

LATVIANS', LATGALIANS' AND RUSSIANS' PAREMIAS ABOUT LIFE

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the analysis of 95 Latgalian and Russian paremias (proverbs, sayings, comparisons, and idioms), the bulk of which are proverbs. The entire corpus of the Russian paremias analysed contains more than 7,000 units. All of them were recorded by Jeļena Koroļova in the period 1977–2018 from the Old Believers of Latgale (they appeared in Latgale after the Church Schism of 1666) and in the period 1970–2015 – from the Orthodox living in Pytalovo (that territory was part of the first Latvian Republic from the 1920s to the 1940s). In order to compare them with Latvian proverbs, folklore collections, phraseological dictionaries, the dictionary compiled by Bernadeta Opincāne, as well as works of the Latvian folklorist Elza Kokare have been used. Modern Latgalian proverbs have been collected in recent years by Oksana Kovzele.

In the research development, the techniques of comparative paremiology have been used to determine the existence of the two nations' traditions in the comparative aspect.

Paremias, proverbs above all, reflect the interaction of cultures and languages in the religious, national and regional aspects. The interaction of cultures in the sphere of the existence of paremias is of a two-sided nature. Borrowed proverbs testify to the fact that culture is a unifying factor for different ethnic groups living in the same state. The origins of popular conceptions of philosophical understanding of life should be sought either in Christianity or in the mythological views of ancient people.

Keywords: proverbs, paremias, variants, feature, adjective, comparisons, dialectal words

INTRODUCTION

In the era of the priority of anthropological research, interest in proverbs as a source of popular wisdom is quite natural. Proverbs summarize popular beliefs and opinions as the result of the people's intuitive philosophy and centuries-old everyday experience. It should be added that most often a proverb has a rhythmically organized and rhymed structure, which contributes to its acquisition, even if it is borrowed, which is important for the oral acquisition of paremias, as is our case.

Proverbs may be either figurative or literal. Most often, literal proverbs serve only for edification and teaching, while figurative ones – apart from edification and teaching, are poetic means of decorating speech, i.e. they perform aesthetic and poetic functions. At the same time, proverbs may have mutually exclusive meanings thus reflecting the dialectic of real life, different views on the same events and situations of representatives of various social groups of a society.

A proverb is a judgment; it is built according to the rules of logic; that is why proverbs always have the structure of a sentence.

Proverbs function as concise texts because there is some sort of life situation behind them. Proverbs are signs of situations, i.e. they have semiotic meanings. At the same time, "the very situations refer to all proverbs that designate them as invariants to their variants" (Jankovichova 2008, 432). Moreover, proverbs are a way of "storing and transmitting culturally significant information" (Semenenko 2008, 404), i.e. they act as culturally significant signs. They are an important element in the definition of folk consciousness and psychology, although, of course, they can hardly be considered a textbook on folk psychology. However, they adequately reflect the worldview of a dialect society.

The main function of proverbs is the pragmatic one, "Пословица к слову молвится" [the proverb is called forth by the word]. Proverbs may be considered a kind of code of a people's life. They "are not created, but are compelled by force of circumstances" (Dal' 1984, 11). Svetlana Tolstaja holds that proverbs and sayings "preserve the relative freedom of the pragmatic goal: depending on the situation, one and the same proverb may be a reproach, a consolation, a moral, a justification, a prescription, a piece of advice, etc." (Tolstaja 2008, 56–57). Edification is an important property of proverbs. They are

“both moral law and common sense expressed in a brief maxim, which ancestors bequeathed as instructions for their descendants” (Buslaev 1854, 37). Exactly because they perform the function of prohibition and prescription within the transfer of accumulated knowledge, abilities and skills to future generations, proverbs are widely distributed and used in dialectal discourse. We are interested in the folklore discourse of the Russians and the Latgalians living together in Latgale since the end of the seventeenth century, after the appearance of migration flows of the Russian Old Believers fleeing persecution for their faith from within the Russian state. At that time, the territory of today’s Latgale was part of the Polish state of Rzeczpospolita, which then urgently needed an influx of human resources due to the war and the plague epidemic.

