

RAIMO ANTILA

A BONSAI FOLIO FOR FINNISH *LAPA* 'FLAT [PART]'
(AND ITS ENTOURAGE)

We who (at least occasionally) do loanword studies in Finnish lexicon constantly bump into the situation that Jorma Koivulehto has already thought it out and in fact published on it. This is one such case, but there might still be things worth pointing out. Either my independent path is confirmation, or it is at least less likely that we would both have been wrong. The table below presents the essential evidence through English glosses, Balto-Slavic forms, and Baltic Finnic items. The curious fact here is that 'leaf' is easily taken as the basic meaning in Balto-Slavic, but this is a meaning that does not show up in Baltic Finnic, but rather just the 'blade/flat-part' stretch. As it turns out, the Finnish word for 'leaf', *lehti*, is an Indo-European loan (Koivulehto 1995:119-125). Thus, **bhlh₁-tó-* > Gmc **blada-* > German *Blatt*, English *blade*, etc., whereas the full grade **bhleh₁-to/ā-* gives Gmc **blēda-* > Old English *blæd* 'blooming, sprout, fruit'. Both ablaut grades were borrowed into Saami, North *liedde* 'blooming, flower, leaf'; (and the zero grade form later — from Scandinavian — in *Ø/b/pladde* 'leaf (of a book), newspaper' and there are also meanings 'oar blade' and 'shoulder blade', in compounds). We have o-grade forms in Latin *flos* and Gmc **blōma-* 'flower'. This is one of the cases where the PIE laryngeal shows up as Finno-Volgaic -š- (another Koivulehto contribution), **lešte*, -h- in Finnish *lehti/lehde-n*. The item is missing in Mordvin, where it is replaced by *lopa* from Baltic (A; 1995:125). (From now on I will just concentrate on the stricter Baltic Finnic.)

BALTO-SLAVIC EVIDENCE

BALTIC FINNIC

A. leaf, sheet, plate, blade(lāpas, lapà - lapa, <i>lópast'</i>)	lap(p)a laba <i>labeħ</i>
A1. 'leafy' plants (<i>lépè</i> , lapūkas - <i>lēpe/a</i> , <i>lopúx</i>)	
A2. arbor(lapīnè, lapbūdē, lapijà - lapene)	
A3. 'flat' foods(lapāīšis - lāpeniņš, <i>lepjódška</i>)	
A4. shoulder blade(lopetà - lāpstīņa, <i>lopátka</i>)	lapa laba <i>lapa</i>
A4.1. shovel (lopetà - lāpst[ī]ņa, <i>loptá</i>)	lapio labidas <i>labid</i>
A4.2. oar, rake [~ B1.] (-lāpsta, <i>lópast'</i>)	lapa laba <i>lapa</i>
A4.2.1. haycock, windrow	laponen labu <i>lavoh</i>
A5. bunch/hand of shingles [~B.](lópè, lopis)	
A5.1. light, torch(lópè - lāpa)	
A5.1.1. fish by ↑(- lāpīt)	
A6. distaff-board(- lāpsta)	lapa lap(p)o laba <i>lapa</i>
 B. paw, claw, flipper, foot/hand ..(lōpa - lāpa, <i>lapa</i> , <i>last'</i>)	lapa laba <i>lapa</i> <i>lapà</i>
B1. harrow(- lapas)	labu <i>laboh</i>
B2. catch, snare(<i>lépat'</i>)	
B3. crawl, drag(lapnóti - lāpāt)	
B3.1. flap [wings](lapīnti, lapénti)	labakāsi
 C. patch, scrap, rag(lōpas - lāps, lāpene)	?lapatossu ?lapp
C1. patch, mend, darn(lōpyti - lāpīt, <i>lāpit'</i>)	?lappima
C2. piece of land(lōpas - lāpene)	?lapimaa
[C3. "big ear"(- lāpausis, lēpa, <i>lopoúxij</i>)	
bast sandal(<i>lāpot'</i>)	

BALTO-SLAVIC: Lithuanian first, Latvian after hyphen, Russian *italic*

BALTIC FINNIC: Finnish plain, Estonian **bold**, other BF languages *italic*

MEANINGS IN ITALIAN:

A. foglia, lamina, paletta, filo, stelo, A2. pergola, frascato, A4. scapula, A4.1. pala, A4.2. remo, rastrello, A4.2.1. mucchio di fieno, A5. fascio/mazzo di assicelle, A5.1. torcia, fiaccola, A6. conocchia.

B. zampa, artiglio, unghia, pinna, mano/piede, B1. erpice, B2. acchiappare, prendere, B3. strisciare, trascinare, B3.1. penzolare, ripiegare.

