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THE FASCINATING WORLD OF WIDESPREAD IDIOMS: A TRIBUTE TO ELISABETH PIIRAINEN (1943-2017)

I dedicate this review essay to the memory of the world-renowned researcher into international phraseology Elisabeth Piirainen, who left this world unexpectedly on 29 December 2017. Her outstanding scholarship and unmatched dedication to phraseology will serve as an inspiration to many present and future scholars. May her soul rest in peace!

Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond. Toward a Lexicon of Common Figurative Units. By Elisabeth Piirainen. New York, Washington, D.C./Baltimore, Bern, Frankfurt, Berlin, Brussels, Vienna, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012. Pp. 591; *Lexicon of Common Figurative Units. Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond. Volume II*. By Elisabeth Piirainen. In cooperation with József Attila Balázsi. New York, Bern, Frankfurt, Berlin, Brussels, Vienna, Oxford, Warsaw: Peter Lang, 2016. Pp. 776.

The two parts of Elisabeth Piirainen's last magisterial opus titled *Widespread Lexicon of Common Figurative Units. Toward a Lexicon of Common Figurative Units* (henceforth Volume One) and *Lexicon of Common Figurative Units. Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond. Volume II* (henceforth Volume Two), which appeared as volume 5 (in 2012) and volume 10 (in 2016) in Wolfgang Mieder's *International Folkloristics* series (with Alan Dundes as its Founding Editor), should be discussed against the background of the comparatively short lifespan but remarkable recent development of phraseology as a scholarly field as well as in the context of Piirainen's previous work. Because the books reflect the progress and findings of the international project *Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond*, launched by Piirainen in 2005 and stretching over a period of almost twelve years, they should be regarded as one work in two

parts. As one of the odd 250 odd participants in the project, over the years I was privileged to witness firsthand the commitment, perseverance and unbending determination with which Elisabeth Piirainen pursued her goals notwithstanding the setbacks that kept emerging, among which the sheer scope of the work, the difficulties in finding informants, the unexpected problems arising from the specifics of the different stages of the investigation that had to be explained within the proposed theoretical framework, and, sadly, the fragility of human life. A careful reading of the books shows the impeccable intellectual character of their author, her absolute honesty in reflecting all of the aspects and stages of her endeavor, each with its own insights and specific problems, and frankly admitting to the hardships she had to grapple with and eventually overcome or leave for others to deal with. In every step of the way she viewed her extensive work as an intermediary stage in the history of idiom research, as a background for further research to be conducted by others after her.

In terms of their place in the field of phraseology as a thriving branch of linguistics today, the two books, with their total of 1367 pages and impressive scope of data under study, can be seen as the climax of what has been achieved by the world's distinguished phraseologists over a period of over a century (i.e., since the "founding" of phraseology in 1905 by Ferdinand de Saussure's disciple Charles Bally with his work *Précis de stylistique* whose ideas were subsequently developed in *Traité de stylistique française*, 1909, and *Linguistique générale et linguistique française*, 1932) (Kaldieva-Zaharieva 2013: 17). The present two-volume study builds on the basic findings of phraseology proper that emerged during the couple of decades in the middle of the twentieth century, when the linguists in Europe began to shift their attention from the lexeme as the number one linguistic sign to the ready-made word combinations in written and spoken language functioning as parts of the sentence or (short) self-contained lines in conversational turns. For many years, the phraseological units in a language were thought to be the most difficult word combinations to translate into a foreign language (cf. Vlahov, Florin 1980 [1963]), a practical problem undoubtedly providing an important stimulus to much of the research in the new field. Phraseology quickly began to attract new adherents first in Eurasia, and then in Eastern and Western Europe and the

