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TOPONYMS IN PROVERBS: A CASE STUDY OF RUSSIAN, LATVIAN, LITHUANIAN, POLISH, GERMAN, FRENCH, ENGLISH, FINNISH, AND TAJIK PROVERBS

**Abstract:** This article provides a comparison between Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, German, French, English, Finnish, and Tajik proverbs with toponyms. It deals with groups of proverbs notable for their semantics: toponyms as symbols and measure of significance and a long, rich history; toponyms as a symbol of an objective, a destination point; toponyms and their characteristics in relation to wealth and money. A generalised imageless proverbial idea is used for comparison.

Among Russian proverbs, Moscow is the most productive toponym, among proverbs in other European languages the equivalent productive toponym is Rome.

Despite toponym uniqueness, comparative studies show substantial semantic similarity between proverbs of the languages under study with different toponyms used.

**Keywords:** Paremiology, proverb, cultural linguistics, toponym, semantics, equivalent, comparative studies, cognitive model

The paremiological picture of the world reflects at its level the people's stereotypical images of the world and sociocultural experience, being a compact hold of experience, a kind of packaging for this experience [Бредис 2018: 15]. As far as the functionality is concerned, proverbs have much in common with goods packaging. Protecting the product the package at the same time catches the potential buyer's attention making sure that he remembers and buys this item. If sociocultural experience is to be viewed as such packaged product, then the proverb also draws the person's attention, allows the person to easily remember the message, and prompts to follow the values contained in the proverb.

The value of proverbs in any language lies in the fact that many of them contain important knowledge of the national culture. An important part in the proverbial imagery system of dif-

ferent languages is played by proper nouns that we assign, along with artifact names and ethnonyms, to national linguistic markers (viz. ethnolinguistic markers), the proverb components “that reflect national distinctness, ‘cultural memory’ and do not necessarily have direct analogues in another language thereby displaying the linguistic sign ethnic specificity” [Ломакина 2018: 85].

Among proverbs with proper names there are the following groups: a) proverbs with anthroponyms, b) with toponyms – geographic names (town names – astionyms, water bodies – hydronyms, streets – odonyms), toponym derivatives – names of residents, macrotoponyms [Ломакина 2018: 85-86].

Toponyms – place names – function as linguistic markers in proverbs. The toponyms in one geographic area considered collectively constitute its toponymy. Toponymy is an important source for research on peoples’ historical past, economic centres’ geography, and historic trade routes. Besides, it is also a subject of study in linguistics, particularly lexicology, etymology, dialectology, phraseology, etc. The value of proverbs with toponym components lies in the fact that toponyms are not just geographic realia but are also cultural phenomena reflected in the language. According to O.I. Aldinger’s data, in the Russian proverbs collected by V.I. Dal toponyms come second in usage frequency accentuating the importance of place names in human life [Альдингер 2006].

The purpose of this paper is to conduct comparative linguistic and cultural studies of several groups of Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, German, French, English, Finnish, and Tajik proverbs containing toponyms, primarily astionyms – town names. Proverbs from Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, German, French, English, Finnish, and Tajik proverb collections as well as a number of proverb digital resources served as study material.

Sharing Polish researcher W. Chlebda’s point of view to the effect that potentially any proverb of any language should have its notional (logical) equivalent [Chlebda 2008: 96], we believe that this statement is of great importance for comparative paroe-miology. The absence of an equivalent proverb in another language may mean that it is yet to be discovered by researchers, or may have existed earlier and have gone out of use. It appears that a full picture of equivalent proverbs is somewhat reminiscent of

D. Mendeleev's periodic table of chemical elements wherein empty spaces can in theory be filled whenever the matching elements are found.

For comparison, we are using the generalised imageless proverbial idea referred to by E.I. Seliverstova as a “proverb condensate”. The proverb condensate is a two- or three-part notion concisely and briefly conveying the semantic content of the unit, i.e. the condensed meaning of the proverb, which is understood as a succinct semantic model resulting from demetaphorisation [Селиверстова 2017: 141].

This article will explore several groups of proverbs containing place names, primarily towns and populated localities. These groups are notable for their semantics: toponyms as symbols and measure of significance and a long, rich history; toponyms as a symbol of an objective, a destination point; toponyms and their characteristics in relation to wealth and money.