In this paper, we study the paremias, but the main focus is on proverbs. Thus, the study involves a wider range of phenomena (not only proverbs) with common pragmatics. These are proverbs and sayings, maxims and aphorisms, phraseology and comparative constructions. Thus, an important aspect of paremiological studies within the comparative analysis of languages is the search for invariants, or “universal atoms of meaning” (Anna Wiezhibicka), on the basis of which they are combined into common blocks, thematic groups, and parallels (Elza Kokare). This approach allows for the identification of the common, the universal, the typological and the specific national in the paremias of two peoples.

The source of the research is the material collected by the authors from the Russians and the Latgalians in Latgale, as well as the published sources on Latgalian, Latvian and Russian materials. The Russian material has been recorded by Jeļena Koroļova since 1970 in Pytalovo and since 1977 – in Latgale. This material demonstrates paremias as they are used in real life. In addition, we make use of Lithuanian Old Believers’ proverbs (these also are Old Believers – Bespopovtsy of the Pomeranian branch of the same migration flow as the Old Believers of Latgale), since they are recorded in Zarasai, which is located about 30 kilometres from Daugavpils. Live Latgalian material has been recorded nowadays by Oksana Kovzele. The Russian respondents from today’s Latgale are Old Believers, but the respondents from Pytalovo, which was part of Latgale in the period 1920–1940, are Orthodox; the Latvians, whose proverbs have been extracted from the monographs by Elza Kokare, are in most cases Protestants; the Latgalians representing the main population of Latgale are Catholics. In addition, we use published sources, from which we have extracted the material recorded in different years throughout the territory of Latvia, including also Latgale. Thus, we

combine written and oral sources recorded from Russians, Latgalians and Latvians, Orthodox, Old Believers, Catholics and Protestants, which have been collected nowadays and at the end of the twentieth century, the sources published in the past, as well as very recent ones.

In recent studies (Bobkina 2010; Orlova, Kolosova, Medvedev, Barov 2018, and others), proverbs and sayings are mainly considered as language elements, in which the particularities of thinking, cultural experience and the system of values of a separate society are presented in a concentrated form. Such an approach makes it possible to distinguish and analyse the fundamental concepts (spatial, temporal, and anthropological) on the basis of the material under study. A number of studies touch upon the issue of borrowing and influences (Iakovleva and Nikolaeva 2016), as well as offer a comparative-contrastive analysis of proverbs and sayings, as a rule, by using the example of two unrelated languages (Ionescu 2017; Mosiashvili 2015, and others).

The study has been developed by using the techniques of comparative paremiology, designed to determine, if possible, the genesis and the existence of the folklore tradition of two peoples in a comparative aspect. The authors attempt to trace the historical-genetic and contact parallels of the paremias of two peoples. Such an approach is found in the works of Boris Putilov (the development of the methodology of comparative folklore; Putilov 1976) and Elza Kokare (the comparative historical study of Latvian paremias, the nature of international parallels and national paremias and their share in the common repertoire of Latvian paremias; Kokare 1978, 1988), the representatives of the paremiological school of Valeriy Mokienko (the comparative study and lexicographical description of the paremias of different nations; Mokienko 2008).