United States, where scholars began studying and using the Russian models for developing their own approaches (Cowie 1998: 209). With time, the results obtained opened new vistas for further research so that today phraseology has become a firmly established branch of linguistics. To this attests the truly impressive number of book-length studies (apart from the "avalanche" of smaller studies and articles) published since the middle of the twentieth century until present-day times (cf. Vinogradov 1946, 1977 [1947], Larin 1956, Amosova 1963, Archangel'skij 1964, Teliya 1966, Zhukov 1967, 1978, Babkin 1968, 1970, Chernysheva 1970, Kunin 1972, Makkai 1972, Royzenzon 1973, Fedorov 1973, Molotkov 1977, Dobrovol'skij 1978, 1988, 1990, Mokienko 1980, Raichstein 1981, 1981, Nicheva 1987, Korhonen 1987, Harald 1988, Muratov 1990, Ďurčo 1994, Palm 1997, Cherdantseva 2000, Gonzales Rey 2002, Omazić 2005, Donalis 2009, 2011, Jesenšek 2013, Kaldieva-Zaharieva 2013, Vasilenko 2016). In more recent times, scholars have taken up designing new methodological tools based on the findings of cognitive linguistics, linguoconceptology and linguoculturology (cf. Teliya 1996, Cherdantseva 2000, Baranov, Dobrovol'skij 2008, Dobrovol'skij, Piirainen 2009, Kovshova et al 2013, Arsenteva (ed.) 2014), while others concentrate on monolingual and/or comparative and contrastive studies of large corpora of phraseological units across two or more languages applying some aspects of these approaches in specific ways (Fleischer 1982, 1997, Hessky 1987, Földes (Hrsg.) 1992, 1996, 2009 (Hrsg.), Schemann 1993, Shanskiy 1996, Kaldieva-Zaharieva 2005, Dobrovol'skij, Piirainen 2005, Fiedler 2007, Scandera (ed.) 2007, Sosiñski 2009, Chastikova 2009, Zámečníková 2011, Kovshova et al 2013, Blanco 2014, Ha 2016). The results of their work are often used for the construction of comprehensive monolingual, bilingual or multilingual phraseological dictionaries and thesauruses which try to blend the traditional diachronic approach with the synchronic and linguocultural approach (e.g. Mokienko 2005). The work of the steadily growing number of scholars in this field is summarized and annotated in Wolfgang Mieder's colossal (of 1133 pages) two-volume international phraseological bibliography (Mieder 2009). Still another group of phraseological studies of a more literary character is concerned with the use of phrases in literary and political texts, an

example of which is (among truly a plethora of works in this vein), Wolfgang Mieder's book-length study *Call a Spade a Spade: From Classical Case to Racial Slur. A Case Study* (2002). Viewed in this broad context, the WIs Project and its accompanying two books can be seen both as a continuation of the major achievements in linguistics and phraseology as well as a truly pioneering work in that it combines most effectively the etymological, synchronic and cognitive approaches in phraseological cross-cultural studies as well as making use of an unprecedented (in terms of scope an detail) corpus of empirical data gleaned from a linguistic area covering all the major languages spoken in Europe and many lesser-used ones (73 for Volume One and 78 for Volume Two in all) as well as the languages of close to twenty speech communities outside of Europe, which makes the total number of languages included in the project and books nearly 100 (!).

The writing of the books ran parallel with the progress of the project, which was organized on a completely voluntary basis. In the course of more than a decade, hundreds of explanations of idioms were sent back and forth via email to Elisabeth Piirainen by the collaborators from all over Europe and elsewhere. The roughly 250 informants were engaged in providing answers in their own native languages to a series of carefully constructed questionnaires. The large amount of data selected for the analysis (a total of more than 470 idioms for both books) out of the larger pool of idioms collected, together with the rigorous and exacting up-to-date research methodology applied to them should disperse any doubts concerning the validity of the author's final conclusions.

These two volumes also mark the climax of Elisabeth's Piirainen own extensive work on idioms, which stretches over several decades. It was performed on her own or in collaboration with other scholars, of whom perhaps the most notable co-author was the world renowned linguist Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij. This study, especially in terms of its theoretical foundations, builds considerably on the findings presented in Piirainen and Dobrovol'skij's more recent two book-length studies *Figurative Language. Cross-cultural and Cross-linguistic Perspectives* (Dobrovol'skij, Piirainen 2005) and *Zur Theorie der Phraseologie: Kognitive und kulturelle Aspekte* (Dobrovol'skij,

Piirainen 2009). The present project, especially with regard to Volume Two (where his participation is respectfully acknowledged) is realized in collaboration with the Hungarian linguist József Attila Balázsi, an outstanding scholar familiar with several languages from different linguistic families and groups.

