Языкознание

Антропоцентризм в кодах культуры древнеанглийской паремики

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Аннотация. Рассматриваются проявления антропоцентризма в паремике древнеанглийского языка. В центре внимания находятся субстантивные компоненты паремий, соотносимые с антропным, соматическим, духовным, общественным, природным, зооморфным и вещным кодами культуры. Антропоцентризм получает явное выражение через антропный и соматический коды. Опосредованное выражение антропоцентризма – антропоморфизм – происходит при помощи олицетворения, затрагивающего единицы, соотносимые с природным, зооморфным и вещным кодами.

Ключевые слова: антропоцентризм, паремия, древнеанглийский язык, фразеология, код культуры, лингвокультурология

Original article

Anthropocentrism in Culture Codes of Old English Paroemias

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Abstract. The research is focused on studying the manifestation of anthropocentrism in Old English paroemias whose substantive components can be correlated with the anthropic, somatic, spiritual, social, natural, and zoomorphic codes of culture. Anthropocentrism tends to directly display itself through the anthropic and somatic codes. An indirect expression of anthropocentrism, that is anthropomorphism, is largely effected by virtue of personification, which involves lexical units correlating with the natural, zoomorphic and material codes of culture.

Keywords: anthropocentrism, paroemia, Old English, phraseology, code of culture, linguoculturology

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INTRODUCTION

Presently much recognition is won by V.N.Telia's conception of cultural specificity of the national phrase-stock. The initial hypothesis posits that the system of images fixed in phraseological units is tantamount to a kind of a niche, which accumulates the perception of the world and is related to material, social, and spiritual culture of a linguistic community, thus being capable of providing testimony of the nation's cultural experience and traditions [Телия, 1996].

A phrase-stock is one of the unique forms of conveying knowledge of national cultural identities, due to the complex semantic organization of phraseological units, which convey the volume of information comparable to that of an entire text [Зыкова, 2007]. Phraseological signs should be considered as special elements or mechanisms of cultural memory. They make it possible to preserve and gradually increase selective cultural information which reflects the most valuable and relevant cognitive experience of a specific linguistic community [Зыкова, 2014]. It is especially true of predicative utterances, i.e. paroemias, as they are very culturally informative.

The study of paroemias in different languages enables one to make a conclusion of the paramount role of anthropocentrism. To a great extent it is characteristic of phraseology as a whole. Aphoristic paroemias, assigned to phraseology in accordance with the broad approach to the latter, show anthropocentric nature *par excellence*. Anthropocentrism is deemed to be an absolute universalia, which embraces various languages in both geographical and chronological aspects. No exception is made by Old English, a language in which many paroemic sayings were born, providing the building material of the English nation's culture at the dawn of its existence.

TASKS, METHODS, LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE

The present research is focused on analyzing the mechanism of cultural codes interaction associated with linguistic, mainly lexical, means of cultural encodement in paroemias found in Old English manuscripts. It appears possible to analyze paroemias in search of meaningful information in both historical and cultural sense. As far as phraseology is concerned, culture codes are building matter which "corresponds to the cultural meaning of hraseological image structure correlating in the language with metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, etc. [Телия, 2006].

The main tasks of the research are as follows: 1) identifying paroemias in Old English texts;

2) analyzing lexical components of paremias; 3) establishing the correlation between specific lexemes and certain culture codes; 4) studying culturally conditioned lexical means of expressing anthropocentrism; 5) extracting culturally meaningful information out of paroemias.

The main methods employed are linguocultural, componental and etymological analyses. Semantization is effected through the New English and Latin definitions in J.Bosworth's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* [Bosworth, 1964]. When the dictionary allows for divergent interpretations of meaning, clearer understanding is obtained from etymological data by comparing Old English lexemes with their etymological counterparts in other languages. The data are provided by G. Kroonen's Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Germanic [Kroonen, 2013].

