



RHGT, Vol. XVII, Issues 32-33, pp. 53-64

## **DO ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME? PLACE NAMES AND LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS IN ROMANIAN, HUNGARIAN AND GERMAN PROVERBS AND SAYINGS**

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***Abstract:** Proverbs and sayings seem to be some of the most fascinating defining elements of national identity, as they store centuries-old popular wisdom, but also the native humor of people. Among them, a special place is occupied by those that appeal to placenames and landscape elements. These proverbs and sayings resort to the quality of the toponyms, the connotations they bear and developed in the course of the history of certain regions and people. They tap the symbolic power and the capacity of the place names to activate imaginations and emotions, imposing positive or negative connotations on the phraseological structures. This comparative study applies a content analysis on the proverbs with place names in Hungarian, Romanian and German, aiming to identify constants and differences that exist between the proverb material of the three surveyed languages. Our objective is to illustrate common threads and motifs, but also to point out singularities and particular elements in the cultural heritage of the different languages and their geographical proverbs.*

***Key words:** proverbs, content analysis, toponyms, comparative study*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Geographical names are not only linguistic expressions which convey accurate location-based information and reflect spatial characteristics, they have meanings, symbols, historical and social values attached (Helleland, Ore & Wikstrom 2012). Place names are a distinguished component of our cultural heritage in that they not only recount us something about the place to which they refer (Helleland, Ore & Wikstrom 2012), but they are also condensed narratives about the name-giving community, about their worldviews, their intellectual practices and their ways of living (Hausner 2017), their cultural, political, social and economic constitution and interests, and on their relation with their environment (Jordan 2016; Hausner 2017; Helleland, Ore & Wikstrom 2012). Place names are the memory of the essence of the name givers (Hausner 2017), they are a vital part of the individual and collective memory, they are some of the most steady national symbols and significant traits of national and territorial identity (Helleland, Ore & Wikstrom 2012).

Jordan defines toponymy as the “unwritten history of a people, a real archive where the memory of so many events, facts and scenes is being kept more or less old or important, which happened over time and impressed in a certain way the popular soul” (Jordan 1963, 2). Similar to the toponyms, proverbs and sayings carry culturally important information (Yusupova & Kuzmina 2015) and have a complex relationship with folklore (Harte 2019). The brief, witty, and at times cryptic or allegorical sentences or phrases reproduce bits of folk wisdom, values and beliefs of the community (Yusupova & Kuzmina 2015), a certain experience and common sense, universal truths in a neat and catchy form (Dueck 2004; Mashunina 2019; Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga 2015; Mieder 2004). Because of their mostly vernacular origin, for centuries proverbs and sayings preserve various facts passed from generation to generation, often reflecting ancient historical experience and preserving traces of past events and periods, making them relicts of the past unharmed by time (Dueck 2004).

The proverbs convey to the readers pieces of local information, whether historical or geographical (Dueck 2004; Mieder 2004). The traditional sayings permit their users to comment on, typify and assess new situations with the help of known social stereotypes (Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga 2015). Numerous sayings are connected to certain locations and so these place-names become proverbial for particular situations, human features and natural conditions. Thus, the respective event and the specific trait become models and examples for general types of similar occurrences (Dueck 2004). Further on the proverbs connected with sites and their explanation adds historical, ethnic, topographical information about these places (Dueck 2004).

This study analyses the proverbs with place names in Hungarian, Romanian and German, aiming to identify constants and differences that exist between the proverb material of the three surveyed languages. Without the intention of being exhaustive, our objective is to illustrate common threads and motifs, but also to point out singularities and particular elements in the cultural heritage of the different languages and their geographical proverbs.

## 2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

In our study we use the definitions of the Oxford Dictionary for the concepts we address. Thus a proverb is a “well-known phrase or sentence that gives advice or says something that is generally true” (proverb noun - Definition, pictures, pronunciation and usage notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com). Similar is the term saying, “a well-known phrase or statement that expresses something about life that most people believe is wise and true” (saying noun - Definition, pictures, pronunciation and usage notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com). Further on we included also the term idiom which is “a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words” (idiom noun - Definition, pictures, pronunciation and usage notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com)

Owing to the language skills of the author (Hungarian, Romanian and German) and to her cultural background (Hungarian minority in Romania and with a strong connection to the German speaking countries) we could tap into three different cultural heritage of proverbs and sayings, and could decrypt meanings and symbols of national and regional dimensions.