The two volumes follow strictly the logical sequence of a typical classical investigation in the old European tradition. Volume One (pp. 591) is made up of eleven chapters. It starts with a Preface (pp. 1–4) and the list of participants in the project (pp. 5–8) and goes on with three theoretical chapters (One, Two and Three, pp. 9–72), titled respectively "Europe and Europe-wide Linguistic Studies", "Conventional Figurative Language", and "Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond: Theoretical Approach", the main objective of which is to lay down the methodological foundations of the study and explain the terminology used in it. This very substantial theoretical part is followed by an equally substantial fourth empirical chapter (pp. 73–102) titled "Collection and Presentation of Widespread Idioms: Empirical Approach", which dwells on five major aspects of the organization of the lexicon that proceed from the theoretical framework: the steps in collecting the data, the linguistic situation in Europe, the languages represented in the project, the way the data are presented, and some relevant geographical and sociolinguistic aspects of the latter. Chapters Five through Ten (pp. 105–512), which make up the bulk of the book, is the lexicon proper. In it, the idioms are organized thematically around the six major types of textual sources of origin that have emerged as a result of the etymological investigation: Chapter Five, "Antiquity as a Source of Widespread Idioms" (pp. 105–170); Chapter Six, "The Bible as a Source of Widespread Idioms" (pp. 171–254), Chapter Seven, "Various Ancient Sources of Widespread Idioms" (pp. 255–350); Chapter Eight, "Post-classical Literary Works as Sources of Widespread Idioms" (pp. 351–394); Chapter Nine, "Proverbs and Proverbial Units of Medieval and Reformation Times as Sources of Widespread Idioms" (pp. 395–444), and Chapter Ten, "Fables, Folk Narratives, and Legends as Sources of Widespread Idioms" (pp. 445–512). Each of the six chapters in the lexicon closes with a brief "Conclusions" section that summarizes and discusses the intermediary results. Chapter Eleven (pp. 513–530) presents the general conclusions and main results of the entire

first phase of the study (until 2012). It is followed by a vast list of the literary sources used (pp. 531–560), two lists of abbreviations (pp. 561–562), and a very detailed index section (pp. 563–591) comprising eight individual indexes: of the maps in the book, the literary works, the depictions, the English idioms, the further linguistic units, the languages and groups of languages, the subjects, and the names used in the study. The different chapters of the book as well as each single entry can stand as separate, self-contained units, while also complementing each other, each one being an indispensable part of the whole. There is a large number of cross references dispersed throughout the book, a great help to the reader who may otherwise easily lose his/her way in the maze of vast data. The volume is superbly organized and remarkably easy to follow for such an extensive work.

In Chapter One, "Europe and Europe-wide Lingustic Studies", the author traces the history of the problem and introduces the key concepts of the study – Europe, European languages, Eurolinguistics, European Sprachbund/SAE area, Europäische Universalien, Abendländische Bildfeldgemeinschaft, linguistic typology, phraseology, paremiology, idiom, ФЕ-интернационализмы, figurative language, and Inter-Phraseologismus, each of which is discussed against the relevant background knowledge currently available, leading the reader to the conclusion that "the figurative lexicon of the languages spoken in Europe has until now received little attention in Europe-wide studies, including Eurolinguistics" (p. 18). While in principle Piirainen acknowledges the importance of culture in idiom research, as her many other studies including the present one abundantly sho, she right from the start argues against the basic premise of anthropological linguistics about the intrinsic relationship between a given language and its corresponding culture[1]. But here the author does that in relation not to one specific language and its culture (as she states on p. 513, and, indeed, several more times in both volumes), but the broader notion of a common linguistic Europeanness thought of as a special entity with a core and a periphery: "… within "cultural-anthropological" approaches to the linguistic situation in Europe … cultural conditions and the linguistic situation are confused. The exclusion of the "Orthodox world" or the Islamic states in Southeastern Europe from Europe is based on the biased assumption that cultural and linguistic fea-