The linguistic material under scrutiny is found in statements of paroemic nature from a number of Old English texts:

1) the runic inscription (dd. presumably early 8th century) of the Franks Casket;
2) three written pieces from the 10th century Exeter book (*Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3501*): *Precepts, Maxims I, The Rhyming Poem;*
3) *Durham proverbs* – an 11th century collection of aphoristic sayings (*Durham Cathedral MS B.III.32*);
4) a text about riddles *Solomon and Saturn II* (*Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 422*);
5) *Dicts of Cato* – an Old English adaptation of a Latin collection of aphorisms dd. 11–12th centuries (*Cambridge Trinity College MS R.9.17; London British Library Cotton Vespasian MS D.xiv[2]; London British Library Cotton Julius MS A.ii*);
6) Ælfric the Grammarian's *Catholic Homilies* of the early 11th century (*Oxford Bodleian Library Bodley MS 340 и Oxford Bodleian Library Bodley MS 342*);
7) an 11th century collection of gnomic poetry *Maxims II* (*London British Library Cotton Tiberius MS B.i*).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Attributing anthropic features to animals, artifacts, abstract concepts and natural phenomena is as ancient practice as language itself. Anthropocentrism of linguistic worldview is closely associated with anthropomorphism. It can be asserted that the very documentally fixed history of English begins from personification, which is found in the earliest statements showing paroemic traits. To prove this

point, let us consider the inscription of the Franks Casket renowned in anglistics.

The casket is one of the earliest (mid 7ᵗʰ or early 8ᵗʰ century) artifacts bearing texts written in the language which can be definitely identified as Old English. The best known of the runic inscriptions on this piece of presumably Northumbrian craftsmanship is the so called *Stranded Whale* poem. The two-line inscription on the front panel runs clockwise; in a more conventional arrangement it looks as follows:

ᚠᛁᛋᚳ.ᚠᛚᚪᛖᛞ.ᚪᚻᚪᚠᚩᚾᛠᚱᚷ | ᛖᚾᛒᛖᚱᛁᚷ |
ᚪᚪᚱᛞᚷᚪ:ᚻᚱᛁᛚᚷᚪᚱᛖᚾᛞᚪᚱᚻᚪᚠᚩᚷᚱᛖᛁᚢᛏᚷᛁᛋ
ᚠᚪᛖ | ᚻᚱᚪᛖᚾᛋᛒᚪᛖ

In Late Wessex adaptation it reads: *Fisc flod ahof on firȝenberiȝ. Wearþ ȝasric ȝrorn þær he on ȝreot ȝeswam. Hranes ban.* Our literary interpretation of this inscription is as follows: *A flood tossed the fish onto the cliff. Sad was the mighty demon to swim to shingle. Whale's bone.* This alliterative verse is sometimes interpreted as a riddle about the material of which the casket is made. Such understanding is substantiated by the final phrase *hranes ban*, which, in this interpretation, is the key to the riddle offered by the author-craftsman. In this case it would be justified to assume that the text in question does have some essential paroemic features. The riddle of the casket is based on symphor and can therefore be referred to the sphere of idiomaticity.

The inscription exemplifies the fact that in the earliest Old Enlish texts paroemic sayings already demonstrated interaction of different culture codes. Analyzing the lexical components of the inscription, one can correlate the lexemes with specific culture codes:

1) zoomorphic code – *fisc (fish), hran (whale)*;
2) natural code – *flod (flood), firȝenbeorȝ (cliff, rock), ȝreot (shingle)*;
3) zoosomatic and at the same time material code – *ban (bone)*;
4) activity code – *ahebban (raise, lift), ȝeswimman (swim)*.

One of the most interesting components is the noun *ȝasric*. The meaning of this derivative is deduced from the meanings of its morphological elements. The first element is the root *ȝas(t) (breath, spirit, soul, ghost, demon)*, the second is the suffix *-ric*, which means *noble, mighty, king, ruler*[1]. Consequently,

the overall meaning of the derivative *ȝasric* is *king of ghosts* or *mighty demon*. So is the dead whale called. In terms of linguoculturology it is an archetypical image, and the noun itself is correlated with the spiritual (concept GHOST or SPIRIT), anthropic and social (concepts POWER or RULE) codes.

