large carpet or an ordinary mattress’ and says that this word in Houtsma’s Turkish-Arabic dictionary too should have been kowüz, but it has been written kör (Clauson, 1972: 692). I believe this word
should be read as köwür which means carpet. In accordance with the process of rotatism, in Turkish, /z/ has changed to /r/ and köwüz has become köwür. This word has become kovyr in Russian meaning ‘carpet’. Şipova (1976:189), on the basis of information she had acquired from Sreznevskiy, writes that this word entered the Russian language as kovor and kovr in 977 (I. I. Sreznevskiy, Materialy dlya Slovarya Drevnerusskogo Yazyka, Sankt- Peterburg, 1893-1921, Vol. I, pp 1242-1244). The Russian contemporary linguist Fasmer believes that this word may have come from kaver which is derived from Donau Bulgarian or Old Chuvash kebir; Fasmer also points out that the Mongolian kebis too means ‘carpet’ (Fasmer, 2009: Vol. II, 270).

The word kigiz meaning ‘felt’, which is related to Old Turkish kiwiz/ köwiz, has become kiyiz in Kyrgyz (Yudahin, 1945: 467) and ki:z in Kazakh. The word ke:z or ki:z كيژ in Moin’s Persian dictionary is defined as ‘a type of felt made from wool’ and it is shown as a Persian word (Moin, 1381: Vol. 3, 3150). There is the word ki:s كيژ in Arabic which means ‘a (felt) bag for money and grain-shaped edibles’ (El-Muncid, 1908: 751). The fact that this word has no derivatives in Arabic shows that it is a foreign word, because another Arabic word with the same spelling pronounced keys has more than ten derivatives. It seems that the word ki:s that resembles Turkic ki:z has become ki:se or ke:se. In Persian this word means ‘a small money bag’ and figuratively it defines ‘pocket’. Ki:se-bur in Persian means pick pocket. The equivalent of ki:se/ke:se in Middle Persian is henba:n (Mckenzie, 2009: 290). This word later has become enba:n in Modern Persian. In Modern Turkish too kese means both ‘bag’ and ‘pocket’. The root of the word keçe meaning ‘felt’ is not known (Eren, 1999: 225). This word might have come about after being assimilated with ke:se, derived from kigiz meaning ‘felt’ following the phonetic process as kigiz > ki:z > ki:s >ki:se/ke:se. In other words ke:se by analogy has become keçe. In Lügat-i Çağatay, a Chagatay dictionary, both kiz and kigiz are defined by meanings like ‘felt, kilim and hair-cloth or horse-cloth’ (Şeyh Süleyman Efendi, R. 1298: 266 and 267). In Turkmen for felt and similar objects the compound noun keçe-ki:z is used (Türkmen Diliniň Düşündirişli Sözlügi, Vol. II, 2016: 18). Makhdumkuli, the Turkmen classical poet, has used the word ki:z meaning ‘felt’: Adam bar per düşek yanyn agydar Adam bardyr ak ki:z dyzyna degmez (There are people who feel feather mattresses hurt their body And there are people whose knees never touch (even) a white felt) (Magtymguly Diwany, 2008:330).

The Chuvash word kebir and Mongolian kebis both meaning ‘carpet’ are phonetically changed forms of köwüz, kiwiz and köwür all
meaning ‘carpet’. In Turkish /z/ can change to /r/ due to rotatism as explained above. Also /b/ may change to /g/ and /b/ and /g/ can change to become /w/. Taking these phonetic changes into account, the word kopuz, which is the name of the oldest Turkic musical instrument, may change to kobuz > kowuz (the word gowuz in Turkmen means ‘jaw’s harp’). Also kobuz becomes kobur and kobur > kowur or kogur > koguz. Words used for carpet in Old Turkish and some Turkic languages like köwüz, köwür, kebir and Mongolian kebis are all derived from kopuz and they are the softer versions of this word. The Russian linguist Fasmer, on the basis of information he had acquired from Mikkola (Memoires de la Société Néophilologique à Helsinfors, Helsinki 1893, Vol. I, p. 389), writes that the oldest form of the Russian word kovyor meaning ‘carpet’ was kogurr which meant ‘carpet and blanket’ (Fasmer, 2009: Vol. II, 270-271).