“TO LIVE A LIFE IS NOT AS TO SEW A SACK”

Man and the surrounding world appear in the proverbs of Latvians and Russians in a very multifaceted way. The philosophical view of life is presented in proverbs with the keyword *life*. The maxim *life is difficult* is reflected in the Latvian-Russian parallel: “Mūžu dzīvot ne maisu šūt” [to live a life is not as to sew a sack] (Niedre and Ozols 1955, 281). A calque from the Latvian language is fixed in J. Koroljova’s “Dialektnyj slovar’ odnoj sem’i – 2”: “Да, жизнь прожить – не мех шить” [yes, to live a life is not as to sew a sack], “Век сжить – не мех шить” [to live a life is not as to sew a sack] (the dialectal мех – ‘sack’) (Koroljova 2013, 97). The proverb is wide-

spread in the Russian oral use in the territory of Russia and is very popular in all strata of society, but it is known in another variant: “Жизнь прожить – не поле перейти” [to live a life is not to cross a field]. The widespread use of this proverb by the Russians in Russia makes it possible to consider this particular variant as the primary source. The comparison with other variants widespread in the whole space of Russian folklore allows for the identification of four stages corresponding to the main periods of the human life cycle. First, these are simple housekeeping concerns related to the home: weaving *lapti* (‘bast shoes’), sewing, and cooking: “Жизнь изжить – не лапоть сплести” [to live a life is not to weave a bast shoe] (Dal’ 1984, 225); “Жиру вести – не лапоть плести” [to keep the house is not to weave a bast shoe] (Nefedova 2008, 220); “Век изжить – не рукавицей тряхнуть” [to live a life is not to shake a mitten] (Dal’ 1984, 225); “Жизнь прожить – не мех сшить” [to live a life is not to sew a sack]; “Жизнь прожить – не ниткой шить” [to live a life is not to stitch a thread] (Kartoteka...); “Жить – не лукошко шить” [to live is not to craft a basket] (Anikin 1988, 99); “Жизнь прожить – не сермягу (‘caftan of coarse homespun cloth’) пошить” [to live a life is not to sew a caftan] (Gudonene 2007, 385); “Жизнь прожить – не мутовку (‘a whisk for whipping sour cream’) облизать” [to live a life is not to lick a whisk] (Anikin 1988, 99).

Second, there are activities outside the home, focused on the locus typical for a peasant farmer – a field: “Жизнь прожить – не поле перейти, не поле переехать, не поле перебежать, не в поле ехать, не поле ехать” [to live a life is not to cross a field, not to drive over a field, not to run over a field, not to go to/into the field] (Kartoteka...). All of these are variants of the prototypical proverb of the whole nation “Жизнь прожить – не поле перейти” [to live a life is not to cross a field]. The great number of variants testifies to the high degree of frequency of the use of the proverb. Field has a specific semantic function in the organization of the folklore space (cited from Bajburin 2005, 18). Let us recall Russian folk tales, spells, and songs in which the epic part of the narrative often unfolds in an open field.

Third, the Arkhangelsk proverb “Жизнь прожить – не волок переехать” [to live a life is not to cross a portage] (the space between water bodies, along which boats and cargo are dragged over the ground) (Kartoteka...). Here, it is the semantics of transition that is important.

Fourth, crossing a body of water: “Жизнь прожить – не реку брести” [to live a life is not to wade across a river] (Kartoteka...); “Жизнь прожить – не море переплыть” [to live a life is not to cross

the sea] (Zimin and Spirin 2006, 150). Villages were usually located on the banks of rivers. In addition, the path to the underworld in European culture is associated with crossing an underground river. Besides, water organizes the folklore space, too.

Thus, the sphere of life is the spatial area between one's home, a field, a path to water and a river, the crossing of which marks the end of the life cycle. The four loci of the proverb correspond to the four age periods of human life: childhood (1), mature age (2), elderly (3), old age and death (4) (Koroļova 2008, 58–60).

Latgalian compare a human's life cycle with different moments of the day and it consists of three stages: "Reitam cereiba, dinai dorbs, vokoram mīrs" [hope – for the morning, work – for the day, rest – for the evening] (Opincāne 2000, 66). For this reason there are so many proverbs with the lexeme *day* in Latgalian folklore, for example: "Kotrai dīnai sovas ryupes" [each day has its own concerns] (Opincāne 2000, 38); "Kotrai dīnai sovs vārds" [each day has its own name] (Opincāne 2000, 38); "Kotrai dīnai sova nakts" [each day has its own night] (Opincāne 2000, 38); "Nav dīnas bez nakts" [there is no day without night] (Opincāne 2000, 53); "Kotra dīna nav svātdīne" [not every day is Sunday] (Opincāne 2000, 38), etc.

