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TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF VARIANT FORMS IN SPANISH PROVERBS FROM A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Some proverbs with a parallel structure and/or with a symmetrical pattern in Spanish have evolved from the 16th century if their syntactic structure and lexis are to be compared with their counterparts as they are known and used today. A study of variant forms has been carried out with a sample of proverbs from the 16th-century *Refranes y proverbios* by Hernán Núñez by contrasting them with the synchronic canonical forms as found in the *Refranero Multilingüe* (RM) from the *Centro Virtual Cervantes* and in *Mil y un refranes españoles* (Sevilla Muñoz & Cantera Ortiz de Urbina 2008). The general trend is towards reduction, shortening or truncation as in *A mal hecho, ruego y pecho* > *A lo hecho, pecho*, although counterexamples are also possible, although extremely scarce (*El que parte, toma la mejor parte* > *El que parte y reparte se queda con la mejor parte*). Three main phenomena have been observed, firstly the truncation of a whole part of bipartite or tripartite proverbs, originally oppositional, that have evolved mainly into non-oppositional with a single descriptive element. Secondly, a series of lexico-grammatical changes, usually in the second part of bipartite proverbs and thirdly, instances of variation by substitution of one of the nominal or adjectival constituents for a synonymous term—a semantic-related one or even another term bearing little or no semantic relation whatsoever.

Key words: Hernán Núñez, Spanish proverbs, diachronic variant forms, truncation, lexico-grammatical changes.

This paper is based on a collection of proverbs written by one of the most renowned Spanish paremiographers of all times, Hernán Núñez de Guzmán, who worked at the University of Salamanca in the first half of the 16th century. He was an eminent scholar and a professor of rhetoric and Greek. As a paremiographer, he compiled the collection of proverbs *Refranes o Proverbios en romance*, first published posthumously in 1555. Although most of the proverbs are in Spanish, he also recorded proverbs in Italian, Portuguese, French, Catalan and Galician and even in other less-known Romance varieties such as Asturian or Aragonese. The present paper is a diachronic study that covers roughly a 460-year time span. For the purposes of this study I have used the critical edition by *Combet et al.* (see references), which only includes the proverbs in Spanish.

I perused over 6,000 Spanish proverbs in order to detect and examine variant forms. It is interesting to note that most of the proverbs where variant forms were identified, when compared with their modern counterparts, fall into the category of proverbs with parallel

structure or symmetrical pattern. This is, therefore, a study of variant forms concerning mainly the syntactic structure of proverbs as well as their lexis. The main objective is to present a piece of research conducive to a preliminary typology of variant forms of Spanish proverbs from a diachronic perspective. For contrastive methodological reasons, a unique synchronic canonical form was found for each of the 16th century proverbs using the following sources: first, the *Refranero Multilingüe (RM)* from the *Centro Virtual Cervantes*. This online database is not just a dictionary of proverbs but an immense paremiological work of scholarship including synonyms, variant forms, origin, semantic features and other bibliographical and philological information. Second, the multilingual dictionary of proverbs *Mil y un refranes españoles* (One thousand and one Spanish proverbs). And third, the *Oxford Spanish-English bilingual dictionary*. These sources were also used in the same order to look up the English equivalent of each of the Spanish proverbs. In the very few cases in which no equivalent was found, the literal translation has been provided.

Diachronic paremiology

When one looks at a quantitatively important number of 16th-century Spanish proverbs and compares them with their modern counterparts, one can observe that there is a general trend that comes to the surface: current forms tend to be shorter than older proverbs.

(1) *A mal hecho, ruego y pecho.* > *A lo hecho, pecho.* (There's no use crying over spilt milk.)¹

(2) *Quien guarda, halla: y guardaua² la cazcarria.* > *Quien guarda, halla.* (Those who hide can find.)

This is merely part of language change at large—at least for Western languages—that involves different sorts of reduction, shortening or truncation. In (1) the adverb *mal* (badly), in the first half of the proverb, is no longer used as its meaning becomes implicit in the current form. This process of implicitness goes hand in hand with the general process of reduction and affects a large number of proverbs according to my results. In the second half of the proverb, the binomial *ruego y pecho* (prayer and courage) has also been shortened to *pecho* so that the internal rhyme of the proverb be kept.