tures develop in parallel ways" (p. 12, footnote 6). The reasons for taking such a stand are made explicit in the unfolding of this idea: "we must now avoid a new romanticism of trying to draw a dividing line between the languages of Europe and those of other continents in an attempt to establish a European "community feeling" or, even worse, trying to reconstruct some kind of "European mentality" or "European worldview" by means of the "Lexicon of Common Figurative Units"" (pp. 12–13). The argument proposed in support of this claim however is not fully convincing: "in order to claim [a European] exclusivity [of the cultural and areal-linguistic structure of Europe], all of the remaining approximately 6,500 languages spoken around the world would have to be analyzed in view of their entire figurative lexicon" (p. 13), a task that is both untenable and impractical. The first chapter closes with some well-grounded criticism of the major cross-linguistic studies of idioms conducted so far (pp. 28–30).

Chapter Two, "Conventional Figurative Language", dwells on the distinctive features of idioms as opposed to other linguistic units in order for the author to arrive at a definition of the term widespread idiom. The discussion of the "conventional figurative units" and all "other types of metaphorical expressions" unfolds into an in-depth comparative analysis of a plethora of relevant terms, some of which have already been introduced, e.g., phraseology, phraseme, one-word and multi-word units, collocations, proverbs (figurative and non-figurative) and proverbial phrases (pp. 31–42). Piirainen does not devote too much space to discussing the origins, essence and basic aspects of phraseology per se, arguably because she does not consider this topic so central to the present study, but also probably because it has already been discussed multiple times in her numerous other works. In the next section of this chapter, 2.1.5, Subcategories of Widespread Idioms (pp. 42–44), the 380 idioms "in a broad sense" included in the "Lexicon of Common Figurative Units" are divided into seven groups along a morpho-syntactic set of criteria: 15 sentence idioms (*the die is cast, God only knows*, which are full sentences, and *a tooth for a tooth, after us the deluge*, which are implicit sentences), 280 verb idioms, by far the largest group of all (*to rule with an iron hand, to tighten one's belt*), 65 noun idioms (*a sacred cow, a wolf in sheep's clothing*),

25 adverbial idioms (*in the twinkling of an eye, from the cradle to the grave*), 10 adjectival idioms (*as hungry as a wolf, as poor as a church mouse*), whose status is uncertain as they are most often used predicatively, 13 similes (*to collapse like a house of cards, to be dropping like flies*), and 15 irreversible binomial idioms (*to move heaven and earth, from head to foot*). In this classification, the author follows the generally accepted principles of phraseology. Piirainen stresses though, that the idioms may belong to more than one subcategory and that this shouldn't bear on their comparability across different languages. The second section of Chapter Two (pp. 44–54) deals with the cultural foundation of idioms. By this the author means their cognitive aspect and its perception. It is discussed in the context of the Russian psychological tradition based on the concepts of idiom "motivation" and "inner form/image" of the idiom, introduced by Alexandr Potebnya at the end of the XIX century (cf. Potebnya 1905, Zhukov 1978: 12–13, Muratov 1990) and developed by the next generation of linguists, an issue that has long been central to idiom research as such and that has been explored and applied extensively in Piirainen's own work (cf. Dobrovo'lskij, Piirainen 2005, and also Volume Two: 20). As is to be expected, the application of these concepts to the idioms in this study shows that "[a]ll of the 380 widespread idioms … identified are clearly motivated" (p. 48). The implications of this fact are of paramount importance for conducting cross-linguistic contrastive studies, since, as the author explains, "this means that most speakers of the various languages of our project can activate certain knowledge structures to make sense of the use of a given idiom in the meaning conventionally ascribed to it. The relationship between the two conceptual levels, between the mental image invoked by the lexical structure and the figurative meaning, becomes comprehensible to them." Piirainen then points out insightfully that "[t]his semantic transparency is certainly an important prerequisite for the wide dissemination of these idioms" (ibid.). In order to explain her choice of intertextuality as a criterion for grouping idioms of various languages together, Piirainen places it in the broader concept of motivation: "Intertextuality is understood here as the relation of conventional figurative units and existing texts" (p. 49). Her view of intertextuality thus becomes a valuable extension of Potebnya's central