Deciphering of the encoding means in a comparatively small linguistic context of the inscription under analysis, provides an opportunity of extracting important cultural and historical information out of the paroemia:

1) the lexeme *fisc (fish)* representing the zoomorphic code bears evidence of the naivety of Anglo-Saxon worldview. A person who lived in the Middle Ages undoubtedly took for a fish the creature that lived in the sea and could swim, while in fact a whale is an animal;
2) the use of lexemes representing the natural code signifies the importance of the sea and everything that is associated with it in the Anglo-Saxon culture. On the one hand, the sea was considered to be an active dangerous force capable of slaying even a whale, easily smashing him against the rocks (verb *ahebban – raise, lift*), on the other hand, without the sea people would suffer scarecity of the necessary resources, such as whale bone;
3) the nouns *hran (whale)* and *ban (bone)* in this context demonstrate interaction of zoomorphic, zoosomatic, and material culture codes. Whales and whaling played an important role in the economy and therefore culture of Anglo-Saxon England. Whale bone was much in demand in arts, the tangible proof of which is made by the Franks casket itself. Quite expectable for a riddle, the word *hran (whale)* is found only at the end of the inscription, as a part of the key, whilst in the main part the whale is called figuratively *fisc* and *ȝasric*;
4) The use of the lexeme *ȝasric (king of ghosts; mighty demon)* is underpinned by indivisibility of the material and spiritual world in Medieval mentality. The material world, including the sea, was understood to be full of living creatures which did not fall into real and imaginary ones because in mythological mentality an animal and a spirit are the same entity. Besides, the word *ȝasric* reflects the significance of the pagan cultural stratum represented by the historical time in which the Franks casket was manufactured.

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[1] E.g. in Germanic anthroponymics this word-building model engenders masculine names with the originally Proto-Germanic formant *-rik-* [Kroonen, 2013]: German **Fried*rich* (peace + ruler)**, Gothic *Þiuda**reiks** (people + ruler)*, Swedish **Erik** *(eternity + ruler)*, Scandinavian-Slavonic *Рю**рикъ** (glory + ruler)* etc.

Eventually, let us note the manifestations of anthropocentrism. Human society was an integral part of the Anlo-Saxon worldview, and according to the principle of anthropocentrism social structure was believed to be equally proper to spirits and animals, which appeared to be constructing a hierarchy similar to the human one. The whale enjoys the role of the supreme ruler of all sea creatures, the mightiest of all sea ghosts. Besides, he is seen to be capable of human emotions (the form ʒrorn, which is identified as an adjective *sad, sorrowful*[1]).

The above analysis of the Franks casket incription suggests the following linguopragmatic interpretation of the riddle verse. In describing the real or imaginary episode of the stranded whale's death in the storm, the author of the text (also likely to be the bone graver who manufactured the box) aims at making the reader consider the story that had taken place before the creation of the casket, thus giving origin to the latter. The main part of the verse being an implicature, the last phrase offers a key to understanding the riddle and the entire meaning of the inscription. The author-craftsman gives a kind of a hint: this is what happened during the storm, now guess how this casket came into being.

It has already been mentioned that riddles, assuming the form of an extended text, do not quite meet the crateria of aphorisms, and in this respect the inscription analyzed is not a typical paroemia. Aphoristic phrases are more prone to explicitly describe human characters and behaviour. In such cases anthropocentrism is expressed directly. As a rule, in sayings of such kind there are substantive and/or pronominal components whose direct object of nomination is persons: *man(n) (man), ʒuma (man, person), se þe (he who), etc*. From the linguocultural viewpoint, they feature some direct correlation of the structural components with the anthropic culture code. In Old English literature aphorisms that name persons directly are found in abundance, e.g.:

Æt þearfe *mann* sceal *freonda* to cunnian[2] (In need should a *man* understand the worth of his *friends*)[3];

Seldan snottor *ʒuma* sorʒleas blissað[4] (Seldom does a wise *man* rejoice without sorrow);

Onlær þinum *bearne* bysne ʒoda, and eac swa some eallum *leoda*[5] (Teach thy *child* by good example, and so all the *people*);

Bald bið *se ðe* onbyreʒeð boca cræftes[6] (Be bold *he who* strives for proficiency in letters);

Ðonne ðu oþerne *mon* tæle, ðonne ʒeðenc ðu þæt nan *mon* ne bið leahterleas[7] (In telling off *others*, do remember that no *one* is impeccable);

Þæt *folc* bið ʒesæliʒ þurh snoterne *cyninʒ*, siʒefæst and ʒesundful þurh ʒesceadwisne *reccend*[8] (*People* are happy under a wise *king*, they are strong in war and sound under a reasonable ruler), etc.