We consulted several online sources, listings of proverbs and sayings, and also printed publications searching for proverbs and sayings which include place names. Several sources indicated also the origin and meaning of the sayings. We identified around 25 sayings in each of the three languages and conducted a content analysis.

Language	Sources	Number of sayings and proverbs
Romanian	<a href="#">GEOGRAFILIA: Expresii populare și proverbe care au în componență toponime</a> <a href="#">"Să nu-ți iei nevastă din Breaza și cal din Comarnic!" 20 de expresii breze, izvorâte din geniul românesc - Matricea Românească</a> <a href="#">Listă de proverbe românești - Wikipedia</a> <a href="#">Proverbe românești - Wikicitat (wikiquote.org)</a>	26
Hungarian	<a href="#">750 magyar közmondás - 750 Hungarian proverbs (oszk.hu)</a>	25
German	Duden (Hrsg.) (2014): Wer hat den Teufel an die Wand gemalt? Redensarten. Wo sie herkommen, was sie bedeuten. Dudenverlag, Berlin <a href="#">Verzeichnis:Deutsch/Sprichwörter – Wiktionary</a> <a href="#">Liste deutscher Redewendungen – Wikipedia</a>	30

Figure 1. Sources for proverbs and sayings with toponyms

We do not intend an exhaustive analysis in our comparative study, but we chose to exemplify the identified categories of use of toponyms in proverbs and sayings in the analysed languages. All examples are translated into English, which is given in square brackets after the original entry.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to current paremiological investigations, proverbs are still alive and used by the society as they possess complex communicative functions (Mieder 2004; Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga 2015). Both place names and proverbs as well as sayings are not only a source of linguistic knowledge, but also of geographical, historical, anthropological, ethnographic, social, psychological, and other knowledge and are of interest to these respective sciences who study them from a range of perspectives for various reasons (Helleland, Ore & Wikstrom 2012; Mayer 1984; Mieder 2004; Stone 2006). Thus both phenomena can be analysed from various approaches according to the specific research foci of the scientific field.

Current approaches of critical toponymy broadens the classical studies on origins and etymology of place names and directs the focus on the cultural politics of naming, the decision process and decision makers as well as their political agendas. In this context one major topic is toponymy as commodity, exploring the privatisation and commercialisation of naming-rights (Light, Young 2015) or the neglected role of tourism in commodifying and consuming place names (Light 2014).

A two way process characterizes the interconnections between toponymy and identity (Woodman 2014): “Our instinctive drive to name places and features stems from our need to provide them with an identity. We require that identity in order to organise our lives and our social structures” (Woodman 2014, 8). However “toponyms, having been set down by humankind as labels, then themselves act in reverse as furnishers of human identity” (Woodman 2014, 8). In relation to the identities and symbols geographical names bear, their capacity of branding is an emerging research topic (Woodman 2016).

Nicolae (2007) points out that the Romanian toponymy is part of the European one, however it showcases some particular features. A large share of the literature on the Romanian toponyms addresses the origin and the etymology of the place names, focusing either on one name (Boamfă, Ungureanu 2021), or a whole geographical or historical region and even with emphasis on the toponyms of a certain ethnic origin (Crețan 2007; Frățilă 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011). Extensive research tackles the political and identity infusing gesture of street naming in various cities and moments of political change, revealing for instance the renaming of streets (Light 2004) and the role of the users in the persistence of some socialist street names in post-socialist Bucharest (Light, Young 2014), or the ethnopolitics capacity of space claiming through shifting urban names scapes (Rusu 2019). A further study of Light and Young (2018) stands out for addressing the continuity of a toponymic landscape despite change in the political order. A more general study of the toponymy in Romania is the assessment of the Romanian Place Names Act and its implementation (Jordan 2006).

Several collections that transcend time, cultures and space preserve proverbs, aiming to pass down the rich cultural tradition of their folk of provenance (Stone 2006; Apperson 2006; Duden 2014). A vast scholarship on proverbs attempts definitions (Mieder 1994, 2004), determine their origin and dissemination (Mieder 1994, 2004; Stone 2006), identifies markers and meanings (Mieder 1994, 2004; Norrick 2011), as well as develops classification systems (Mieder 2004).