premise. She introduces the term blending for denoting multiple motivation, and illustrates this phenomenon with the idiom *to be in seventh heaven*, which, as she explains, is motivated in several different ways: by the conceptual metaphor HAPPY IS UP, by the word *heaven,* which invokes associations of bliss and happiness, by the symbolic meaning of the number *seven,* i.e., many, very, and by intertextuality (i.e., the presence of the word *heaven* in the Bible) (pp. 51–51). By examining the history of some other idioms, e.g., *to fish in troubled waters, the Good Samaritan, to tilt at windmills, to swallow a bitter pill*, the author concludes that the reason for their wide dissemination across many languages is not synchronic, but historical, i.e., it is due to their existence in identifiable texts that have found their way into the various literatures of Europe both in the original (such as Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Adagia* in Latin) or in translation (pp. 52–53). In section 3 of the same chapter, Piirainen returns to the term intertextuality to interpret it within a phraseological framework rather than within its conventional literary and paremiological framework (pp. 54–55). Another useful tool developed by the author is the rigorous classification of the different types of intertextuality (pp. 56–58) that can be observed in idiom research. Seven types are identified: 1) direct quotations (*to be balanced on a knife-edge* (Iliad), *the silent majority* (President Nixon), 2) idioms summarizing or alluding to a text/text fragment (*forbidden fruit*, *to bear one's cross*, both with biblical allusions), 3) idioms that belong to both groups (*much ado about nothing*, *the last of the Mohicans*, which are both titles and summaries of literary works), 4) proverbial quotations (*a wolf in sheep's clothing, the die is cast*, which belong to two consecutive layers of sources), 5) idioms that have changed their lexical composition and/or figurative meaning from their original texts (*the black sheep in the family, to be a double-edged sword*), 6) idioms coming from two or more sources (*not to be able to hurt a fly, to prick one's ears*), and 7) idioms, whose original text cannot be clearly identified. In this study then, intertextuality is proposed as a most convenient research tool, which brings to the fore the grounding of idioms in the literary texts of a culture rather than on physical perception, thus showing that "many seemingly "natural" concepts to be found in the figurative lexicon do not go back to people's direct experiences or observation of na-

ture, but to conceptualizations founds in works of literature, legends, folk narratives, classical and biblical texts, cinema films, and other old or modern texts" (p. 58). We can see that the term cultural foundation [of idioms] in Piirainen's interpretation has very specific denotations as it also involves intertextuality.

Chapter Three, "Widespread Idioms in Europe and Beyond: Theoretical Approach", introduces the term widespread idioms through suggesting six criteria for identifying this type of linguistic units and their variants and proposes a working definition of the term. The criteria include geographical and genetic distance of languages, a similar lexical structure, the same figurative core meaning, their historical development and cultural coinage, and their image component that relates to a culture-bound knowledge structure (pp. 59–62). These criteria are summarized in a terse and exhaustive definition: "… idioms that – when their origins and particular cultural and historical development is taken into account – have the same or similar lexical structure and the same figurative core meaning in various different languages, including geographically distant and genetically unrelated languages" (p. 62). In the remaining ten pages of the chapter, the six criteria are explained via analyzing a set of well-chosen examples. The term equivalent idioms however need to be re-examined in the light of the dichotomy core figurative meaning (the content plane) vs. lexical structure (the expression plane). More suitable semantic terms, e.g., analogs, counterparts, or parallels, could have been proposed, which would explain the inclusion of the borderline cases more convincingly and would differentiate the whole group even more clearly from the false friends, i.e. the idioms whose wordings not only differ substantially from the basic one, but whose core figurative meanings have also diverged from it. For Piirainen, the most crucial factor accounting for the inclusion of an idiom in a group of widespread idioms appears to be its origin in a common identifiable text. If an idiom can be traced back to a common text from which a sufficiently large group of analogous idioms have derived in a sufficiently large number of unrelated languages, this common origin determines this idiom's WI status.