In example (2), the entire second half of the 16th century proverb disappears in its current form. This type of coordinative proverb can be analysed from a topic-comment perspective: the first half, *Quien guarda, halla*, would be the topic whereas the second half, *y guardaua la cazcarria*, would be the comment whose literal translation is 'and he used to keep the dirt'. It is this sort of superfluous or unnecessary comment, usually humorous or hyperbolic, that clearly falls out of use with the passing of time.

(3) *El que parte, toma la mejor parte.* > *El que parte y reparte se queda con la mejor parte.* (He who cuts the cake takes the biggest slice.)

I have found very few counter-examples, in fact just one, to this general rule in which the modern form is longer than the older one, as can be seen in example (3). In the current version, the form *reparte* (hands round) has been added mainly by reason of internal rhyme, although the consequential addition (slicing a cake, for example, and then handing slices round) is also semantically pertinent.

Typology of proverb variant forms

I shall not take into consideration, as regards typology, the normal language changes concerning obsolete spelling, morphology, syntax or lexical forms. These are minor morphological or grammatical changes as can be observed in examples from (4) to (7).

(4) *Do fueres, haras como vieres.* > *Donde fueres, haz lo que vieres.* (When in Rome do as the Romans do.)

(5) *En boca cerrada no entra mosca.* > *En boca cerrada no entran moscas.* (A shut mouth catches no flies.)

(6) *Mas ay dias que, longanizas.* > *Hay más días que longanizas.*³ (There is always plenty of time.)

(7) *Cria coruo, y sacar te ha el hojo.* > *Cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos.* (I gave you stick to break my own head with.)

Example (4) involves a word form (*do* > *donde*), a verb tense (*haras* > *haz*) and syntax (*como* > *lo que*). As for (5), the only change concerns grammatical number, that is singular constituents becoming plural (*entra mosca* > *entran moscas*). In example (6) word order and different spellings of a word (*mas ay dias* > *hay más días*) are combined in the same phrase, and finally number (7), which involves a combination of spelling and grammatical number (*corvo* > *cuervos*; *el hojo* > *los ojos*) with different word order and verb forms (*sacar te ha* > *te sacarán*).

The typology that follows is made up of five major types, namely truncation, downgrading, rewording and rephrasing, lexical substitution, and a mixed type and then two minor types, namely lexical insertion, and inverted parallelism or chiasmus.

Truncation

When attempting a typology of proverb variant forms, the commonest and most recurrent mechanism is the truncation of a whole part of a bipartite proverb. It is normally the second half of the proverb that is truncated, although (8) is the exception that proves the rule. It

should be noted that even in this case it is the comment that is truncated and not the topic, as can be observed in the English translation provided by the *RM* where the truncated part (*how dirty soever it be*) is placed at the end.

(8) *Por turbia que este, no digas de esta agua no beuere.* > *Nunca digas 'De esta agua no beberé'.*

(Don't say I'll never drink of this water, how dirty soever it be.)

Other cases of truncation of the first half of a bipartite proverb will be discussed further down in the section 'Mixed types of variant forms' as they combine truncation and lexical substitution.

Examples from (9) to (12) follow the pattern "first half (topic) / second half (comment)" and in all of them it is the second half that is truncated in contemporary Spanish.

(9) *El dinero va al dinero, y el hogar al cauallero.* > *Dinero llama dinero.*⁴ (Money begets money.)

(10) *Pan y vino, andan camino, que no moço garrido.* > *Con pan y vino se anda el camino.*

(Things never seem so bad after a good meal.)

(11) *El corcobado no vee su corcoba, y vee la de su compañero.* > *Ningún jorobado ve su joroba.*

(The hunchback does not see his own hump, but sees his companion's.)

(12) *En Abril aguas mill, en Mayo tres o quatro.* > *Abril, aguas mil.* (April weather, rain and sunshine, both together.)