For the case of toponyms in proverbs, we found a comparative study of geographical proverbs in English, French and German by Delaroche (2013), who

identified proverbs common to several languages, but also local or regional proverbs and those used throughout a certain country. Dueck (2004) analysed the use of geographical proverbs and proverbial expressions in the work of Strabo and concluded that from Strabo's point of view these proverbs with their extremities and weirdness are tools to describe certain sites on the basis of special local occurrences. Coca (2018) assessed the presence of toponyms in the Romanian phraseology and concluded that the value/symbol/quality attached to the used toponym defines the positive or negative connotation of the phrase. Mayer (1984) tackled the toponyms in the Hungarian proverbs as one category of names occurring in sayings. David (2017) addressed the sacred and profane in phrases with names, whereat she distinguishes religious toponyms, sayings which include place names encountered in biblical contexts, and points out a tendency of desacralisation of the original biblical expressions and a shift in their attached meaning.

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Place names are symbols that provoke a variety of emotions depending on the relationship between the name user's and the named object: positive experiences with a certain place tend to awake positive connotations, and negative connotations emerge, if he or she had negative experiences with a place (Helleland, Ore & Wikstrom 2012). Users acquainted with the place, notably persons with emotional attachment to a certain place, or socialized in a specific community feel a particular emotion, when they encounter the name, as they not only recollect their factual concept of the place, but also reminiscences of persons and occurrences they are associating with it (Jordan 2010). Through this process place names transform the mere physical and geographical information into something that is historically and socially embedded and experienced (Helleland, Ore & Wikstrom 2012). They create and support emotional attachments to places (Jordan 2016), which are associated with cultural-historical narratives (Hausner 2017). Place names are ties to the past, mirrors reflecting various settings and activities of the past (Helleland, Ore & Wikstrom 2012).

Names of larger towns, or cities, regions or countries famous for particular reasons appear in proverbs and sayings. Included in proverbs the place names mediate this multitude of qualities and meanings attached to a certain place and shared by a given social group (Helleland, Ore & Wikstrom 2012). Considered to be "codes" of culture (Mashunina 2019; Coca 2018), proverbs are keepers of ethno-cultural information (Yusupova & Kuzmina 2015). The connotation attached to the proverb is determined by social, regional, cultural and other factors, as well as emotionally conditioned factors (Yusupova & Kuzmina 2015; Mayer 1984). In the use of regional, national or international known toponyms it is primordial to have an audience who poses the necessary knowledge to decipher the references and the sense of the proverbs and sayings, meaning that one needs to have access to the collective memory and cultural heritage of the community of origin.

The survey confirmed the conclusion of Hrisztova-Gotthardt & Varga (2015), that the common European proverbs root in the Greek and the Roman Antiquity, the Bible, the Medieval Latin and the loan translations. Besides the long-time established proverbs, some modern sayings can also be created and diffused by the mass media, like lines of popular songs and films, advertising slogans which can very quickly turn into proverbs.

Citations from literature, particularly poetic verses, at times become independent of their original context to form a self-contained saying (Dueck 2004).

Following a content analysis on various collections of proverbs and sayings in all three languages, we evidenced a series of results related to the identified unilingual and multilingual proverb material. Consistent with the outcomes of Dueck's (2004) research, we can distinguish two main groups of sayings containing toponyms: (1) proverbs bearing relicts of historical eras and particular events; (2) proverbs mediating local features of places or people, whereat some sayings may belong in both categories.

Most of the proverbs deal with extreme circumstances and exceptional events and therefore provide a comparative standard in similar situations, such as unusual victories, outstandingly good or bad physical conditions, extreme dangers, exaggerated attributes. This was the motive for their emergence in the first place and their conservation in the collective memory for characterising resembling extreme circumstances (Dueck 2004).

In all three languages we traced several **international clichés**, basically detectable by the presence of toponyms of notoriety, like "All roads lead to Rome". This is also an example for common proverbs originating from Latin, as it is an internationally known expression derived from the Latin „Mille viae ducunt homines per saecula Romam”, meaning "A thousand roads lead men forever to Rome" and can be used with the sense: all methods lead to the same result, a goal can be achieved in different ways, all problems have the same solution.