The same range includes also the association of life with the seasons, which, according to mythological conceptions, were two – *winter* and *summer*. In Latgalian proverbs, the transitional seasons are particularly significant, i.e. spring and autumn, which are very important for farmers. "Pavasars sūla – rudiņš izpylda" [spring promises, autumn performs] (Opincāne 2000, 62). That is why exactly these seasons are also often featured in Latgalian proverbs. "Rudinī i bōba gudra, pavasarī i vecs duraks" [in the autumn even a woman is smart, in the spring, even an old man is a fool] (Opincāne 2000, 67); "Rudinī ganeņš gudrōks par orōju pavasarī" [in autumn a young shepherd is smarter than a ploughman in the spring] (Opincāne 2000, 67). A strong member of the opposition is *autumn*: "Rudiņš – myusu barōtōjs" [autumn is our breadwinner] (Opincāne 2000, 67); "Rudiņteņš – bogōts veirs" [autumn is a rich man] (Opincāne 2000, 67).

The conceptions about life are based on binary oppositions. Life is inextricably linked with death: "Молодой ждѣт жизни, а старый – могилы" [a young man is waiting for life, an old man – for the grave] (Shifrisova). The conceptions about life are related not only to the opposition of life and death, but also to the opposition of the younger generation to the older generation.

One observes also the opposition of the sky (sacred space) and the earth, which is associated with a farmer's everyday life.

“Na ar debesim ļaudis dzeivoj, bet ar dorbu” [people don’t live by heaven, but rather by work] (Opincāne 2000, 53). The main appeal to work is contained in the proverb “Nu zyļa gaisa nivīns navar dzeivōt” [none can live from the blue air] (Opincāne 2000, 59). The Russian parallel sounds like this: “Воздухом сыт не будешь” [you can’t be satiated with air], therefore “Dorbs dora dzeivi soldu, slynkums – ryugtu” [work makes life sweet, laziness makes it bitter] (Opincāne 2000, 16); “Syuram dorbam soldi augli” [hard work brings sweet fruit] (Opincāne 2000, 68). Thus, the proverb “Reitam cereiba, dīnai dorbs, vokoram mīrs” [hope – for the morning, work – for the day, rest – for the evening] (Opincāne 2000, 66) determines the vector of man’s vital interests throughout the whole of their life. Each of the vectors is represented by a huge number of paremias, but in this research paper we will not dwell upon them.

The life code can be briefly reduced to several postulates. Every person has their own destiny, every person lives their own way and occupies their own social niche in society. In the linguistic structure of paremias, this is manifested in the frequency of the presence of the possessive pronoun *свой* (one’s own (his, her, their)): “Kotram sova dzeive jōdzeivoj” [every man has to live his own life] (Opincāne 2000, 37); “Nivīns nu sova liktiņa naizbēgs” [nobody will escape their fate] (Opincāne 2000, 57); “Na pēc vīnas receptes dzeivojam” [we don’t live according to one recipe] (Opincāne 2000, 54); “Na vysim putnenim vīnā bērztolā dzīdōt” [not all birds will sing in the same birch grove] (Opincāne 2000, 54); “Nu vōrnas laksteigolas naiztaiseisi” [you can’t make a nightingale out of a crow] (Opincāne 2000, 59); “Palākam putnam palāka dzīsmē” [a grey bird has a grey song] (Opincāne 2000, 62).

However, in every person’s life there is a place for happiness: “Nav dzeives bez laimes” [there is no life without happiness] (Opincāne 2000, 53); “Kotram mōkūņam ir sova sudorba maleņa” [every cloud has a silver brim lining] (Opincāne 2000, 38).