The copious stock of such aphorisms is opposed by less numerous sayings which do not provide a direct naming of persons. They have for subject and/or object natural phenomena, animals and diverse spiritual, ethical and social concepts expressed by abstract nouns, e. g.:

Seo *nydþearf* feala læreð[9] (*Necessity* teaches a lot of things);

Druncen beorʒ þe ond dollic *word*[10] (Beware of *drunkenness* and silly *words*);

Forst sceal freosan, *fyr* wudu meltan, *eorþe* ʒrowan, *is* brycʒian[11] (*Frost* should freeze, *fire* should melt, *earth* should grow, *ice* should bridge);

Eorðmæʒen ealdaþ, *ellen* cealdað[12] (*Earth's might* grows old, and *courage* grows cold);

On ælcere *ea* swa wyrse *fordes*, swa betere *fisces*[13] (In each *river* the worse is the *ford*, the better is the *fish*), etc.

In paroemias of this type anthropocentrism is usually manifested through metaphorization of the lexical anthropomorphic means: necessity is believed to be capable of teaching, earth is said to have power which grows old, etc. Seldom enough, aphoristic phrases include the names of artifacts and material products of human activities. With very few exceptions, nouns with material semantics are sole in a phrase and surrounded by lexemes which belong to the categories enumerated above, e.g.:

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[1] The meaning of the adjective *ʒrorn* is usually deduced from the verb *ʒrornian (mourn, lament)* [Simmons, 2010] a descendant of the Proto-Germanic **gnuznojan*. Etymologically associated forms in other languages demonstrate the archaic Indo-European origin of the lexeme *ʒrorn*, as in Germanic variants there can be noticed the effect of rhotacism in comparison with their counterparts in non-Germanic languages, e.g. in Church Slavonic *съгрустити ся (to become sad),* where the root retains the original Indo-European sibilant *-s-* [Фасмер, 1986].

[2] Durham proverbs.

[3] The New English translation is ours. – Authors.

[4] Precepts. Quoted after [Thorpe, 1842].

[5] Instructions for Christians. Quoted after [Jones, 2012].

[6] Solomon and Saturn II. Quoted after [Shippey, 1976].

[7] Dicts of Cato. Quoted after [Cox, 1972].

[8] Ælfric's Catholic Homilies. Quted after [Ælfric's..., 1979]

[9] Durham proverbs.

[10] Precepts.

[11] Maxims I. Quoted after [Thorpe, 1842].

[12] Rhyming Poem. Quoted after [Thorpe, 1842].

[13] Dicts of Cato.

Языкознание

Liorna maneʒa *bec* & ʒehyr moniʒ spell; wite ðeah hwylcum þu ʒelyfan scyle[1] (Learn a lot of *books* and hear out a lot of tales, but understand well which of them you should believe);

Ʒif ðu hwæt on druncen misdo, ne wit ðu hit ðam *ealoþe*[2] (If you commit something wrong when drunken, do not put the blame on the *ale*);

Ceastra beoð feorran ʒesyne, orðanc enta ʒeweorc[3] (*Cities* are seen from afar, a skilful *job* of giants).

In such paroemias material substantives are typically used without any semantic transformations, in their direct meaning. A rare occcasion as it is in aphoristic sayings, material lexis does not moreover lend itself to personification.

Let us analyze an example of a saying which can be referred to the sphere of aphoristics with much nore certainty than the Franks casket text. In the collection of Durham proverbs there is a moralistic statement which is replete with vivid imagery:

Ne mæʒ man muþ fulne melewes habban and eac fyr blawan.[4]

The New English translation that we consider proper to offer goes as follows: *One cannot have his mouth full of flour and blow on a fire*. The conceptual subject-matter of this maxim implies immanent unlikelihood and therefore jocularity of the situation. Hence, the aphorism can by right be specified as ironic, humorous [Wilcox, 2000].

Let us enumerate the culture codes correlating with lexical components of this aphorism:
1) anthropic code correlating with the pronominalized noun *man (man, one)*;
2) somatic code correlating with the noun *muþ (mouth)*;
3) nutrition code correlating with the noun *melu (flour)*;
4) natural code correlating with the noun *fyr (fire)*;
5) activity code correlating with the verbs *maʒan (can)*, *habban (have)* и *blawan (blow)*.