The image of ancient cities as important historical symbols is present in many European proverbs. The ones under study mention Rome, Paris, Krakow, Moscow, Cologne, Aachen, Turku, and Riga: Rus. *He в один день Москва строилась* (*Moscow was not built in a day*); Latv. *Rīga nav celta vienā dienā* (*Riga was not built in a day*) [Zusne 2008: 34]; Lith. *Roma nebuvo pastatyta per dieną* (*Rome was not built in a day*); Pol. *Nie od razu Kraków zbudowany* (*Krakow was not built all at once*); Ger. *Rom ist nicht in einem Tage gebaut worden* (*Rome was not built in a day*), *Köln und Aachen wurden nicht an einem Tag erbaut* (*Cologne and Aachen were not built in a day*); Fr. *Paris n'a pas été bâti en un jour* (*Paris was not built in a day*); Eng. *Rome was not built in a day*; [Świerczyński 2001: 224]; Fin. *Roomaa ei rakennettu yhdessä päivässä* (*Rome was not built in a day*), *Ei Turku tunnissa tehty* (*Turku was not built in a hour*) [Храмцова 2011: 186].

The above toponyms are important for each of the people. Rome, Krakow, Moscow, and Paris are ancient capital cities, Turku (formerly Abo), Finland's oldest city, was also the capital in the Swedish times. Riga was a large German commercial city founded in 1201 in Livonian lands that later became Livonia's main economic centre. At present Riga is the capital of Latvia. Ancient Aachen known as early as in Roman times was the capital of Charlemagne's empire, and until the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Ger-

man kings' coronation place. Cologne is one of Germany's oldest cities. Agrippina the Younger, the daughter of the Roman warlord Germanicus, born in the settlement of Oppidum Ubiorum (the Town of the Ubii), located in this area in 15 or 16 AD is generally thought of as the founder of the city. Agrippina, wife of the Emperor Claudius, sister of the Emperor Caligula, and mother of the Emperor Nero, managed to secure for her birthplace the status of a Roman colony named Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium, or CCAA. Even now, remnants of Roman fortifications, gates, and towers can be seen in the city. In the course of time, of the long name there remained only Colonia, which subsequently turned into Köln. These proverbs demonstrate commonality of different peoples' views as to the long time and great effort required for town planning. The proverbial model *The town of X was not built all at once* may be considered universal since therein city names may vary in different peoples' languages, in addition to the ones we have reviewed as follows: Lubeck (Ger.), Lvov (Pol.), Prague (Czech and Slovak), Warsaw (Pol.), Washington (Eng.), Zagreb (Croat. and Slov.), etc.

Most of the reviewed European proverbs with this semantics mention Rome, which comes as no surprise: Rome has earned the fame of the "Eternal City" that was the centre of the empire extending over half of the world in ancient times. Throughout the Middle Ages, it was Europe's most important religious centre, mediaeval Europe's main city, the location of the Holy Apostolic See, whereas Latin inherited from Ancient Rome for many centuries served as the language of religion, science, and paperwork practically in all European countries. The semantics of these proverbs in concentrated form may be described as *Everything needs time and effort*. The old age of the capital cities mentioned in the proverbs suggests that to achieve their present-day size, strength, and power one needs a long time and continuous effort. The name of Rome in this model passed into proverbs in such languages as Afrikaans, Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Provencal, Rhaeto-Romance, Romanian, Scots, Spanish, and Swedish [Walter 2014: 202]. As far as the name of Moscow is concerned, only East Slavs use it in proverbs: Ukr. *He sprazy (vidprazy) Moskva budyvalasja* (*Moscow was not built all at once*) and Bel. *He za god*

*Москва построена, Москва не сразу будавалася (Moscow was not built in a year, Moscow was not built all at once)* [Ibid].