There is a call to an ascetic way of life encountered: “Ēd syuru, dzer skōbu, tod i zemē napyusi” [eat bitter, drink sour, then you won’t rot in earth] (Opincāne 2000, 19). “Āt speķi, vairōk spāka byus” [eat lard and you’ll have more strength] (Krāslava district, Skaista). In Russian folklore, there is a corresponding proverb “Живи просто – выживёшь лет со ста” [live simply, then you will live to a hundred] (Dal’ 1984, 544); “Живи просто – проживёшь лет со ста” [live simply and you’ll live a hundred years] (Blagova 2000, 114).

Life is diverse; in the Latgalian proverbs, the main means of organizing this diversity of life in paremias is a *feature*, primarily an

adjective as a part of speech, which is specifically designed to convey the semantics of the feature. Taking into account that the “identification, comparison, classification and evaluation of objects are performed by means of features; and feature is the most important tool for the acquisition and categorization of the world” (Tolstaja 2002, 8), this is quite natural. In the oral use among the Russians, there is a common expression “Жизнь в полоску: то чёрная полоса, то белая” [life is striped; a black stripe is followed by a white one]; “Это всё в жизни переплетено – чёрное, белое” [all in life is intertwined – black, white] (Daugavpils). It is echoed by the Latgalian proverb “Myužā joredz gon boltas, gon naboltas dīnas” [one should see both white and black days in life] (Opincāne 2000, 51). Nouns can enter into antonymic relations, too: “Dīvs laidis cylvāku pasaulē prikim un bādom” [God let man into the world for joy and misery] (Opincāne 2000, 15). In the opposition *black* – *white*, the strong member of the opposition is *black*. Contextually, *black* is synonymous to the adjective *heavy/hard*: “Gryutas dīnas par akmini gryutōkas” [heavy days are heavier than a stone] (Opincāne 2000, 21) and the adjective with the meaning of taste *syurs* (‘bitter’): “Myužs syurs kai vērmeles” [life is as bitter as wormwood] (Opincāne 2000, 51).

In Latvian paremias, the main property of life, i.e. its diversity, is transmitted by the keyword *raibs* – ‘motley, colourful’. There are several variants of such proverbs: “Cilvēka mužs raibs kā pupas zieds” [human life is as motley as a bean’s flower]; “Cylvāka myužs raibs kai dzeņa vāders” [man’s life is as colourful as the woodpecker’s belly] (Opincāne 2000, 12); “Cilvēka mūžs tik raibs kā dzenis” [human life is as colourful as a woodpecker] (Niedre and Ozols 1955, 45), “Dzenis raibs, bet cilveka mūžs vēl raibāks” [a woodpecker is colourful, but man’s life is more colourful] (Niedre and Ozols 1955, 282), “Dzeņš raibs – cylvāka myužs vēl raibōks” [the woodpecker is colourful – human life is even more colourful] (Opincāne 2000, 17); “Mūsu dzīvība raibāka nekā puķu ziedi” [our life is more colourful than ablooming flower] (Niedre and Ozols 1955, 64); “Dzīve raiba kā cimds” [life is as colourful as a mitten] (Niedre and Ozols 1955, 282), “Nekur neiet tik raibi kā pasaulē” [nowhere is more colourful than in the world] (Niedre, Ozols 1955, 282). However, the national specificity is most vividly reflected in the proverb “Dzīve raiba kā cimds” [life is as colourful as a mitten], because Latvian mittens are knit with a national ornament of multi-coloured threads. In this case, the folk motive is confirmed at the level of the object code.

In Latgale, Elza Kokare has recorded the following proverbs with the lexeme *raibs* (‘motley, colourful, speckled’): “Vai viens suns

vien raibs!" [Is only one dog speckled!] (Daugavpils, Ilūkste); "Vai viens vien suns raibs!" [Is only one dog speckled!]; "Na tev vīnam raiba gūvs" [not only you have a spotted cow] (Rēzekne) (Kokare 1988, 216). A proverb recorded from the Latgalians in Latgale "Jo raibōks, jo smukōks" [the more colourful, the more beautiful] (Opincāne 2000, 28) includes an aesthetic component, which makes it possible to conclude that proverbs with the word *raibs* reflect the national specificity of the Latvian proverbial discourse, because the national component is reflected in proverbs with an aesthetic component.