C. pezza, toppa, C1. aggiustare, rappezzare, scartare, rammen-dare.

Note that Germanic *leaf* in Gm. *Laub(e)* has the meaning A2 (cf. also Ru. *lápnik* 'evergreen twigs'), and that Swedish goes roughly like English (*löv, blad*). A1 contains lots of plants with big leaves (e.g., cabbage leaf, burdock, colt's foot, water lily, plantain, pondweed), but also small (*lāpina* 'mushroom gill', *lepestók* 'petal'). "Flat" foods (A4.2.1) fit in nicely (*lapatursis, lapaišis* 'flat potato pancake', *lepjóska* 'flat cake, cookie, lozenge'). At A4 we hit more "abstract technology". In A4.2 for 'oar' the tip part is originally meant, and for the rake, the paw, as it were (the meaning B, the flat part of a limb). For 'haycock' and 'windrow' we have the product of a rake's activity, hence they are kind of '*rakings'. A hand of shingles (A5) is a bunch of "flatties", and in the Baltic area these were standard sources of light (A5.1; Old Prussian 'flame'). A distaff-board (A6) is a flat gadget, and furthermore it handles a coil of wool (*lavos*) parallel to a windrow (A4.2.1).

Section A in the table covers the flat or broad part of anything, and a rich array of derivatives exist (not listed in the table), e.g., for Fi. *lapamato* 'tape worm', also *lavikas, lavikka, lape* (gen. *lapeen*). Similarly for 'mitten', *lapanen* (B), *lapakka, lapuri*, etc. The situation is similar in the sister languages. Related are forms like *lapikas*, also 'mitten' and other footwear, particularly a boot with its toe tip curled upward to secure the toe strap of the ski. The meaning coherence on the Baltic side can be enhanced by Lith. *lapúotas* A 'leaf-' and A5 'stratified'.

'One rakeful of hay, a little stack' (A4.2.1) is signified also by Fi. *lavos, lavot, lapo(o), lappo(nen), lapale*, etc., and similarly in the sister languages. A feature of a "broad stripe" (or mistake) in weaving that comes out in a double heddle is rendered through Fi. *lapa(nen), lapasin, lavasin* (and similar forms in the other languages). (Curiously, cf. Lith. *lopótieji*, name of a weaving pattern, i.e., definite adj. masc. pl., and with short vowel, *lapùkas* 'leaf' [dem.], but also a weaving pattern.)

Double *-pp-* has already occurred here and there, and one can add to *lap(p)a* 'belt buckle' (Kar. *lappa, Veps lappu, lappea, lappio*,

lape 'flat side', Est. *lapik* 'side' — and words for 'outlying, on the edge': Veps *lapt*, *laptas*, Est. *lape* (gen. *lappe*), *ukse lappes* 'at the side of the door'. The /a side/flank of a slaughtered animal also shows up, Fi. [*sian*]*lappi*, Est. *lape*. (Note for Estonian voiceless consonants here: short = *b*, long = *p*, and overlong = *pp*; the weak grade of the short everywhere = *v*.)

One should mention the two verbal forms, Fi. *lapistaa*, *lavastia* 'to shape a point with an axe', Est. *labastada*, *lavastada* 'to cut the point from two sides = to flatten; make mundane'. This is clear enough, whereas Fi. *lappaa*, *lapata* 'haul, pull, tug, feed/pull in the line, cram, shovel in' (Est. *lapata*, *lappada*, etc.) seem to need more imagination. I see no insurmountable difficulties, however, if one starts out with the activity of handling wool at and around the distaff. From here it goes naturally into coiling of all kinds of ropes and other straps.

Cluster B (as organized here) starts well enough, as also 'harrow' is clearly claws (*lapas*), mirrored also in Estonian and Veps. B2 is perhaps unnecessary here (since the Baltic Finnic side is void), but semantically it matches Fi. *joutua kynsiin* [to get into the claws...] 'to be captured/caught'. B3 would only provide descriptive-type forms like *laputtaa* 'hasten, run, scam' and B3.1 *lepattaa*, *läpyttää* 'flap'. Est. *laperdama* 'flap, flutter', and *lapats* 'flap' is about the same, whereas *labakäsi* [flat hand] 'pinion = wing' is again good evidence. Traditionally this material has been taken as purely descriptive, but one wonders about Lith. *lepetā* 'the foot of a big animal', *lepetóti*, *lepénti*, Latvian *lapačuot* 'to trample, walk clumsily' and Lith. *lepečkojis* [clumsy-foot] 'one with big paws'. These are mainly with short *e*. Then there is the (other) rake's activity, viz. *lapáuti* 'to lead a soft life, to be wanton' and *lapavimas* 'wanton behavior' that could reflect something like the "as a leaf in wind" of the Carmina Burana. Phraseology gets blurred here, note Latvian *laisties lapās* [to fly in the leaves] glossed 'to show a clean pair of heels'. One would expect from this the soles (B), but it is clearly A, because of the (lack of) length in the first syllable. 'To be lazy' is "to darn/mend laziness" in Latvian (C1).

