

# LITUANUS

LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Volume 41, No.4 - Winter 1995

Editor of this issue: Robert A. Vitas, Lithuanian Research & Studies Center

ISSN 0024-5089

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## It ain't exactly so! English-Lithuanian Dictionary of Idioms.

Edited by Evelyn Kolupaila-Masiokas and Bruno Masiokas. Aurora, Colorado 1995. Paperback. 506 pages. (Raguva Press, B.V. Masiokas, 13902 E. Marina Dr., #404 Aurora, CO. 80014, USA).

This is the very first dictionary of its kind: a bilingual dictionary of (American) English idioms with their equivalents in Lithuanian. We use the word "equivalents," but idioms in one language are seldom word for word equivalents in another language. Perhaps, approximations, explanations, semi-translations or descriptions would be more precise.

On page "Contents-2," we find that there are 9461 English (American) idioms which the editors compiled from several idiom and other types of English dictionaries including bilingual dictionaries.

The editors took a broad definition of an (American / English) idiom phrase, e.g., "to drive somebody or something home" (pg. D-16). If you use this phrase to signify that "you drive someone home" then this is not an idiom. However, if you use this expression meaning "to argue strongly" then it is considered idiomatic.

I think that this is a good approach; more idioms, even the "semi-idioms" are usually included in this dictionary. *A propos*, no one actually knows exactly how many idioms there are in American-English, but 10,000 idioms is a good estimation.

An excellent feature of the dictionary is that along with each idiom explanations of the various meanings are provided in English. Thus, such an expression as "to get warmed up" (pg. G-18) is given in both languages. This is very useful for those interested in learning English or Lithuanian. This is especially beneficial for translators and interpreters.

For some of the English idioms, we find excellent Lithuanian idioms. For example "silence is golden" (S-27) is translated into Lithuanian as "tyla gera byla"; or "a silver-tongued orator" (S-27) is rendered as "auksaburnis, gražbylys." *Verbatim* translations of these two idioms would sound ridiculous.

An American baseball expression "not to get to first base" is found on page F-13. Although there are a few baseball teams in Lithuania, such expressions have very limited usage there. Thus, the Lithuanian equivalent has nothing to do with any "base."

The editors, we assume, could simply not find any similar idiomatic phrases in Lithuanian in some cases. Therefore, for "nutty as a fruitcake" (N-10) is simply given in Lithuanian as "kvailas, pamišęs" which means "stupid, or crazy." More picturesque expressions like "durnių karalius" ('king of idiots'), "visiškai sukvailėjęs" ('completely idiotic'), or "kvailas kaip čebato aulais" ('as stupid as the upper part of a boot'). There is hope that a possible second edition, prepared by a larger team perhaps, will be even better.

One has to admire the hard work, patience, and perseverance that was necessary to gather and list all the expressions. The verb "to get" has eighteen pages and the verb "to give" has eight pages. However, some entries may be misleading; "round the clock" (pg. R-16) is translated as "be pertraukos" or "ištiesai." I think that the closest Lithuanian expression would be "visą parą" meaning literally for 24 hours in duration.

Only the idiomatic and not the literal meaning is given for certain idioms. After all, "to get the picture" (G-16) is primarily used as indicated "to understand the whole situation;" it may also mean "to receive, accept a picture, i.e., a painting, photograph," etc. On the same page, we find the expression "to get the sack" given only in the sense "to be dismissed, discharged or fired." This is appropriate; although one can imagine someone buying a sack or bag. One can hardly imagine someone saying "He's got the sack." Most probably someone would say "He has a sack," or "He's bringing, or holding a sack," etc. Thus we see that it is appropriate to give only the idiomatic meaning when the literal meaning is hardly ever used.

As we have mentioned in previous articles ("Some Remarks on Idioms:" *Lituanus* 40:1 (1994), pgs. 54-64, and "A Few More Remarks on Idioms:" *Lituanus* 40:3 (1994), pgs. 24-26), in many cases an equivalent idiom from one language to another is impossible. In our opinion the editors of this unique dictionary, in most cases, did an adequate job. It remains for future revisers and editors to improve it.

Since I am a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, I cannot help but mention that the Ivy League can be found in this dictionary as follows: "*Ivy League, the* (a group of eight colleges in the Northeastern United States) aštuonių universitetų grupė šiaurės rytų JAV dalyje" (pg. 1-14). I assume that the editors must have found the "Ivy League" listed in one of the dictionaries that they used. But is this an idiom? I am not sure, but I still think it was appropriate to include it. Only I wonder if in future editions it would be proper to include more of the academic nomenclature such as "March Madness," and "The road to the Final Four," etc.

I suppose that we shall never agree on the exact count of the idioms in any language. Some stay in a language for a long time while others tend to disappear. Regardless, this book is a very useful dictionary. Now someone should compile a companion book — a Lithuanian-English Idiom Dictionary!

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