There is an important difference between the second half in (9), *y el hogar al caballero* (and home begets the gentleman), and the second part in examples (10) and (11). The second half in the 16th-century proverb in (9) complements semantically the first half whereas in (10) and in (11) the second half is oppositional: in the case of (10) it is emphasized that after having eaten and drunk—bread and wine are used metonymically for food and drink—anyone can bear a long walk and not only or especially a strong young man. As for (11), although the proverb is apparently coordinative, in reality the conjunction *y* (and) is used adversatively to mark an opposition between the first and the second half—A hunchback cannot see his hump but can see his companion's.

Finally, (12) is an instance of juxtaposed nominal sentences bearing a coordinative link between each half. This calendar saying (literally 'In April a thousand waters, in May three or four') follows the topic / comment pattern in which the main and most significant part simply states that April is a very rainy month.

It has to be noted that an important number of truncated proverbs have become fossilized, and thus institutionalized, in modern Spanish. These reduced forms can also be seen as ellipsis but, in any case, they represent a shortened and fully-contained version of the earliest traditional proverbs.

Downgrading

The second type of variant form can be described as downgrading. This term has been taken from Rosamund Moon (1998) where it is defined as “traditional proverbs and sayings [are] downgraded from their canonical or earliest forms to lower-level grammatical units: a compound sentence to a single clause, or a clause to a group”. The main difference with the first type, truncation, is that with downgrading a former proverb such as the one in (13), *Quando la rana tuuiere pelo*, is no longer a proverb in its current form, but an idiom, as it can be observed when one considers the status of its English equivalent, *when pigs fly*. The same principle can be applied to examples from (14), (15) and (16).

(13) *Quando la rana tuuiere pelo, seres vos bueno.* > *cuando las ranas críen pelo*⁵ (when pigs fly)

(14) *No pidas al olmo la pera, pues no la lleua.* > *pedir peras al olmo* (to ask the impossible)

(15) *Leuătar la liebre, para que otro medre.* > *levantar la liebre* (to let the cat out of the bag)

(16) *Buscays cinco pies al gato y el no tiene sino quatro.* > *buscarle cinco pies al gato* (to complicate matters, to make life difficult)

This tendency for proverbs to turn into phrases has been pointed out by Arnaud and Moon (1993) and Moon (1998), among others.

Proverbs are frequently truncated or reduced to verbal groups and complementation, thus contextualizing something that is essentially or diachronically a statement of a universal truth or deontic. Such downgradings may become institutionalized as variations, or effectively supersede the proverbial form.⁶ (Moon 1998: 115)

Contextualization, as explained in the quotation above, is a key word or mechanism in the field of diachronic proverb variant forms. Traditional proverbs and sayings are extremely scarce in corpora and when they occur they tend to be used in their citation form, either syntactically detached from the other elements of the sentence or followed by introductory phrases such as “as my grandmother used to say”, “as the (old) saying goes”, “as they say” (Mieder 2004). Not all traditional proverbs lend themselves to downgrading—negative imperative sentences, used either as prohibitions or as pieces of advice can easily be transformed into predicate idioms as illustrated in (14).

Rewording and rephrasing

This third main type concerns lexico-grammatical changes, usually in the second part of bipartite proverbs as in examples from (17) to (21).

(17) *A buen entendedor, breue hablador.* > *A buen entendedor, pocas palabras bastan.* (A word to the wise is enough.)

(18) *Mal de muchos, gozo es.* > *Mal de muchos, consuelo de tontos.* (Two in distress make sorrow less.)

(19) *Casa con dos puertas, no la guardan todas dueñas.* > *Casa con dos puertas, mala es de guardar.* (A house with two doors is difficult to protect.)

(20) *Quiē peces quiere, mojar se tiene.* > *El que quiera peces que se moje el culo.* (He that would have eggs must endure the cackling of hens.)

(21) *El perro del hortelano, ni come las verças, ni las dexa comer al estraño.* > *El perro del hortelano, que ni come ni deja comer.* (The dog in the manger won't eat the oats or let anyone else eat them.)