The overall set makes it possible to understand that the original sphere of applying the image that underlies the paroemia in question is householding and economic activities. Anthropocentrism in this case is far more pronounced than in the Franks casket inscription. In defining the core component of the statement, it appears justified to make the choice of the noun *man*, whose nomination object is a human as a generic notion. This peculiarity of nomination is typical of aphorisms: aphoristic statements do not describe specific situations, but only suggest typifying images and models. Besides, aphoristic sayings are universal in that they do not provide exact information on the location and time of the action. All the information they contain is but abstract.

Another expression of anthropocentrism is effected by the noun *muþ (mouth)* with anthroposomatic meaning. The noun *melu (flour)* names a substance, which exists only as a product of human activity and is required to satisfy human needs. The verbs *maʒan*, *habban* and *blawan* in this context name human actions and states. The only lexical component which could potentially be referred to the domain of inanimate nature – the noun *fyr (fire)* – here evidently denotes an anthropogenic reaction of burning – the flame of a candle or a bonfire. So all the substantive components of the aphorism are to at least some degree associated with humans and human activities.

The paroemia describes a grotesque, unbelievable situation. To stuff one's mouth full of flour and then blow on fire is an obviously strange behaviour unthinkable for a person of sound mind and good reason. The subject-matter and the image of the aphorism can serve as a model of any illogical behaviour of a person who tries to do incompatible and mutually exclusive things. The semantic organization of the analyzed statement is a typical example of aphoristic structure of meaning, which includes [Чехоева, 2013]:
1) superficial meaning, which equals the sum of componental meanings: it is literally impossible to blow on fire with one's mouth full of flour;
2) deeper meaning, which does not equal a mere sum of componental meanings: it is impossible to do simultaneously two mutually exclusive things;
3) systemic meaning, which is a sum of the deeper meaning and background knowledge, connotations, and associations: flour is an edible substance, but one does not normally take it in one's mouth; one blows on fire either to put it off or, on the contrary, make it burn brighter; a mouth full of flour is associated with some obstacle, etc.;
4) inference: the person who tries to combine incompatible things looks stupid and ridiculous.

Lastly, the didactic function of the aphorism consists in trying to implicitly avert people from such behaviour. Inasmuch as the aphorism in question names a human directly, anthropocentrism of the

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[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Maxims II. Quoted after [Maxims II, 2020].
[4] Durham proverbs.

statement has an explicit expression, while the expression of personification is altogether absent.

Let us consider one more paroemia, which features another combination of culture codes:

Meotud ana wat hwær se cwealm cymeþ, þe heonon of cyþþe ȝewiteþ.[1]

The translation which we propose for this statement from the maxims collection of the Exeter book is as follows: *God only knows to which place the disaster will go from whence it was born*. Let us note the culture codes correlated with the specific lexical components of the statement:

1) spiritual code represented by the noun *meotud (God)*;
2) activity code correlated with the verbs *witan (know), cuman (come)* и *ȝewitan (look, go for)*;
3) locative code correlated with the adverbs *hwær (where), heonon (hence)* и существительным *cyþ (country, land)*;
4) natural / social code correlated with the noun *cwealm (disaster)*.

Here one can observe culture codes in interaction and synthesis which provide conditions for personification that, in its turn, performs the anthropocentric function. The image underlying the statement is produced by two main macrometaphoric models: "disaster is a living creature" and "disaster is capable of moving. Let us consider how specific linguistic means are used to get this mechanism working. In order to do so, it will take some analysis of the components of the statement.

The noun *meotud* shows a certain semantic evolution depending on the chronological properties of the texts in which it is found. The dictionary supplies the entry with a special commentary, according to which this word is likely to have had the meaning *"fate, destiny, death"*. It stands to reason that at some time there occurred a metonymization of the meaning, and the word came to denote the one who dispenses disasters[2]. Later, under the influence of the cultural and historical factor, i.e. the country's christianization, it acquired the meaning "*Christian God*", who is the supreme judge administering penalties and determining the destinies[3] of people and all things[4]. God's figure was without doubt central in the spiritual culture of Anglo-Saxon England after Christianization. The fact that the lexeme *meotud* is

found in the paroemia makes it possible to conclude that the latter appeared in a cultural community in which Christianity was already a dominating religion. Also one has to note the manifestation of anthropocentrism provided by the word *meotud* because in Christianity, just as well as in many other religions, God is perceived to have human features.