The saying "Rome wasn't built in a day" – present in all three surveyed languages and meaning time is needed to create great things – is a translation of a medieval French phrase, "Rome ne fu[t] pas faite toute en un jour", from the collection *Li Proverbe au Vilain*, published around 1190 ([Rome wasn't built in a day - Wikipedia](#)). However we found also adaptations of the saying to the national context, like in the Hungarian "Nem egy nap alatt épült Buda vára" ["The castle of Buda was not built in one day"], replacing Rome with the Buda fortress/castle.

Some idiomatic expressions include place names which refer to **representations of other cultural spaces**, in which certain particularities are exploited. Such as the German "Eulen nach Athen tragen" ["to bring owls to Athens"], or the Hungarian „Tiszába hord vizet“ ["to carry water into the Tisza river"] meaning to do something needless, unnecessary.

Structures that contain **hydronyms** enjoy a good phraseological representation in all three languages, standing for a wide range of senses and uses. Passing of time *since* some event, *until* something happens, or *ago* is the most common denomination of proverbs including river names, making allusion to the flowing movement of these waters. The Romanian "Are să curgă multă apă pe Dunăre" ["A lot of water will flow down on the Danube"] and the German "Da fließt noch viel Wasser den Rhein runter" ["A lot of water will flow down on the Rhein"] indicate that something last/takes long, will happen in the far future. The Hungarian "Sok víz lefolyt azóta a Dunán" ["A lot of water flowed down on the Danube"] or "Akkor még a Tisza is másfelé folyt" [„Back then even the Tisza flowed elsewhere"] refer to an event that happened long time ago. The Hungarian "Akkor lesz az, mikor a Duna visszafoly vagy elszárad" ["It will happen when the Danube reverts its course or dries up"] and the Romanian "Când s-o întoarce Oltu' înapoi" [„When the Olt reverts its course"] bear the meaning *never ever* or *no chance, impossible*. Further on hydronyms are used in proverbs making allusions to the greatness of the rivers or their power. The Hungarian "Dunát lehetne rekeszteni vele/velük" [„The Danube could be dammed by them"] means there are too many or

something is extremely large. The Romanian “A se face Dunăre (a se face Dunăre turbată, a se face Dunăre de mânie) [„To turn into the Danube (to turn into the Danube because of fury)”] refers to the power of the flooding raging water. Negative features are also illustrated with the greatness of rivers, such as the Romanian „Lacomului nu-i ajunge, Oltu-n gură de i-ar curge“ [“The greedy would not be full, even if the Olt flows into his mouth”] or „A nu te spăla cu tot Prutul“ [“The whole Prut is not enough to wash off your sins”] in the sense of having committed something unforgivable.

Cultural references with toponyms which denominate **sites of historical events**, are also present. The German „Sein/ein Waterloo erleben“, the translation of the English „to meet his Waterloo“, a symbol for a crushing defeat, points to the commonly known battle of Napoleon I. in 1815. The Hungarian “Több is veszett Mohácsnál” [“More was lost at Mohács”], in the sense of do not worry, this is not a serious loss/trouble, refers to the Ottoman victory in 1526 which led to the partition of Hungary for several centuries. These proverbs contain place names which commemorate important occurrences or personalities from a country’s history, significant expressions of collective or even national identity with powerful symbolic importance (Helleland, Ore & Wikstrom 2012). Toponyms function as memory keepers for historical events of humans that make places unique and important. Without their place names it would be more difficult to recall what happened at Verdun, Waterloo (Helleland, Ore & Wikstrom 2012) or Mohács. Further proverbs where the place name is not used to designate the place itself, but an event which happened there, are also the following: The German “Ein Gang nach Kanossa” and the Romanian version “a merge la Canossa” [“A walk to Canossa”] means to humble oneself like the Emperor Henry 4<sup>th</sup> of Germany pledging allegiance to Pope Gregory 7<sup>th</sup> in 1077 (Duden 2014). The German saying “Ab nach Kassel” with the neutral meaning “let’s go”, refers to the forced recruitment of soldiers by England in Hesse during the American War of Independence, the troops gathering in Kassel.