Wolfgang Mieder notes the existence of common European proverbs, i.e. “proverbs that have dissimilated through precise loan translations throughout Europe” [Mieder 2014: 25]. It is therefore no surprise that there are a great many precise equivalents in different languages. This very proverb with the same toponym is used in most of the languages in question to express the semantic meaning of ***The same goal may be reached by many different ways***: Rus. *Все дороги ведут в Рим*, Latv. *Visi ceļi ved uz Romu*; Lith. *Visi keliai veda į Romą*; Pol. *Wszystkie drogi prowadzą do Rzymu, Każda droga prowadzi do Rzymu (Every road leads to Rome)* [Stypuła 1974]; Eng. *All roads lead to Rome* [Manser 2007: 6], *There are many roads that lead to Rome*; Ger. *Es führen viele Wege nach Rom*; Fr. *Tout chemin mène à Rome* [Arthaber 1989: 598], Fin. *Kaikki tiet vievät Roomaan* [Храмцова 2011: 55]. It has been established that the proverb *All roads lead to Rome* was first recorded in the *Prologue to A Treatise on the Astrolabe* by Geoffrey Chaucer approx. in 1391 [Manser 2007: 6]. Despite the presence of a toponym as an ethnolinguistic marker, these proverbs are not ethno-specific. The toponym *Rome* therein may be viewed as a form of cultural memory reflecting the features of a common European culture based on Christianity, for which Rome is the main symbol of Western Christianity. Besides, in Medieval Latin that is one of the important sources of common European proverbs [Mieder 2004: 12], there was a proverb, *Mille vie ducunt hominem per secula Romam (A thousand roads lead man forever towards Rome)* [Manser 2007: 6]. The remarkable similarity of proverbs in European languages is not just attributable to the similarity of the laws of logic but also common European history and sources, as well as similarity of living conditions, peoples’ language and cultural contacts.

In this particular case, the use of this proverb in different languages is not only down to the existence of the medieval proverb of Rome, but also the great popularity of a later literary source. The proverb became widespread owing to Jean de La Fontaine’s fable *The Arbitrator, the Almoner, and the Hermit* published in his last collection in 1693.

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| <p>Trois Saints, également jaloux de leur salut,<br/>         Portés d'un même esprit, tendaient à même but.<br/>         Ils s'y prirent tous trois par des routes diverses:<br/> <i>Tous chemins vont à Rome</i> : ainsi nos Concurrents<br/>         Crurent pouvoir choisir des sentiers différents.</p> <p>La Fontaine</p> | <p>Three saints, for their salvation jealous,<br/>         Pursued, with hearts alike most zealous,<br/>         By routes diverse, their common aim.<br/> <i>All highways lead to Rome</i>: the same<br/>         Of heaven our rivals deeming true,<br/>         Each chose alone his pathway to pursue.</p> <p>Fables 1882</p> |
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The name of Cezary Makiewicz's song *Wszystkie drogi prowadzą do Mrągowo* (*All roads lead to Mrągowo*), which is a transformation of an old proverb where one toponym is substituted by another bears witness to the proverb's popularity in present day Poland. Mrągowo is the name of a small Polish town surrounded by six picturesque lakes.

H. Walter and V.M. Mokienko link the appearance of transformed proverbs (according to W. Mieder, anti-proverbs) with a pragmatic factor – frequency of use as well as typicality, stereotypicality of traditional proverbs causing people to feel protest, “resistance” [Вальтер, Мокиенко 2005: 7]. Contemporary anti-proverbs are formed according to the patterns typical of traditional proverbs, and the prototype is instantly recognised by native speakers. The recognition effect is central to the anti-proverb popularity. “No matter how much proverbs are changed by bon mot lovers, they have to be recognised in order to strike a spark of irony or humour between the poles of the traditional and the creative new” [Вальтер, Мокиенко 2005: 12]. This is exactly why the existence of anti-proverbs is indicative of the traditional proverb popularity. Thus, in the Polish internet segment one may come across another anti-proverb on the subject: *Wszystkie drogi prowadzą do łóżka* (*All roads lead to bed*), where the replacement of the toponym *Rome* with the notion *bed* assigns to the proverb a new ironic meaning.

A number of proverbs wherein the toponym image is used as a destination, have the meaning of *Asking (for directions) will*

**take you anywhere.** There are proverbs in Russian where the destination toponyms are the cities of Kiev and Moscow: Rus. *Язык до Киева доведёт; Язык до Москвы знает* (A [clever] tongue will take you to Kiev; [Your] tongue knows the way to Moscow) [БСПИ 2010: 1013]. In ancient times, Kiev was the capital of the Russian state; Moscow became the centre of Russia later. The meaning of the expression is that although the capital is far way one can get there asking people for directions. That is you have to ask and you will be answered. The Polish proverb *Koniec języka za przewodnika* (The tip of the tongue [will act] as your guide) [Stypuła 1974: 349] has the same semantic meaning without any toponyms mentioned. Other Polish proverbs propose asking for directions to the Polish ancient capital – Krakow: *Język i do Krakowa dopyta* (Your tongue will take you to Krakow), or to Rome *Język i do Rzymu doprowadzi* (Your tongue will take you to Rome) [Stypuła 1974: 259]. The French and the Germans name Rome as a worthy destination: Fr. *Qui langue a, à Rome va* (A [clever] tongue will take you to Rome); нем. *Mit Fragen kommt man nach Rom* (Asking for directions one can get to Rome) [Arthaber 1989: 355].