Chapter Four, "Collection and Presentation of Widespread Idioms: Empirical Approach", discusses the empirical aspects of the study. After an account of the steps of the procedure (the col-

lection of the linguistic data, the selection of the list of idioms for the study, the construction of the questionnaires, and the building of the network of collaborators) (pp. 74–75), the author gives a highly detailed picture of the linguistic situation of Europe, against the background of which the languages represented in the project are listed (pp. 76–89). This presentation makes very easy the comparison of the researched linguistic areal vs. the whole territory of Europe. The 73 European languages participating in this phase of the project are divided into a group of 38 major or standard languages (each of which has developed its own literary tradition) and another group of 35 lesser-used or minority languages, many of which are predominantly oral and some of which are endangered. Yiddish and Esperanto, which are not territorial languages, are also taken into account. Piirainen demonstrates truly outstanding knowledge of many lesser-used languages as well as their present-day status. Each idiom is rated in terms of the number of languages in which it exists. This is very helpful for conducting linguocultural studies where frequency and cultural elaborateness (i.e. semantic density) is of primary importance. This part of the book attests perhaps more than any other part to its author's colossal philological erudition and broad experience. In practical terms, it can serve as a frame of reference to scholars of language typology and areal linguistics in that it presents a highly detailed picture of the totality of language families, groups and individual languages spoken both in Europe and its adjacent territories. In terms of the goals pursued in the study, this chapter also shows most clearly the prodigious scope of the project. However, if a large colored map of Europe were also added to the chapter, it would have been of inestimable help to the readers who find it difficult to visualize the complex geographical distribution of the diverse great and small language families, groups and individual languages.

The micro-structure of the entries of the lexicon is determined by the main objectives of the study: to show the extent of dissemination, meaning, similarities and variations across languages, history and cultural underpinnings of a given widespread idiom across the full range of languages in which it appears. For this reason, the idioms are given in their original languages and systems of writing (including the Cyrillic alphabet, which is an additional proof of the superb academic quality of the book),

with the exception of a tiny group of more "exotic" alphabets that are represented in their official Latinized scripts. The idioms are conveniently translated into "meaningful and readable" English (the language of the book) so that their literal meanings become immediately clear to the reader, a much more pragmatic choice than resorting to the commonly applied and much more precise but rather cumbersome practice of interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme or word-by-word glossing. There are two ways of presenting the idioms: detailed, and space-saving, whose organization is the same for the first five sections (the code number, the idiom as heading, an explication of the figurative meaning, the cultural foundation and etymology of the idiom, and the references for the cultural information) but different for sections six and seven (the comments and the data). For the idioms "exhibiting some more striking features", the arrangement is accompanied with a black-and-white map of Europe and its adjacent territories where the full range of languages in which this idiom exists are shown in gray and white squares of different sizes in accordance with the size of the respective language community, or with a grid ("a concise version of the map") which allows the reader to visualize the distribution of the idioms across the 36 standard European languages. This presentation is very well thought out. It is unambiguous, clear, well-ordered, comprehensive, exhaustive, detailed and space-saving to an utmost degree. The information selected for inclusion in the entries should satisfy even the most demanding of researchers as well as the lay readers interested in the history of an idiom and its counterparts in the whole range of European and other languages. The reference sources for cultural information in both volumes are arguably among the most reliable ones; among them is a thirteen-volume thesaurus of the Germanic and Romance proverbs of the Middle Ages, Lutz Röhrich's three-volumed lexicon of proverbs, two large multilingual dictionaries of proverbs by Gyula Paszolay, and Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, to name but just the largest reference works, together with diverse case studies on individual phrases or proverbs. But the author's explanations do not stop here. They provide information about the register of the idioms and, when necessary, about their stylistic features.