The formal symmetry or parallelism of the older version in (17), *a buen entendedor, breve hablador*, is lost in the current proverb where the second half *pocas palabras bastan*, shows no phonemic, lexical or syntactic resemblance with the first half. Other changes can be observed in examples from (18) to (21) which account for the dynamics of proverbs and sayings but also for their oral nature and transmission. (19) is an example of non-metaphorical proverb in which an obsolete word combination *todas dueñas* (all housewives) gives way to a more general statement without reference to any specific subject. As with types 1 and 2, that is truncation and downgrading, one can also find counter-examples: in (22) it is not the second part of the proverb that changes but the first although in both cases the internal rhyme is kept (*ventura/sepultura*; *figura/sepultura*).

(22) *Rodar ventura, hasta la sepultura.* > *Genio y figura, hasta la sepultura.* (The leopard cannot change his spots.)

(23) *Quien lengua ha, a Roma va.* > *Preguntando se va a Roma.* (Better to ask than to go astray.)

(24) *Al enemigo, si buelue la espalda, la puente de plata.* > *A enemigo que huye, puente de plata.* (It is good to make a bridge of gold to a flying enemy.)⁷

(25) *Cātarillo que muchas vezes va a la fuente, o dexa el asa, o la frente.* > *Tanto va el cántaro a la fuente que al final se rompe.* (The pitcher goes so often to the web [sic], that it is broken at last.)⁸

Examples (23), (24) and (25) show rewording and rephrasing also in the first half of the proverb. This type of transformation, either in the first or the second half of the proverb, seems to be the most widespread among the examples analysed as proverbs are passed from generation to generation mainly by oral transmission and this has an enormous impact in the evolution of their lexico-grammatical structure. As a general rule, proverbs that have gone through a process of rewording and rephrasing tend to be more prosaic, or rather less carefully worded, in their current form than in their earliest versions. They also tend to sacrifice internal rhyme for the sake of brevity or style as can be observed in examples (23) and (25). The latter is an interesting example of diachronic evolution: the first half of the proverb is reworded and the second half is rephrased. The rewording represents a slight change with no incidence whatsoever on the sense of the clause whereas the rephrasing of the second half illustrates the

passage from a specific description—speaking of a large earthenware pitcher used by women in the past for collecting and carrying water from the village fountain to their house, ‘either the handle or the front breaks’ that simply gives in its modern form ‘it breaks’.

Lexical substitution

The fourth main type is variation by lexical substitution. As proverbs have travelled the centuries orally, they have been eroded by time and tongue and this is reflected in the changes when looking at lexis. As can be observed in examples from (26) to (32), adjectives, nouns and verbs are replaced by others, synonymous or not, when compared with their synchronic counterparts.

(26) *A palabras locas, orejas sordas.* > *A palabras necias, oídos sordos.* (For mad words, deaf ears.)

(27) *Suelas y vino, andan camino.* > *Con pan y vino se anda el camino.* (Things never seem so bad after a good meal.)

(28) *Mas vale paxaro en mano, que bueytre bolando.* > *Más vale pájaro en mano que ciento volando.* (A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.)

(29) *Ojos que no veen, coraçon que no quiebra.* > *Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente.* (Out of sight, out of mind.)

(30) *De tal leña, tal morceña.* > *De tal palo tal astilla.* (Like father, like son.)

(31) *Por mucho madrugar, no amanece, mas ayna.* > *No por mucho madrugar amanece más temprano.* (Time will take its course.)

(32) *Gato escaldado, del agua fría ha miedo.* > *Gato escaldado, del agua fría huye.* (Scalded cats fear even cold water.)

It has to be noted that some of the lexical substitutions that can be observed are but a variant form already used in the 16th century as with, for instance *Año de nieues*, *año de bienes* and *Año de nieues*, *año de miesses*. Only the former is used in contemporary Spanish.

Mixed type

Finally, there is a mixed type where rewording, rephrasing, substitution and addition can coexist as found in examples from (33) and (38).

(33) *Quien burla al burlador, cien dias gana de perdon.* > *Quien roba a un ladrón, tiene cien años de perdón.* (The devil laughs when one thief robs another.)

(34) *Arde verde por seco, y pagan justos por peccadores.* > *pagar justos por pecadores* (The innocent pay for the sins of the guilty.)