The Finnish proverb with the same meaning *Ei kysyvä tieltä eksy* (Not asking you can lose your way) does not contain any toponyms. However, there is another proverb in the dictionaries that is rarely used at present, and in all likelihood originating under the influence of the Russian proverb: *Kieli vie Kiovaan ja tuo sieltä takaisin* (A [clever] tongue will take you to Kiev and bring you back from there) [Храмцова 2011: 224].

In the Moslem East, the most important religious centre is Mecca. Therefore, understandably this particular Sacred City is the prime object of enquiries in Tajik proverbs: Taj. *Пурсида-нурсида Маккаро ёфтаанд* (Through enquiring Mecca was found) [Калонтаров 1965: 276]. Although it is not easy and a long way to go, but asking people you can reach your destination. Mecca plays a special part in the lives of the peoples of the East. This is a holy pilgrimage centre annually attracting a great number of believers. The image of Mecca is used in the Tajik proverb with somewhat different semantics **One will find one's kin**: *Хоҷи хоҷиро аз Макка меёбад* (Hajji will find another hajji even in Mecca) [Калонтаров 1965: 194]. Tajik proverb can also contain the toponym Khorasan. This is an ancient historical

region of Persia renowned for its carpets, cultivation of saffron and barberry. A clever tongue will take you even to Khorasan: *Пурсон-пурсон Хуросон (Through enquiring one may get to Khorasan)* [Калонтаров 1965: 276].

Tajik proverbs also use images of other cities well known in the Moslem world – Medina and Baghdad (e.g. *Baghdad is not far for someone in love*); however, we have not discovered any proverbs with these particular toponyms in connection with the semantics under study. It is worth noting that Baghdad, founded in 762, the renowned centre of the world and Islam culture that has been the capital of an extended Islamic Caliphate for many centuries, is present in the proverbs of different peoples of the East. Thus, M.V. Porkhomovsky's study into the Turkish proverbs notes that Baghdad is by far in advance of other cities (Mecca, Istanbul, etc.) by the number of mentions in Turkish proverbs [Порхомовский 2014: 94]. E.g. *Balım olsun, sinek Bağdat'tan gelir (I would rather have honey, and the fly will fly from Baghdad)* [Ibid: 160].

Of interest is also a group of proverbs wherein different cities are described in terms of their wealth. In particular, the notion of a concrete city is reflected in the proverb semantics briefly expressed as *The city of X is rich*. In Russian proverbs, the embodiment of wealth and abundance is typically the ancient capital, Moscow: Rus.: *В Москве недорода хлебу не бывает; Москва людна и хлебна; В Москве все найдешь, кроме птичьего молока (There is no such thing as a poor crop in Moscow; Moscow is populous and wealthy; One can find anything in Moscow but bird's milk)* [БСПИ 2010: 556]. In the minds of Latvians the symbol of abundance is Riga: Latv.: *Rīgā trūkst tik putna piena un vēža asinu (All that is missing in Riga is bird's milk and lobster's blood)* [LSDF: 529 1008]. A Lithuanian proverb uses the image of the Prussian city of Tilsit: Lith. *Tilžė – pinigų milžė (Tilsit is a cash pail)* [Patarles.dainutekstai.lt]. In German proverbs, it is the Saxon cities Leipzig and Dresden that are notable for their affluence: Ger. *Zu Leipzig hat ein Reicher, was sein Herz wünscht (In Leipzig a rich man will find whatever he wants)* [Wander 1873: 31], *Dresden ist angefüllt mit allem, was man sich wünscht (Dresden is full of everything you can wish for)* [Wander 1867: 697]. The English proverb *The streets of London are paved with gold* [Special-dictionary.com] reflects the



people's perceptions of the unheard-of wealth of the capital. It is interesting that both the Russian and the Latvian proverbs about Moscow and Riga use the metaphor "bird's milk". Researchers relate this image to the Ancient Greek literary texts that as is known the Russians were acquainted with directly from the Greek language. In Ancient Greece, "bird's milk" was a very popular phraseological unit denoting something rare and valuable. The image of bird's milk as the ultimate wish can be encountered in Aristophanes', Strabo's, Lucian's and other works. Strabo wrote that poets lavishly praising the fertility of the island of Samos pointed out that there was even *bird's milk* there [Тимошенко 1897: 52]. Likewise, the Latvian proverb uses another image, "lobster's blood." It is a case of an equally rare phenomenon as bird's milk. Besides, from a biologist's point of view, lobsters do not have blood in the usual sense of the word, but hemolymph. There is no such thing as lobster's normal blood. For this reason, the proverb says that the only thing that is missing is lobster's blood meaning that there is overabundance of everything in the city.