The word kogurr above resembles the Mongolian kugur > hugur (pronounced hu’ur) which means ‘kopuz, a musical instrument’ (Lessing, 2003: Vol. II, 1515). It seems that the Old Turkish words kögür or köwür which are derived from kopuz have become in Old Mongolian kugur/ ku’ur meaning ‘kopuz’. A kopuz player in Old Mongolian was called ku’urçin (Haenisch, 1949: 177). This word has entered the Persian language as kuhu:rçi: meaning ‘lute player or kopuz player’ (Doerfer, 1963: Vol. I, 443). The word kowürge meaning ‘drum’ in Mongolian and Chagatay is also related to kopuz. Köwürge in Persian has, because of mispronunciation, become geverge (Amid, 1343: Vol. II, 886).

As mentioned before, many carpet experts believe that there is a relationship between music and carpets, but they cannot reach a concrete conclusion. This paper studies this subject from linguistic point of view and concludes that the oldest name of the carpet has derived from kopuz which is a musical instrument. Here, it must be pointed out that the names of Turkish musical instruments çöğür, cura and sipsi as well as the Kyrgyz musical instrument síbisga, although they look completely different, all have derived from kopuz. This, in fact, could be studied separately.

In Old Turkish the same word was used for both a carpet and a musical instrument, but it is not possible to establish to which one the name was given to first – to the carpet or the kopuz, the musical instrument. In fact there are similarities between a musical instrument and a carpet loom. The warp of the carpet is similar to the strings of a musical instrument; in Persian both are called ta:r as in dutar ‘two-stringed’, sitar ‘three-stringed’. Every stringed musical instrument has a bridge and the rod holding the heddles in a carpet loom resembles
the *bridge* in musical instrument. The shed stick in carpet looms, which tightens the warp, functions like a peg in a stringed musical instrument. Every stringed musical instrument is tuned and the warp is tightened from time to time. The verb for tuning a musical instrument and tightening the warp are the same – *kurmak* / *şürmak*, and the carpet loom is called *şurama* in Turkmen. Below, a picture of a Turkmen carpet loom – *şurama* – is presented.

![Turkmen Carpet Loom](image)

The carpet loom could be defined by its relation to sound and its property as a weight carrier:

- **Its relationship with sound:** When a carpet is being woven, after a row of knots are completed on the warp, they are strengthened by hitting the comb with a certain rhythm. This action creates sounds like *tok tok*. These sounds create a special tune in the atmosphere of a harmonious colour and design. From the sound of *tok* the verb *toki-* (*tokıma*) comes about which originally meant ‘to beat, to hit, to knock’: tepip *tokıdım* (*I met [the enemy ] and beat [them]*)), *kazguk* *tokıyurmen* (*I knock in a peg*), *tamırım tokıdı* (*my pulse beat*), *er böz* *tokıdı* (*the man wove cotton cloth*). (Clauson, 1972: 467 and 508). The verb *toki*- in the last example means ‘to weave’ and it has to do with hitting the comb against the tied knots. Today ‘to weave’ in Turkish is *doku-* (*dokumak*). In Arabic too the word for carpet is *żarbıyye* which is derived from *żarb* meaning ‘to hit’. This shows that the word for carpet in Arabic is also related to the sound of the comb hitting the weft.