(35) *Cobdicia mala, saco rompe.* > *La avaricia rompe el saco.* (Grasp all, lose all.)

(36) *En burlas ni en veras, con tu señor no partas peras.* > *partir peras con alguien* (to fall out with somebody)

(37) *En consejas, las paredes han orejas.* > *Las paredes oyen.* (Walls have ears.)

(38) *Si tal fuesse lo roto como lo descosido, no auria nada perdido.* > *Nunca falta un roto para un descosido.* (You can always find a companion in misfortune.)

Minor types of variant forms

I have found two minor types of variant forms. The first one is lexical insertion (or addition) which I presume rather infrequent, as it goes against the general trend, in which a lexical item is added in the synchronic as with the addition of *buen* (god) in example (39).

(39) *A hambre, no ay mal pan.* / *A buen hambre, no hay pan duro.* (Hunger never saw bad bread.)

The following minor type is inverted parallelism or chiasmus in which a criss-cross pattern can be observed between the older and the current form. This can be seen in the first half of the proverb in example (40) where the verbs *rascar* and *comer* (scratching and eating) are reversed in the current proverb. As a consequence, the second half is also altered so as to maintain the internal rhyme (*comer* and *menester* versus *rascar* and *empezar*)

(40) *Rascar y comer, comienzo han menester.* > *El comer y el rascar, todo es empezar.* (Eating and scratching, it's all in the beginning.)

Diachronic variant forms

Different proverb variant forms were already in use in 16th century Spain if one compares Hernán Núñez's compilation with the same proverbs as registered by other Spanish paremiographers such as Sebastián de Covarrubias and Gonzalo Correas. One should consider the fact that a compilation of proverbs, however complete it may be, is never a comprehensive account of all the different variant forms that existed at the time. Even though inside *Refranes y Proverbios* variant forms do not abound some examples have been detected.

(41) *El carnero encantado, que fue por lana y boluio tresquilado* / *Ires por lana, y vernes tresquilada.* > *Ir por lana y volver trasquilado.* (to get more than you bargained for).

(42) *Ni vn dedo haze mano, ni vna golondrina verano* / *Vna golōdrina, no haze verano.* > *Una golondrina no hace verano.* (One swallow doesn't make a summer).

(43) *Dichoso el varō, que escarmiēta en cabeça aģena, y en la suya nō.* / *Escarmentar en cabeça aģena.* > *Escarmentar en cabeza ajena.* (to learn from someone else's mistakes)

In the three examples above, the second and shorter 16th century variant form coincides with the contemporary form although some morphological and orthographical differences can be observed. The existence of coeval forms already in the 16th century is clear evidence of the fact that the shortened versions of proverbs or even proverbs downgraded to verbal idioms are not necessarily a synchronic phenomenon.

Conclusions and perspectives

Very few proverbs have come to us in the exact form they had in the 16th century mainly because they have passed down from generation to generation through spoken language but also because of the normal evolution of the language. Shortening or reduction seems to be the norm when looking at variant forms from a diachronic perspective. A typology of variant forms from a diachronic perspective is entirely and perfectly possible. Changes seem to operate in bipartite, parallel or coordinative proverbs rather than in equational or non-oppositional proverbs. Although this cannot be applied to all the cases analysed, a considerable number of the contemporary proverbs or idioms have lost their original internal rhyme and tend to be more stylistically prosaic than the earliest versions or fuller forms.

As regards perspectives, I believe that it would be interesting to further develop this typology by taking into account other collections of proverbs from the 16th century. A contrastive study with other Romance languages and especially with Portuguese proverb variant forms should be put into place for the same time span with the aim of finding similarities across languages.