Another Latvian proverb runs as follows: *Par naudu var Rīgā visu dabūt, tik tēva, mātes un putna piena ne* (For money one can get everything in Riga, but not a father, a mother, nor bird's milk) [Birkerti 1997: 69]. Here the images of father and mother are added to the inaccessible bird's milk – these are the things that cannot be bought, but everything else is in abundance.

Moscow is the most productive toponym in Russian proverbs. The other popular toponym in proverbs is the northern capital of Russia, St Petersburg. The dichotomy "Moscow – St Petersburg" is traditional for the Russian people's language consciousness, this is reflected in such proverbs as *Москва бьет с носка, а Петер бока повьтер* (Moscow hits off the toe, and St Petersburg rubs holes in the sides); *Москва создана веками, Петер – миллионами* (Moscow was built over centuries, Petersburg was built with millions); *Петер – голова, Москва – сердце* (St Petersburg is the head, Moscow is the heart); *Петер – кормило, Москва – корм* (St Petersburg is the helm, Moscow is the food). In the people's minds, Moscow is associated with the heart of Russia, since it has for centuries been and still is the Russian capital and at the same time is the opposite of home, provincial life: *Родная сторона краше Москвы* (The native

*land is better than Moscow*); *Говорят в Москве, а слушают во всей стране* (*They speak in Moscow but listen throughout the country*) [Ломакина 2018: 92].

The English proverb *The streets of London are paved with gold* traces its origin to the famous legend of Dick Whittington, a poor man who subsequently became Mayor of London. This 19<sup>th</sup> century story is in its turn based on the legend of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Apparently, already as early as that remote time the capital's splendour and wealth that had passed into the proverb as a gold pavement boggled the people's imagination. The German proverb *Auch in Danzig sind die Dächer mit Fladen nicht gedeckt* (*Even in Danzig not all roofs are covered with flatbreads* [Wander 1867: 571] uses flatbreads instead of gold tiles as a symbol of wealth (houses the roofs whereof are not covered with ordinary tiles but with flatbreads). This is not as impressive as streets paved with gold but the semantics attests to the fact that Danzig is undoubtedly rich, however, not all townspeople are equally well off.

The Lithuanian proverb *Tilžė – pinigų milžė* (*Tilsit is a cash pail*) [Patarles.dainutekstai.lt] implicitly expresses the semantics ***The city of X is rich***. Tilsit (at present the city of Sovetsk) is located in the Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation near the Lithuanian border. In the nineteenth century, the city was East Prussia's important economic and trading centre. Many trade routes came together there, and there were five languages used in the city. The city was well known to Lithuanians since they did their shopping there. The pail image hints at the milking process. Tilsit sort of milked people coming there with the money. In other words, the money was spent on shopping and remained in Tilsit, hence the city grew rich.

Another group of proverbs expresses the semantics likewise related to wealth but rather its reverse side, costliness. The semantics ***The city of X is rich*** is discernible in the Russian proverbs *В Москве толсто (часто, густо) звонят, да мало (редко, жидко) едят* (*In Moscow bells deeply (frequently, intensely) ring, but they scantily (rarely, thinly) eat*); *В Москву бресть (идти) – последнюю копейку (деньгу) несть* (*To take your way (to come) to Moscow is to bring your last kopeck (money)*) [БСРП 2010: 556, 557]. The first proverb points to the abundance of churches and at the same time costly life, particularly

for the visiting peasants. The second proverb states that life in the Russian capital involves big spending. Similar semantics can be noticed in the Lithuanian proverb: *Buvau Vilniui, buvau Kaune, atvažiavau nuoga šlaunia* (*I have been to Vilnius, have been to Kaunas, and have come back with bare haunches*) [Patarles.dainutekstai.lt]. Lithuania's main cities – Vilnius and Kaunas – are also seen as expensive, after a trip thereto people return unclad and lean. As regards St Petersburg, there is a Russian proverb with similar semantics: *Хорош город Пумер, да бока повытер* (*St Petersburg is a nice city, but the sides are worn out*) [БСПИ 2010: 663]. However, the German proverb *Ei Tempfeld verplempern se s Geld* (*They blow money in Tempfeld*) [Rother 1927: 403] may be taken to mean that people in Tempfeld like to spend money, or alternatively that the city itself is notable for its high prices.