The first of the six "lexicon" chapters, Chapter Five, "Antiquity as a Source of Widespread Idioms", is itself a powerful proof attesting to the common cultural heritage of the European nations. In it, a group of 37 widespread idioms of the type *Ariadne's thread, the Elysian fields, the golden age, Deus ex machina, Carpe diem!,* etc.) is analyzed (we are reminded that the pool from which they are selected is of course larger). They are aptly divided in three parts according to their origin: 13 idioms from classical mythology and narratives (*to open a Pandora's box, to sweep the Augean stables, the lesser evil, to have one foot in the grave*), 13 proverbial phrases current in antiquity (*the lesser evil, to preach to deaf ears, to add fuel to the fire*), and 11 quotations from Greek and Roman authors (*the naked truth, to combine business with pleasure, to be a walking dictionary*). The conclusions to this chapter strongly resonate with the idea of the classical roots of the century-long learned tradition of Europe: "…the majority of classical widespread idioms are known from the works of Homer, while Horace is the most prominent among the Roman poets. Besides well-known classical poets, historians and philosophers like Hesiod, Solon, Herodotus, Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Menander, Plautus, Cicero, Caesar, Lucretius, Vergil, Livy, Ovid, Tibullus, Plutarch, Juvenal and Lucian, there are also lesser-known writers (Lucanus, Flavius Josephus, Eunapios) and authors from Late Antiquity (St. Jerome, St. Augustine) whose words turned into widespread idioms […] " (p. 168). This section also dwells on ancient idioms that have made their way into the European languages not via textual sources, but because they are associated with a well-known historic event (*to cut the Gordian knot, a Pyrrhic victory, to cross the Rubicon*), come from ancient religious practices and superstitions (*der Nabel der Welt, to rest on one's laurels, a black day*), from gladiator fights (*bread and circuses, to give something thumbs up/down*), or from certain customs of the Romans (*something is not a bed of roses*, an idiom which has not reached WI status but is also well-known). By applying her version of intertextuality in combination with rigorous historical research, Piirainen thus becomes the first researcher to have established the true classical origin of some idioms that have previously been thought to have sprung from much more recent cultural layers.

Chapter Six, "The Bible as a Source of Widespread Idioms", takes us to a more familiar ground. As Elisabeth Piirainen reminds us in the beginning, research on Biblicisms has a long tradition (p. 171). She demonstrates broad knowledge of the various translations of the Bible and of much that has been written on the subject (she is also familiar with Vurban Vutov's dictionary of Bulgarian Biblicisms and with the two different versions of the Russian translations of the Bible, e.g., the Old Bulgarian (commonly known as Old Slavonic) translation, and the translation of the Bible into Modern Russian) (idem.). As in the preceding chapter, here she continues the debate about the legitimacy of the term internationalism, which, as she rightly insists, is sometimes used without any solid quantitative evidence to support it. The material in this chapter (42 idioms in all) is divided according to the origin of the idioms into a group of 18 idioms from the Old Testament (*forbidden fruit, by the sweat of one's brow, the Promised land, the black sheep (in the family)*), 9 idioms from the Old and New Testament (*to be a double-edged sword, a voice/someone crying in the wilderness, to go like a lamb/like sheep/as lambs to the slaughter*), and 15 idioms from the New Testament (*to separate the wheat/grain from the chaff, to hide one's light under a bushel, the daily bread, to cast pearls before swine*). This organization again shows the extent to which the author has striven to achieve to an utmost degree clarity and orderliness in presenting her material. One is struck by the great amount of detail, none of which is however superfluous, that is included in an average entry that would often cover three to four and sometimes five pages. These entries are a sure joy to read. The comments sections make use both of the relevant printed sources in all the languages with which the author is familiar, but also of the most recent information on the subject which cannot be found in books, but has probably been obtained from primary data, i.e. from the questionnaires and the correspondence with native speakers. We are reminded in the "Conclusions" section of the chapter that the origin of most of the widespread biblical idioms is (as is to be expected) found in two major books of the Bible: The Books of Moses, and the Gospel of Matthew (p. 251). Piirainen makes it a special point to remind us of the much more ancient historical roots and proverbial status of many of the idioms (e.g., *to see the mote in another's eye and not the beam in*