In the Russian dialectal language and the urban colloquial speech in Latgale, the word *рябый* ('speckled') is frequently encountered in the oral use. The word is of Indo-European origin. Its preservation in the dialect language of the Old Believers of Latgale is apparently supported by the Latvian and the Lithuanian languages, including the mentioned paremias: "Рябые такие (олени)" [So speckled (deer)] (Rēzekne district, Zuji); "Коровки такие сортовые – все рябые, все рябые" [cows are so pedigree – all speckled, all speckled] (Rēzekne district, Malta); "Не люблю эти рябые тряпки" [I do not like these speckled rags] (Daugavpils). A derivative of this adjective is recorded in the name of the cow *Рябёха*: "Одна была с цепью – Рябёха" [only one had a chain – Ryabyoha] (Rēzekne district, Zuji). However, the dialect word *рябый* ('speckled') does not occur in the Russian proverbial discourse; instead, the antonymous pair of colour adjectives is used *white – black*, which has a symbolic evaluative meaning. This testifies to the selectivity of the language of culture.

In Russian, paremias about life may overlap with other genres of folklore, primarily songs. Life itself can be compared with a song: "Жизнь прожил, как песню сложил" [one lived his life as if composed a song] (Gudonene 2007, 385); with a road: "Вот и жизнь вихлястая, как дорога" [life is twisty like a road] (Daugavpils); with snow: "Век прошёл, как снег сошёл" [the life passed as the snow melted] (Gudonene 2007, 385); with a wheel: "Вот жизнь-то как идёт, разным колесом она идёт" [this is how the life goes, it goes with a different wheel] (Preiļi district, Shnitkino); "Эта жизнь так и идёт, как в телеге колесо крутится" [this life goes on like the wheel spins in a cart] (Rēzekne district, Malta), "Жизнь как колесо катится и по воде, и по грязи" [life spins as a wheel, both by water and mud] (Gudonene 2007, 414); with the vortex ('whirlpool, swirling movement of air'): "Жизнь коловертью крутится – тяжело жить стало" [life is spinning – it has become hard to live] (Eglaine), with a raspberry: "Жизнь – не малина" [life is not a raspberry] (Līvāni);

with a river: “Жизнь быстро проходит, года текут рекой” [life passes quickly, years flow like a river] (Koroļova); with the sea: “Жизнь прожить, что море переплыть: побарахтаешься – и ко дну” [to live a life is like swimming across the sea: you flounder a bit – and to the bottom] (Fjodorovs 2008, 98); with flowers: “Я гляжу на него: ну как цветок цветёт, а ещё эта военная вся блестит, и все награды наденет, чтоб погордиться” [I’m looking at him: he’s blooming like a flower, and that military uniform is all shiny, and all the awards are put on to boast and take pride] (Preiļi district, Sanauža); with a ladder: “Живёт человек – что денёк, то ниже – что по лестнице” [thus man lives – with every day lower – as if by a ladder] (Preiļi district, Sanauža); with a sack and a poke (торба – ‘bag, package’, borrowed from Polish): “Всяко на веку наживёшься – в торбы и в меху” [one sees everything in life – both poverty and wealth] (Koroļova 2013, 152); with sleep: “Как во сне живём, а на яву умрём” [we live as if in a dream, but we’ll die in reality] (Gudonene 2007, 387), “Дети, не жалеите, кто долго живёт, то самое: 105 лет отжил, а что я видел, что раньше, как сон прошёл” [children, do not pity the one who lives for a long time, the very thing: I have lived 105 years, and what have I seen, it passed like a dream] (Krāslava district, Kalishevo); with a drawbar (‘a wooden rod for attaching a plough to the shafts’): “Жизнь как дышло, куда повернул, туда и вышло, сама понимаешь” [life is like a drawbar, where you turn it, there it goes, you understand it] (Daugavpils). This proverb is an alteration of the widespread Russian proverb “Закон, что дышло: куда повернул, туда и вышло” [law is like a drawbar: where you turn it, there it goes] (cf. every law has a loophole). The Old Believers’ life is strictly regulated; therefore it is connected with the law, i.e. the system of prohibitions and instructions. And the following paremia sounds as a testament to the descendants: как Иисус Христос должно жить староверу – ‘an Old Believer must live as Jesus Christ’: “Старовер должен жить, как Иисус Христос” [Old Believer should live like Jesus Christ] (Daugavpils district, Judovka).