The domains C and C1 are extremely rich in Baltic, and there is no reason to list it all here (note how Fi. *luppakorva* and English *lop-eared* in C3 again somewhat resemble the Balto-Slavic — and note how C3 folds back on A1 and B). I have question-marked some Estonian material here, just not to seem too optimistic. This material, however, is reasonably good. *Lapp* (gen. *lapi*) 'flat' and 'patch, dishrag' (C) show different vocalism in the verbs *lappama* 'make flat' vs. *lappima* 'cut to pieces (*laputama*), patch' (C2); and further *lapistik* 'patchwork', *lapakas* 'piece of cloth, patch'. Particularly telling are *lapimaa* and *lapitalu* (*maa* 'land', *talu* 'farm') 'land holdings distributed around in pieces'. Here, however, we cannot disentangle possible Low German influence, cf. Fi. *lappu* 'piece, bit, scrap, patch, tag' from Swedish. (For fun, cf. Fi. *lapatossu* 'one with flimsy shoes' [*tossu* 'a kind of slipper'] with Lith. *lopúotas* 'who goes around in patched clothes'.)

The table display and the other evidence shown above indubitably prove that Fi. *lapa* and its entourage was borrowed from Baltic. Generally, Baltic contains only short *a* and long \bar{a} (> Lith. [long] *o*), and both would regularly end up as Baltic Finnic *a*. It is also quite regular that a *p* would sprout into length (Fi. *pp* ~ Est. *p* in orthography, whence also the overlong *pp* in the right contexts). And the weak-grade forms with *v* are self-evident. Parallels are easy to find, I just refer to my Naples piece (Anttila 1995), a paper somewhat hated and/or misunderstood by scholars in Finland (difference of opinion furthers scholarship, one hopes). That material also shows semantic parallels in peeling and splitting terminology.

A problem is that Baltic has a few forms with *e* or \bar{e} , or even *uo* in *luopa* (B). I will not speculate about these here, since they do not destroy the overall picture. The Russian items with short vowel in *lep-* can be matched also in South and West Slavic, e.g., in 'leaf' meanings. In Proto-Indo-European terms we have an ablauting root **lep-* ~ **lop-* ~ **lēp-* ~ **lōp-*. Greek evidence clusters around 'flat' and 'peel, husk', and the like: *lépein* 'peel', *lépos* 'rind, husk, scale', *leprosy*, *lópos* 'peel', *lopós* 'flat dish', *lōpē* 'cover,

mantle', *lōpistós* 'patched mantle'. (The Greek evidence is not universally accepted, but it is not too bad.)

Rather close to Baltic and Baltic Finnic comes the Germanic evidence: **lōfō* in Scandinavian *lōfe* (Gothic *lōfa*) 'palm of the hand' as the source of English (Northern dial.) *loof* (since roughly 1400 AD). The Middle English meaning of 'oar, big rudder' agrees nicely with the rest. From **galōfō* we get OE *glōf* > Modern *glove* (1000 AD) (cf. Fi. *lapanen*). It is the Greek and Slavic that tell about the Proto-Indo-European shape **lōp-*, and thus the Baltic **ā* shows the typical adjustment after the change of **o > a*. I.e., *e : ē :: a : X* (*X = ā*). Now *luopa* looks like a relic bypassed by this innovation. (It would be a waste to speculate here about German and Scandinavian shapes in *labb-/laff-/lapp-/läpp-/löpp-* that render all kinds of descriptive semantics.)

There are two curious gaps in the table, section A, viz. the arbor meaning (A2) and the torchlight fishing (A5.1) in Baltic Finnic. Such gaps are of course not that serious, but it can be noted here that both are taken care of by other borrowed terms. The first with Finnish *lehtimaja* [leaf hut], and the second with *tuulas(taa)*. Koivulehto has shown both parts in *lehtimaja* to be Proto-Indo-European loans — the *tuulas* evidence is from Baltic (~ Lith. *dūlis* 'wood for smoke against bees' and Latvian *dūlājs* 'jacklight wood in fishing').

The really curious thing about the arrangement in the table is that such evidence has been totally ignored in traditional Finnish etymology. Could chance resemblance really be that striking? Surprising is further the fact that the material in the table (and beyond) was always in the open, in the most obvious places, for anybody to see. It is true, however, that my mother never thought of seeing it, and neither did my father Lauri, although his name was for many hypocoristically *Lapa* (the normal Finnish solution). The editors of the most recent etymological dictionary of Finnish have taken to an easy defense: They say that whatever is not listed in the dictionary has been found unworthy by a joint decision by nine evaluators.

REFERENCES

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