Endnotes

1. For the numbered examples, and from left to right, first is the proverb in its 16th-century form, then its current canonical form, and finally, and between brackets, its English equivalent. So, as can be observed in example (1) there is the 16th-century *A mal hecho, ruego y pecho*, then the shortened current canonical form *A lo hecho, pecho* and finally *There's no use crying over spilt milk*, the equivalent proverb in English.
2. The original spelling, accents (usually their absence), and punctuation have been kept and consequently not altered to conform with the prescriptive rules of the modern Spanish language. Therefore, the 16th-century form *guardaua* corresponds to modern Spanish *guardaba*.
3. The literal translation of this proverb is "There are more days than there are sausages".
4. Even though this is the exact form of the proverb as recorded in the *RM*, the absence of the definite article before *dinero* appears rather awkward to a number of native speakers that would prefer another variant, grammatical but not lexical, *El dinero llama al dinero*.
5. The first word of the modern Spanish equivalents in examples from (14) to (18) are not printed in capitals and the phrase does not end with a full stop, as is the case with the rest of the examples, as these are considered idioms and not proverbs in Spanish today.
6. Moon exemplifies her argument with several examples from English. Here is a selection: 'a drowning man will clutch at a straw', 'make hay while the sun shines' and 'don't put the cart before the horse' downgraded respectively to the predicates 'to clutch at straws', 'to make hay' and 'to put the cart before the horse'.
7. The *Refranero Multilingüe* and *Mil y un refranes españoles* sometimes differ in the current canonical or citation form in English. The latter registers the following variant form: *For a flying enemy make a golden/silver bridge*.
8. There is a misprint in the English equivalent of this Spanish proverb in *Mil y un refranes españoles*: *web* should in fact be *well*.

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Appendix

	16 th -century proverb	Current version	English equivalent
1	A mal hecho, ruego y pecho.	A lo hecho, pecho.	There's no use crying over spilt milk.
2	Quien guarda, halla: y guardaua la cazcarria.	Quien guarda, halla.	Those who hide can find.
3	El que parte, toma la mejor parte.	El que parte y reparte se queda con la mejor parte.	He who cuts the cake takes the biggest slice.
4	Do fueres, haras como vieres.	Donde fueres, haz lo que vieres.	When in Rome do as the Romans do.
5	En boca cerrada no entra mosca.	En boca cerrada no entran moscas.	A shut mouth catches no flies.
6	Mas ay días que, longanizas.	Hay más días que longanizas.	There is always plenty of time.
7	Cria coruo, y sacar te ha el hojo.	Cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos.	I gave you stick to break my own head with.
8	Por turbia que este, no digas de esta agua no beuere.	Nunca digas 'De esta agua no beberé'.	Don't say I'll never drink of this water, how dirty soever it be.
9	El dinero va al dinero, y el hogar al cauallero.	Dinero llama dinero.	Money begets money.
10	Pan y vino, andan camino, que no moço garrido.	Con pan y vino se anda el camino.	Things never seem so bad after a good meal.
11	El corcobado no vee su corcoba, y vee la de su compañon.	Ningún jorobado ve su joroba.	The hunchback does not see his own hump, but sees his companion's.
12	En Abril aguas mill, en Mayo tres o quatro.	Abril, aguas mil.	April weather, rain and sunshine, both together.