There are numerous proverbs and sayings where the **presence of toponyms serve for the depiction of a person, description or assessment of a situation**, revolving around the connotations the used place names awake. In the following we illustrate this category with some examples. The Romanian “avocat de Târgoviște” [“a lawyer from Târgoviște”] stands for a bad lawyer. The Hungarian “Akkora a szája, mint a Bécsi kapu” [“His mouth is as large as the Viennese gate (in Buda)”] denotes a loud person. The German “Noch ist Polen nicht verloren” [“Poland is not yet lost”] indicates a situation which is not yet so desperate, where there is still chance of recovery. The marching song starting with this line dates back in 1799 and it turned into the national hymn of Poland (Duden 2014). The German „In der Walachei“ [„In Wallachia“], using the geographical denomination of a historical Romanian region, stands for an isolated, remote place. „Das ist eine Tatarennachricht“ [„This is a tatar news/message/post“] stands for a lie, fake terrible news, and originates from an event in 1854, when Tatar horsemen in Ottoman service brought a false report to Bucharest about the fall of Sevastopol, which had a significant influence on events in politics and on the stock exchange (Duden 2014). Similar meaning of lying and exaggerated praise bears the Romanian “A spune brașoave” [„To tell brașovians.”] which originates from the middle ages, when the merchants from Brașov/Kronstadt adopted various methods to sell their goods, including overinflated praise of their merchandise.

The Romanian saying “Ca-n codrul Vlășiei“ [„Like in the woods of Vlășia”] stands for a lawless situation, disorder and makes allusions to the times where the merchants were ambushed and robbed while crossing the woods of Vlășia heading to Bucharest (Coca

2018). The Romanian “A se purta precum califul din Bagdad” [“To behave/act like the Khalif of Bagdad”] stands for being arrogant, to adopt a superior attitude, to be living large. Similar is also “Zici că-i împăratul Chinei” [“You would say he is the emperor of China”] to be extremely stuck-up. The Hungarian “Úgy él, mint Marci Hevesen” [“He lives like Marci in Heves”] addressed to someone who lives a carefree life, refers to a famous outlaw who lived at the beginning of the 19.th century and was mostly prowling in Heves county. Comparable in the meaning of living a glorious life is the German “Leben wie Gott in Frankreich“ [“Living like god in France”], where one of the explanations of the origin of the saying credits it to the French clergy, which had wonderfully and pleasant living conditions in the 18.th century France.

**Particularities of towns or institutions present in the settlement** are used in proverbs to describe situations or to depict individuals. The Romanian “Să nu-ți iei nevastă din Breaza și cal de Comarnic“ [„Do not get yourself a wife from Breaza and a horse from Comarnic.“] sounds as a warning and makes allusions to two settlements with bad reputation: the military centre of Breaza attracted women of easy virtue, and Comarnic was a postal junction, where you could mostly find tired, used horses, not recommended to purchase (Coca 2018). The Romanian “A fi bun de dus la Mărcuța/Socola“ [„To be fit for Mărcuța/Socola”] or the German “Er ist reif für Allenberg” [„To be fit for Allenberg”] all hint at the psychiatric asylum in the named towns. Similar is also the pejorative connotation of the German “Er ist reif für Tapiau” [“He is ready for Tapiau”], referencing another institution, namely the town prison. One explanation of the Romanian “A-și găsi Bacăul” [„To find its Bacău”], which means to get in trouble, originates from the time when in the Principality of Moldova, Bacău was a border crossing point and the customs officers were extremely strict, especially with the merchant (Coca 2018).

Delaroche (2013) observes a use of **proverbs with place names to criticize communities**, at times by tackling features they seem to be deprived of, or to uncover their flaws, real or supposed, such proverbs prevalently indicating the prejudices against these communities. The German “Eine polnische Wirtschaft“ [„A polish household/farmstead“] describes a great mess and sloppiness, and is one of the many examples where negative features are attributed to other folks, particularly neighbouring population (Duden 2014).

Other sayings **play with the sense of the place name**, like in the German “Er ist aus Wartenburg” [„He is from Wartenburg”] pointing out that he is a slow person, “warten” meaning “to wait” (Delaroche 2013). The Hungarian “Munkáson jár valaki” [„Somebody is in Munkács”] means that someone is at work, in which Munkács, the Hungarian name of the Ukrainian town Mukacheve (also spelled Mukachevo or Mukachiv) is close to the Hungarian word denominating “work”, namely “munka”.