Figurative comparisons of life with a *wheel*, *raspberries*, *a song*, *a field flower* (about a girl), *a dream* (Mokienko 2003, 177, 234, 315, 473, 406–407) have become stereotypes in Russian.

Comparisons are not so numerous among Latgalians. They rarely intersect with Russian paremias. A happy life is as if in the ear of God, or of a bear: “Dzeivoj kai Dīva ausī” [lives as if in God’s ear] (Opincāne 2000, 18); “Dzeivoj kai lōča ausī” [lives as if in a bear’s ear] (Opincāne 2000, 18); like a thumb in fat: “Dzeivoj kai eikss taukūs” [lives as if a thumb in the fat] (Opincāne 2000, 18); as

if a bird on a branch: “Dzeivoj kai putyns iz zora” [lives as if a bird on a branch] (Opincāne 2000, 18); as if in fog: “Dzeive it kai pa myglu” [life goes on as if in fog] (Opincāne 2000, 18); as if in sheep’s wool: “Dzeivoj kai pa jāra vylnu” [lives as if in a lamb’s wool] (Opincāne 2000, 18); “Dzeivoj uz cyta rēkina kai vuts vuškas vylnā” [lives at the expense of another, as if a louse in sheep’s wool] (Opincāne 2000, 18); like being naked in nettle: “Dzeivoj kai plyks pa nōtrem” [lives as if naked in nettle] (Opincāne 2000, 18); like a rose garden: “Dzeive nav rūžu dōrzs” [life is not a rose garden] (Opincāne 2000, 18); like a potato field: “Dzeive ir lels kartupeļu lauks, kas lelōks cyuka, tys vairōk izrūk” [life is a big field of potatoes, who is a big pig, he digs more] (Opincāne 2000, 18); like wormwood: “Myužs syurs kai vērmeles” [life is bitter like wormwood] (Opincāne 2000, 51).

It is obvious that the paremias of the two nations have almost no common points of contact. The exceptions are the paremias “Live like in God’s bosom” (Rus.) – “Like in God’s ear” (Latg.); “Like in a dream” (Rus.) – “Like in fog” (Latg.). However, these comparisons of the two peoples are based on archetypal images. These figurative comparisons have conceptual meaning and at the same time they reflect the concrete life of peasants and the dialect society’s philosophical-aesthetic attitude to life.

CONCLUSION

The origins of popular conceptions of philosophical understanding of life should be sought either in Christianity (“Dīvs laidis cylvāku pasaulē priķim un bādom” [God let a man into the world for joy and misery]; “Старовер должен жить, как Исус Христос” [an Old Believer should live like Jesus Christ]), or in the ancient people’s mythological views. The analysis of the proverbial specifics allows for the identification of the ancient mythological foundations of the worldview of contacting peoples who have been living in the same territory since the seventeenth century, because the mythological is inseparable from everyday life. Proverbs provide a spiritual link between myth, language and culture.