13	Quando la rana tuuiere pelo, seres vos bueno.	cuando las ranas críen pelo	when pigs fly
14	No pidas al olmo la pera, pues no la lleua.	pedir peras al olmo	to ask the impossible
15	Leuâtár la liebre, para que otro medre.	levantar la liebre	to let the cat out of the bag
16	Buscays cinco pies al gato y el no tiene sino quatro.	buscarle cinco pies al gato	To complicate matters, to make life difficult
17	A buen entendedor, breue hablador.	A buen entendedor, pocas palabras bastan.	A word to the wise is enough.
18	Mal de muchos, gozo es.	Mal de muchos, consuelo de tontos.	Two in distress make sorrow less.
19	Casa con dos puertas, no la guardan todas dueñas.	Casa con dos puertas, mala es de guardar.	A house with two doors is difficult to protect.
20	Quiẽ peces quiere, mojar se tiene.	El que quiera peces que se moje el culo.	He that would have eggs must endure the cackling of hens.
21	El perro del hortelano, ni come las verças, ni las dexa comer al estraño.	El perro del hortelano, que ni come ni deja comer.	The dog in the manger won't eat the oats or let anyone else eat them.
22	Rodar ventura, hasta la sepultura.	Genio y figura, hasta la sepultura.	The leopard cannot change his spots.
23	Quien lengua ha, a Roma va.	Preguntando se va a Roma.	Better to ask than to go astray.
24	Al enemigo, si buelue la espalda, la puente de plata.	A enemigo que huye, puente de plata.	It is good to make a bridge of gold to a flying enemy.
25	Câtarrillo que muchas vezes va a la fuente, o dexa el asa, o la frente.	Tanto va el cántaro a la fuente que al final se rompe.	The pitcher goes so often to the well, that it is broken at last.
26	A palabras locas, orejas sordas.	A palabras necias, oídos sordos.	For mad words, deaf ears.
27	Suelas y vino, andan camino.	Con pan y vino se anda el camino.	Things never seem so bad after a good meal.
28	Mas vale paxaro en mano, que bueyre bolando.	Más vale pájaro en mano que ciento volando.	A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
29	Ojos que no veen, coraçon que no quiebra.	Ojos que no ven, corazón que no siente.	Out of sight, out of mind.
30	De tal leña, tal morceña.	De tal palo tal astilla.	Like father, like son.
31	Por mucho madrugar, no amanece, mas ayna.	No por mucho madrugar amanece más temprano.	Time will take its course.
32	Gato escaldado, del agua fría ha miedo.	Gato escaldado, del agua fría huye.	Scalded cats fear even cold water.

33	Quien burla al burlador, cien dias gana de perdon.	Quien roba a un ladrón, tiene cien años de perdón.	The devil laughs when one thief robs another.
34	Arde verde por seco, y pagan justos por peccadores	pagar justos por pecadores	The innocent pay for the sins of the guilty.
35	Cobdicia mala, saco rompe.	La avaricia rompe el saco.	Grasp all, lose all.
36	En burlas ni en veras, con tu señor no partas peras.	partir peras con alguien	fall out with somebody
37	En consejas, las paredes han orejas.	Las paredes oyen.	Walls have ears.
38	Si tal fuesse lo roto como lo descosido, no auria nada perdido.	Nunca falta un roto para un descosido.	You can always find a companion in misfortune.
39	A hambre, no ay mal pan.	A buen hambre, no hay pan duro.	Hunger never saw bad bread.
40	Rascar y comer, comienço han menester.	El comer y el rascar, todo es empezar.	Eating and scratching, it's all in the beginning.
41	El carnero encantado, que fue por lana y boluio tresquilado / Ires por lana, y vernes tresquilada.	Ir por lana y volver trasquilado.	to get more than you bargained for
42	Ni vn dedo haze mano, ni vna golondrina verano / Vna golōdrina, no haze verano.	Una golondrina no hace verano.	One swallow doesn't make a summer.
43	Dichoso el varō, que escarmiēta en cabeça agena, y en la suya nō. / Escarmentar en cabeça agena.	escarmentar en cabeza ajena	to learn from somebody else's mistakes

Table 1, Selection of 16th-century proverbs, their current version, and English equivalents.

Curriculum Vitæ

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Ramón Martí Solano is a lecturer at the Department of English, University of Limoges, France. He read Spanish and English at the University of Seville, Spain, and did an MA in Anglo-Germanic Philology in the same institution. He worked as a Spanish exchange teacher at the University of Harvard, USA, and at Joseph Chamberlain College in Birmingham, UK. He has also been a lecturer in Spanish at the Paris School of Political Sciences and a lecturer in English at the University of Poitiers, France. His main field of research is phraseology and his doctoral thesis deals with variation and innovation of phraseological units in the British press. Other

research interests include paremiology, lexical semantics, corpus linguistics, lexicography, lexical morphology and semantics, corpus linguistics, contrastive linguistics, language contact and Anglicisms. He has collaborated as a proof-reader in the project “Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond: A Cross-linguistic and Cross-cultural Research Project”. He is a member of the European Society of Phraseology (Europhras) and of the International Association of Paremiology (AIP-IAP). He has published several articles on paremiology, phraseology, word-formation, discourse analysis and lexicography in Spanish, French, and English. He is a member of the research project Aliento (www.aliento.eu) on the circulation of proverbs between the East and the West.