In the category of cultural heritage, we can include the proverbs and sayings which have **place names of biblical and mythological references**. Religious references, with indications to incidents and chapters of the Old or New Testament, we found in all three examined proverb material. The German „Da herrscht Sodom und Gomorrha“ and the Romanian “Sodoma și Gomora” [“Sodom and Gomorrah”] both stand for a wicked place of vice and depravation. David (2017) notices the desecration of sayings with biblical references, which suffer a shift of meaning in a profane, rather pejorative direction. For instance the sense of “turnul Babel” in Romanian [“the tower of Babel”] originally regarded as the gateway to heaven, transitioned through denominating a cosmopolitan, melting pot like site, into a reference to an entangled situation, chaotic gathering, noise

and confusion. “A avea rude în Ierusalim” [“to have relatives in Jerusalem”] shifted from the primal meaning of having relatives in the Holy Land, who could pray for the entire family, into a saying which makes reference to corruption, having connections and relations (David 2017).

Religious references in idioms go beyond the Christian religion. The name of one of the most distinguished places in Islam is used in an idiomatic phrase to express that a place is extremely popular or is the spearhead in a certain domain, so it bears a positive connotation, like in the German “Das Mekka für Gastronomie” [“The Mekka of Gastronomy”].

Sites of the **Greek and Roman mythology**, common knowledge in the European culture, occur in the surveyed proverb material as well. The German „Auf dem Olymp sitzen“ [“To be sitting on the Olympus“] uses the residence of the Greek gods, according to the Greek mythology, to describe someone who acts arrogant and complacent. The German “Über den Jordan gehen“ [„To cross the Jordan river“] means to decease and it is the Christian correspondent of the Syx river of the Greek mythology.

In the category of cultural references, we have the **quotes from famous, popular literary works**. Some of them are multilingual, like the renowned „Something is rotten in the state of Denmark” from William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, present in all three assessed languages. However most of them are unilingual, belonging to the cultural heritage of one of the languages. For instance “Ein Ritt über den Bodensee” [“A ride over the Bodensee”] it describes a dangerous venture and it points to a literary work by Gustav Schwab, *Der Reiter und der Bodensee* (Delaroche 2013). “Sein Ithaka finden” [“to finde his Ithaka”], meaning to find his place, his destiny, is an allusion to Odysseus’ kingdom, regarded as a haven of peace and tranquillity (Delaroche 2013).

As mentioned above, besides the traditional proverbs, occur **new creations** as well. The Romanian “A mânca pâinică de Spania” [“to eat Spanish bread”] hints at the migrant workers who live abroad, far away from their loved ones and originates from the poet Mircea Dinescu (2006). The Romanian “a clădi castele în Spania” [“building castles in Spain”] with the meaning of chasing mirages is a further result of recent history and events, evoking the great number of Romanian citizens who work and live abroad. The Romanian „Azi în Timișoara, mâine-n toată țara” [“Today in Timișoara, tomorrow in the whole country”] was originally a chanting during the political upheaval from December 1989 which started in this Romanian city.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

As we can see from the above, names denominating places of various sizes – towns, great cities, regions or countries – occur in the proverbs and sayings, however the amount of proverbs or sayings with toponyms is only relatively significant in the three languages.

Proverbs and sayings, that include place names and landscape elements, resort to the quality of these toponyms, the connotations they bear and developed in the course of history of certain regions and people. These proverbs and sayings point at curios events, identity defining geographical places, circumstances which determined narratives, and immortalise them in a witty manner. In some cases the proverbs with geographical names even preserve and transmit features of places, which changed or even vanished in the course of time.

Moreover these proverbs have either an ironical and humorous use, or a positive, laudatory approach on things and people, they express warnings or comfort, and can exert a moralising or didactic function, whereat overlapping can occur.

Further on the potential user pool of sayings and proverbs differ substantially: some proverbs can be deciphered by a larger public, as the used place names and their connotations are part of the collective memory of a broad community, on supranational or even continental level, due to common historical or cultural features. Other proverbs bear meaning for a narrower collective, on national or regional level, since the employed toponyms and their attached symbols are the cultural heritage of a smaller community.

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