Another group of proverbs describes people living in a certain city in relation to the money and wealth. For instance, the Lithuanian proverb *Kaunas kaukia – pinigų laukia* (*Kaunas is crying – pining for the money*) [Patarles.lt]. This proverb requires some comment, since the toponyms contain some extra culturological characteristics. For this reason, one should agree with O. V. Lomakina who notes, “It appears that when making new multilingual dictionaries of proverbs, entries should be complemented with detailed historical and cultural background information, the proverb linguoculturological ‘portrait’ formation, which will simplify intercultural communication” [Ломакина 2010: 217]. According to S. Lapinskas, there may be two interpretations of the proverb, “1) *kaukia* is related to the word mask (*kaukė*), i.e. the city residents wear a mask, under which lust for money is hidden); 2) *kaukia* is related to the word howl (*kaukti*), i.e. Kaunas residents howl like wolves, since they have only one wish – to get the money” [Бредис 2017: 140]. This proverb describes Kaunas residents as quite money-loving people.

The Latvian proverb *Rīgā laba dzīve, tikai nevajaga snaust* (*Life in Riga is good, only do not drowse off*) [LSDF: 208 1920] refers to Riga residents' resourcefulness. This is the city where one must actively work and must not stand gaping. We have already mentioned that in the East the city where one must not drowse and laze about is Baghdad. We have not found any men-

tion of this city among the reviewed proverbs with this semantics. However, let us cite e.g. Tabasaran proverbs with similar semantics: *ФукIара даранIди маш завузди дахъурин ушвниъ, Багъдатдиъра кмиди, псинчли кIатIрам уърхнийи, кIур.* – (They say that even in Baghdad if you do not do anything and lie gaping, a little bird will poop in your mouth) and *Дилхруриз багъдиъра адар, Багъдатдиъра* (There is nothing for the idle either in the garden or in Baghdad) [Гасанова 2015: 27, 314].

The old German proverb about Rome recorded by K. Wander [Wander 1867] characterises Catholic priests as regards their attitude towards money: *Wer mit vollen Beuteln kommt nach Rom hinein, der wird bald Abt oder Bischof sein* (He who will come to Rome with a wallet full of money, will soon become abbeey or a bishop). Among the French and Polish proverbs under study, we have not managed to find any with similar semantics, describing any city as rich or expensive. In the French Internet segment one may encounter expressions similar to proverbs, however, as a rule those are famous quotes, e.g. *Paris est la seule ville au monde où mourir de faim est encore considéré comme un art* (Paris is the only city in the world where death from starvation can be seen as art) [Qcitations]. This quotation belongs to the contemporary Spanish writer and composer Carlos Ruiz Zafón and cannot be viewed as a proverb.

The Finnish proverb *Rahat menivät kuin Kankkulan kaivoon* (The money is like gone into the Kankkula well) [Храмцова 2011: 103] speaks of wasted money. It is based on the toponymic phraseological unit *Kankkulan kaivo* (the Kankkula well). Back in the days a film titled *Kankkulan Kaivolla* (In the Kankkula well) was shot in Finland. Indeed, there is such a locality, the Kankkula farmstead in North Karelia (Eastern Finland). The thing is that in Old Finnish the word *kankku* was a neutral name for *bum*. If you know this, the meaning of the proverb becomes clear.

Another old Finnish proverb is an obvious contact parallel of the equivalent Russian proverb *Moskovassa lehmä kopeikan maksaa, tänne tuodessa sata ruplaa* (In Moscow a cow costs kopecks but here a hundred roubles) [Храмцова 2011: 174]. It is marked in the dictionary as rarely used. Its difference from the Russian proverb *За морем телушка полушка, да рубль перевоз* (A calf is worth a quarter-kopeck piece overseas, but ship-

*ment is one rouble*) is the use of the place name Moscow and other (but also Russian) monetary units.