The prototype of the whole series of proverbs about life is the Russian proverb “Жизнь прожить – не поле перейти” [to live a life is not to cross a field], occurring among the Russians of Latgale in the Latgalian variant “Жизнь прожить – не мех сшить” [to live a life is not to sew a sack]. In the light of mythological conceptions, the prototypical proverb reflects man’s entire life cycle from birth to

death. The proverb has three corresponding proverbs in Latgalian. One proverb represents life from the point of view of a Latgalian peasant who traditionally is engaged in potato cultivation and pig breeding: “Dzeive ir lels kartupeļu lauks, kas lelōks cyuka, tys vairōk izrūk” [life is a big potato field; who is a big pig, he digs more] (Opincāne 2000, 18); the second compares human life with the key points of the division of a day – morning, noon and evening: “Reitam cereiba, dīnai dorbs, vokoram mīrs” [hope – for the morning, work – for the day, rest – for the evening] (Opincāne 2000, 66); and the third – with two seasons – spring and autumn: “Pavasars sūla – rudiņš izpylda” [spring promises, autumn performs] (Opincāne 2000, 62). Thus, according to the mythological conceptions, man’s life cycle may be divided into four – three – two segments. The proverbs discussed are the expression of the global popular ideologems that lie in the basis of the Balto-Slavic folk calendar, which testifies to the linearity and cyclicity of life time in the conception of the Balts and the Slavs.

Feature is an important component of the numerous paremias about life in Latgalian folklore. The Latgalian paremias about life manifest binary oppositions of the archaic worldview: *black – white*, *bitter – sweet*, *old – young* and *life – death*, *sky – earth*, *day – night*, *spring – autumn*, *work – laziness*, *joy – trouble*, and *nightingale – crow*. In general, they feature the symbolism traditional for European culture.

An example of a feature that organizes the folklore space of the Latgalian proverb is the semantically saturated lexeme *raibs* (‘motley, colourful’). It is the neutralizing member of the opposition *black – white* and at the same time it carries specifically national senses, expressed at the level of the zoomorphic (*woodpecker*, *flowers*, *beans*) and the object (*mittens*) codes. The diversity of the life of both nations is demonstrated in figurative comparisons (another embodiment of the feature), though having a few parallels, but in both cultures they express conceptual meaning and reflect the philosophical and aesthetic attitudes of each dialect society to life in general.

Images of paremias are typical of a dialect society: this is the surrounding world of animals, plants, peasant life and human production activities. It is in this sphere that lexical dialectisms are often used. In some proverbs, there predominates specific vocabulary, in others – abstract vocabulary. Abstract vocabulary forms a layer of literal paremias, the main purpose of which is edification.

Definite vocabulary forms figurative paremias with vivid visual images, possessing figurative potential; it develops metaphorical

meanings that allow the conveying of allegorical meanings. In Latgalian proverbs, adjectives are often used to create imagery. Antonyms with pronounced evaluative symbolism may be used as well. In addition, Latgalian proverbs may contain contextual compatibility of adjectives and nouns: "Pēc dorba i maizeite solda" [after work even bread is sweet] (Opincāne 2000, 62). Colour adjectives that are not typical of Balto-Slavic folklore: *rose garden*, *blue air*, *silver cloud* refer to the sphere of the sublime. At the other extreme one finds a *grey bird singing grey songs*. The repetition has an intensifying meaning; tautology is typical of Latgalian paremias: "Gryutas dienas par akmini gryutōkas" [heavy days are heavier than a stone] (Opincāne 2000, 21). However, the choice has been made by a person, because "Kotram sova dzeive jōdzeivoj" [everyone has to live his own life] (Opincāne 2000, 37).

Latgalian and Russian paremias about life have a pronounced national character. This is confirmed by the previous studies by Elza Kokare (Kokare 1978, 167). These paremias reflect the interaction and the opposition of cultures and languages in the national and the regional aspects and their commonality in historical and genetic terms.

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Archive materials

Kartoteka i arhiv Arhangel'skogo oblastnogo slovarja, hranjashhajasja v kabinetu dialektologii Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta im. M. V. Lomonosova.