The noun cwealm has a broad meaning, as demonstrated by the dictionary defininition represented by a number of synonymous or topically associated New English and Latin lexemes which belong to the semantic field "disaster": death, destruction, a violent death, slaughter, murder, torment, plague, pestilence, contagion, qualm; mors, pernicies, nex, cædes, homicidium, cruciatus, lues, pestis, pestilentia, contagium.[5] On these grounds it appears possible to correlate the word cwealm, on the one hand, with the natural code (meaning epidemic, plague), on the other hand, with the social code (meaning war, slaughter).

The use of the word cwealm[6] with a strong negative connotation within the aphorism reflects the realia of the Medieval community featuring its daily and social disorders. Hostile invasions and epidemics were regular and understood very much like a natural calamity. The aphorism under analysis gives some convincing proof of the tendency for personifying abstract notions. Disaster is seen to be a living creature that has a number of anthropomorphic traits found in its conceptual content:

1) it has a place where it came into being, a homeland – *cyþ*[7] (the dictionary definition of this noun sharing the same root with the verb *cunnan (know)*: *a known land, native country, region; situs naturalis, natale solum, patria, regio*);
2) it is capable of moving, the proof of which is provided by the verb *cuman (come)*;
3) this creature has the sense of sight, a sort of thinking ability, and free will, which is expressed by the verb *ȝewitan* (definition: *to turn one's eyes in any direction with the intention of taking that direction, to set out towards, start, pass over, to go, depart, withdraw, go away, retreat, retire, die; transire, discedere*).

In sum, the paroemia in question possesses the mechanism of indirect expression of anthropocentrism, i.e. personification.

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[1] Maxims I.

[2] Cf. in Old Saxon: *metod – 'god'* [Kroonen, 2013]

[3] Cf. in Old Russian *сждьба (judgement, trial, justice, verdict) < сждъ (trial)* [Черных, 2002].

[4] E.g. in the poem *Christ and Satan* of the Exeter book: *Ðu ȝemettes Meotod alwihta (Thou hast met the Lord of all things)* [Thorpe, 1842].

[5] Henceforth there are definitions from J.Bosworth's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. Alongside with the New English definitions the dictionary usually provides Latin ones.

[6] Produced from Proto-Germanic **kwalo-*, whose meaning is defined as *'torment'* [Kroonen, 2016].

[7] Produced from the Proto-Germanic form **kunþa- (known, familiar)*, which is an adjectified passive participle of the verb **kunnan- (know)* [Kroonen, 2013].

CONCLUSION

The earliest Old English texts demonstrate a complex structure of conceptual content. The main culture codes featured by Old English paroemias are anthropic, somatic, spiritual, and social, with natural and zoomorphic codes being less common. The least frequent is the material code. Almost all paroemias show to some extent the tendency for anthropocentrism.

The ways of expressing anthropocentrism are correlated with specific culture codes. Anthropocentrism is expressed explicitly through the anthropic and somatic codes because the lexical means of encodement in this case are the lexemes whose main nominative function is the direct naming of persons and human body parts. The lexemes naming spiritual, ethical and social concepts are correlated with the spiritual and social codes and tend to convey anthropomorphism through personification of various inanimate spiritual, ethical and social phenomena. Indirect expression of anthropocentrism, i.e. antropomorphism, is effected through the mechanism of personification which on the lexical level involves the words correlated with the natural, zoomorphic and material culture codes.

Linguocultural analysis can be efficiently used to better understand the nature of Old English paroemias. The specific culture codes exercise each their own influence on the process of metaphorization, thus making different contributions to building aphorisms with more or less figurative meaning. There are prospects of conducting further research with a view to finding out what culture codes are more required to produce aphorisms with a higher or lower degree of figurativeness.

In the aspect of expressing culturally significant information, Old English paroemias reflect the characteristic peculiarities of common medieval mentality. At the same time they show the correlation with certain historical strata of culture. Further study of Old English paroemias is promising for a number of disciplines: history, culturology, ethnography, etc.

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