Proverbs containing place names and related to trade and economy can be singled out as a separate group: Rus. *В Тулу со своим самоваром не ездят* (*They do not travel to Tula with own samovar*) [БСПП 2010: 917]; Eng. *Don't carry coals to Newcastle, To send coals to Newcastle* [Wordsworth 2006: 104]. Fin. *Ei kanneta lunta Lappiin* (*Do not bring snow to Lapland*) [Храмцова 2011: 160]. However, the Finnish proverb is marked in the dictionary as rarely used.

In addition, in many European languages the ancient Greek proverb with a place name *κομίζω γλαύκας εις Ἀθήνας* (*To carry owls to Athens*) is used. It goes back to the famous comedy "The Birds" by Aristophanes, in which an Athenian named Euelpides asks: "And who is it who brings an owl to Athens?" [Aristophanes]. This is already funny. Indeed, in the Athenian acropolis, there were a lot of owls. Owls lived in quiet corners and were considered a symbol of knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, the patroness of Athens, the goddess of wisdom, Athena, in ancient times was represented as an owl. It is no coincidence that one of its epithets *γλαυκῶπις* can be translated as "owl-eyed" [Античность 1989: 534]. In addition, the image of an owl was minted on Athenian coins, and people called these coins "owls". The city was so rich that in a certain period Athenians did not pay taxes there. In Athens, there was no shortage of owls as well as money. Since then, the image of the owl entered the proverb *To carry owls to Athens* with the meaning *To do something redundant, or futile* [Mieder 2013: 70]. It is used in German, English and several other languages: Ger. *Eulen nach Athen tragen*; Eng. *To carry owls to Athens* [Mieder 1984]. In Polish, this expression is also used: *Nosić sowy do Aten* [Prędotą 1986]. The works of many scholars are devoted to the proverb *To carry owls to Athens* ([Bergmann 2007], [Földes 1989], [Piiirainen 2002], [Williams 1986], and others).

In other cases, this semantics as a rule is expressed without reference to toponymy, e.g. Ger. *Wasser ins Meer tragen* (*Bring water to the sea*), Pol. *Wody do morza nie wozi się* (*Do not bring water to the sea*), *Drzewa do lasu nie wozi się* (*Do not bring wood to the forest*) [Stypuła 1974: 29], Fr. *Montrer le soleil avec un flambeau* (*To show the sun with a torch*), *Porter de l'eau à la*

*mer (Bring water to the sea)*[Arthaber 1989: 554], Taj. *Гул ба бӯстон бурдан (Bring flowers to the flower garden)* [Калонтаров 1965: 150], etc. Likewise, in Russian there are proverbs *В лес дрова не возят. В лес дров не возят, а в колодец воду не льют (One does not take wood to the forest. One does not take wood to the forest, nor pours water into the well).*

What is interesting is that in Tajik and Persian there is a relatively large number of similar trade proverbs containing place names. The Tajik proverb *Лаъл ба Бадахшон бурдан (Bring rubies to Badakhshan)* mentions *лаъл (ruby)* [Калонтаров 1965: 150]. In actual fact, *лаъл* is not a ruby, but spinel. In ancient times, they could not tell spinel from ruby and garnet. Badakhshan, Pamir historic region, is located in eastern Tajikistan and northeastern Afghanistan. This region is famous for its pink spinel known in Europe since the times of Marco Polo who visited the Pamir mines and wrote of beautiful rubies. Another Tajik proverb *Гавҳар ба Уммон бурдан (Take pearls to Oman)* [Калонтаров 1965: 150] speaks of the pointlessness of carrying pearls to the Sultanate of Oman located in the southeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Even these days many residents of Oman pursue the ancient trade of pearl fishing. Yet another Tajik proverb *Филфил ба Ҳиндустон бурдан (To bring black pepper to India)* states that one should not take this spice to the place where it grows.

Thus, the comparison of a number of groups of proverbs containing city names and other place names shows significant semantic similarity of proverbs in the languages under study with different means of imagery used. Many such proverbs were primarily recorded in the 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Proverbs about wealth and money containing toponyms make up an important culturological layer, since toponyms denote unique geographic localities having their own history and representing some or other characteristic features for the native speakers. Proverb toponyms carry a national component. However, despite the rich stock of toponyms reflecting geographic localities of any given country, it becomes apparent that proverbs are international in character, which makes it possible to treat them as universals and group them according to their semantics.

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