Rumpled chicken come home to roost.
From [TO CARD – IMPURITY] to [TO PURIFY/HEAL (someone) – from DISEASE]. Evidence from Anatolian, Ancient Greek, and Old Indic.

The Modern Greek and Italian expression ο κόμπος φτάνει στο χτένι and *tutti i nodi vengono al pettine* (litt. *the knot(s) came to the comb*) clearly means *rumpled chicken come home to roost*. The main historical dictionaries of proverbs trace its origin back to the textile production in the antiquity, but the details are unknown (e.g. La Pucci 2007: 1023).
I advance the hypothesis that this proverb goes back to a phraseological collocation [TO COMB – IMPURITY (from wool)], that is, [TO CARD (wool)], which may reflect Proto-Indo-European (PIE) heritage, and which developed a metaphorical meaning already in antiquity. In particular, I argue for the development of a meaning [to COMB – a IMPURITY/DISEASE (from someone)], that is, [TO PURIFY/HEAL (someone or something) – from a DISEASE]. In other words, healing someone from a disease became like carding wool from impurities. This development is attested in the Anatolian and Ancient Greek branch of the Indo-European language family, although each branch has undergone a specific development starting from the same basic collocation. Anatolian shows a metaphorical narrowing into [TO COMB (down) – DISEASE – from a BODY PART] meaning [TO PURIFY/HEAL (someone) – from a DISEASE] (CTH 765.1, CTH 409.I). The very same collocation remains unattested in Ancient Greek. Instead, it shows a long simile between carding wool and the purification of the city of Athens from a mortal plague, together with a series of lemmata concerning processing wool (Aristoph. *Lys*. 574-86). In addition to that, in a controversial Old Indic passage, the collocation [TO CARD – X] is used metaphorically (1×, AVP 2.31.4, early 1st mill. BC) in the sense of 'to prevent death/ill-minded event'. Although these differences, Anatolian as well as Indo-Iranian and Greek share the same Proto-Indo-European verbal root **kse(-n)-* 'to card, to comb' in the above-mentioned passages: Luw. *kiša-* 'to comb' (+ *katta* 'down'), Ved. *kṣaṇ-* 'to card', Gk. ξαίνω 'to comb' (+ κατὰ 'down'). I will conclude that it is possible to venture the hypothesis that the basic parallel between surviving an unfavourable event and the carding process was already established at a PIE level, although it is methodologically unlikely to infer the very existence of a PIE metaphor even from the attestation of its basic elements attested in the daughter languages (as regards this methodological issue see recently Melchert 2020). Should this hypothesis be correct, it would enrich the numerous metaphors from the semantic field of textile production attested in the PIE languages – for a comparative perspective on this topic see, most recently, Olsen 2018. This study integrates the increasing interest on the identification of cognitive metaphors within the Indo-European languages, with the main scope to separate those elements that can be traced back to a PIE stage from those that are the result of later historical events. After the seminal work of Lakoff & Johnson 1980, who investigated the persistent use of metaphorical language in all areas of human experience, only some attempts have been made so far within the Indo-European languages (most recently, e.g. Kölligan 2020, 2022, van Beek 2017).

Bibliography
Beek, Lucien van (2017). Die Bildersprache des Rechts im Indogermanischen: Griechisch ἰθεῖα δίκη und δίκην βλάπτειν. In H. Bichlmeier and A. Opfermann (eds), *Das Menschenbild bei den Indogermanen. Akten der Arbeitstagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft in Halle (31. März – 2. April 2011)*, 129–150. Hamburg: Baar.
Kölligan, Daniel (2020). Seething anger: Latin *furor*. In: L. Repanšek, H. Bichlmeier, and V. Sadovski (eds.), *vácāmsi miśrá kr̥ṇavāmahai*. Proceedings of the international conference of the Society for Indo-European Studies and IWoBA XII, Ljubljana 4–7 June 2019, 397–412. Hamburg: Baar.

Kölligan, Daniel (2022). Conceptual metaphors and historical linguistics – some case studies. Talk at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan. March 22, 2022.

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson (1980). *Metaphors we Live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Melchert, Craig. 2020. Hittite *handā*(*i*)- 'to align, arrange, etc.' and PIE Metaphors fpr 'morally right'. In M. Serangeli and Th. Olander (eds.), Dispersals and Diversification. Linguistic and Archaeological Perspectives on the Early Stages of Indo-European, 166-178.

Olsen, B. A. 2018. Notes on the Indo-European terminology of sheep, wool and textile production. In R. Iversen & G. Kroonen (eds), *Digging for words. Archaeoloinguistic case stories from the XV Nordic TAG Conference held at the University of Copenhagen 16–18 April 2015*, 66–77. Oxford.