- **Its property as a weight carrier:** Some stringed musical instruments such as Turkish *bağlama* have a small piece of wood on which the strings rest. Because it carries the weight of the strings in Turkmen, it is called *eşek* meaning ‘donkey’. Since *eşek* is a derogatory word in Turkish, it has been change to *eşik* meaning ‘threshold’. In Persian it is called *herek* which means ‘little donkey’ and is similar to the same concept in Turkmen. This animal carries weight. The warp in Old Turkish is *arış*. It has been preserved in Turkish and in Turkmen it has softened to become *eriş*. The word
for weft in Old Turkish is arkağ. In Divanü Lugat-it-Türk, arış arkağ means ‘warp and weft’ (Atalay, 1999: Vol. I, 61). Arğaç is another version of arkağ and is preserved in Turkmen and Turkish. The root of both arış and arğaç is the verb ar- (armak) meaning to be tired. Arığın coming from the same root in Turkish means ‘tired’ and in Turkmen when someone is working, a passer by may say arma which means ‘may you not get tired’. We notice that the verb ar- perhaps means ‘to be tired (of carrying weight)’. Arış meaning ‘warp’ carries the knots or weft and arğaç or weft puts its weight on the warp. A large woven Turkmen pile sack with special patterns on it is called a:rtmak. This word too is related to carrying weight. In Mongolian the verb tohu- means ‘to weave’ and ‘to put weight on something’ (Lessing, 2003: Vol. II, 1279). Its equivalent in Old Turkish and Modern Turkish and Turkmen are toku- and doku- respectively and they mean ‘to weave’. These verbs explain the act of carrying weight. The word tokum that derives from the same root means ‘a donkey’s pack-saddle’ in Chagatay (Şeyh Suleyman: R. 1297: 122). This word too shows the act of carrying weight in connection with the verb toku-. From these examples we realise that a carpet is a thickness that has come about after the weight of knots is placed on the warp.

When people greet each other and inquire after their health, they usually make reference to important subjects in their lives. For example, to say “good morning” the Chinese in Taiwan say “have you eaten your rice?”, because the first thing they do in the morning is eat rice. The Turkmens say “Kökmi? Gurgunmy?” which means “Are you in tune (like a musical instrument)?”, or “Are you set up like a carpet loom?”

Weaving or knitting is an art that occupies an important place in the life of Turkic peoples as well as many other people of the world. Perhaps most Turkic peoples in different parts of the world are not aware of the fact that they are using the terminology of this art as important values of their lives. For example in the language of the Turkic people of the Oguz group, the word tikmek/dikmek in compound phrases such as ağac dikmek ‘to plant a tree’, bina dikmek ‘to erect a building’, gömlek dikmek ‘to sew a shirt’ all denote putting something in right order or position. In Turkish and Turkmen örmek and in Azerbaijani hörmek means ‘to knit’. However, when duvar or diwar (in Turkmen) meaning ‘wall’ is used with örmek, it means ‘to build a wall’.

In Turkish verbs like etmek and yapmak ‘to do’, işlemek ‘to work on something, to process or treat something’ and örmek ‘to knit’ and yapmak (today) to do, (originally) to stick to something’
originally explain the activities of certain professions. Etmek/ (in Turkmen) eylemek means ‘to make leather from hide’. In Arabic the processed hide is called edim (Moin, 1381: Vol. I, 183). The root of this word is not Arabic and it has derived from Turkish etmek as et-i-m > edim. İşleme in Turkish is used for embroidery or production of olive oil, cotton, pestachio and other products. Gaziantep in Turkey is famous for its embroidery and production of the afore-mentioned items. That is why in Gaziantep region to say “How are you?” people say n’işli:ň < ne işiyorun? ‘What are you producing?’ Kilis, another town in Turkey was famous for its tanners. For this reason, in Kilis to greet, someone people say ne’döň < ne ediyorun? ‘How is your tanning?’ People of Kayseri are distinguished by their knitting and embroidery and people inquire after their friends’ health saying n’öroyoň < ne öröyorsun? ‘What are you knitting?’ Yapmak denotes either sticking the bricks to each other or sticking the dough to the wall of an oven in a hole in the ground, to cook bread. Therefore, the relevant job might have to do with either a baker or a brick-layer and I do not know why the Turkish Cypriots say n’apaň < ne yapiyorun? ‘What are you doing?’

Portrait of the author on a Turkmen Yomut rug.

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