one's own) that had made their way into the Bible long before it was compiled as a single text, a fact confirmed in my own research on the *Book of Proverbs* (Petrova 2012). The choice of the Bible translation for the quotations – King James Bible – is perfect, as this version is universally accepted as "the English cultural Bible". Piirainen writes of five different types of intertextuality that underlie the emergence of the biblical idioms, determined by the degree of closeness of the idiom to its original text (pp. 252–253). Finally, the relationship between the existence of biblical idioms in a language and the type of dominant religion of its speakers is discussed via the examination of several cases, leading us to the surprising observation that they are not at all interdependent (!) (pp. 253–254). This chapter thus suggests a problem for further, linguoculturological research into biblical idioms aimed at exploring the reasons why their number is so large; in fact, it is much larger than that of the idioms that have acquired WI status (this holds good for the classical idioms as well). Among the biblical idioms that have not acquired WI status but are also very well-known are phrases such as the *Good Samaritan, doubting Thomas, the prodigal son, the scapegoat* (p. 252). It would be interesting to see, then, if the number of biblical idioms in a language regardless of whether they are widespread or not is consistent with the mainstream religion of the people who speak this language[2].

Chapter Seven, "Various Ancient Sources of Widespread Idioms", deals with a group of 36 idioms "whose textual situation is more complex and whose underlying ancient sources cannot always be kept apart" (p. 255). They are subdivided into three parts. The 11 idioms that make up the first subgroup (*an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, to move heaven and earth, one's better half, a wolf in sheep's clothing*) derive from oriental and rabbinic writing, the Apocrypha, the Bible, and literature of classical antiquity, but it is impossible to single out the oldest source of a given idiom as it appears in several different texts which are themselves closely related. The second subgroup (*to go through fire and water, someone's hair stands on end, to lead someone by the nose, to prick one's ears*) consists of 14 idioms which come from unrelated texts. The third subgroup is made up of ten idioms (*to get up with the left foot, to take something to heart, to be in one's element, the philosopher's stone*) that spring from old

philosophical texts and various superstitions. The author notes in the "Conclusions" section of the chapter that this group of idioms has a very high dissemination index: we learn that half of them are current in more than 50 of the 73 European languages and most of the idioms studied in the book that are current in more than 60 languages belong to this chapter. Thus, the idiom *to be someone's right hand/arm* is found in 64 languages, while *night and day* is found in 69 languages (p. 347). Again, this fact can serve as a starting point for further (ethnolinguistic and linguocultural) research. The chapter closes with further examples of familiar idioms deriving from classical or biblical texts but representing general human experience and world knowledge, whose origin cannot be firmly established and which have not reached WI status: e.g., *to lose one's thread, to shoot up like mushrooms, to rule with an iron hand, to tell someone something straight to his/her face, someone's last hour has come, to tear one's hair, in the twinkling of an eye* (p. 348–349).

Chapter Eight, "Post-classical Literary Works as Sources of Widespread Idioms", dwells on two further subgroups of a total of 21 more recent idioms. Some of them derive from dramas and world literature (11 idioms), others are identified in literary works of modern times, light fiction and cinema films (10 idioms). The chapter traces their complex history and dissemination in their countries of origin and elsewhere. They owe their popularity to works of European and American poets, writers, dramatists, politicians or film directors. Piirainen notes that apart from four widespread idioms from Shakespearian works, many of the other idioms disseminated through Shakespeare's plays, for example, which are very popular in the English-speaking world, have not attained WI status (among them are, e.g., *the rest is silence, there is something rotten in the state of Denmark, the wish is father to the thought* (which is also a proverb, R.P.), *come what may come*, *love labor's lost, the milk of human kindness*) (p. 351–352) (I should note that two of the small group of idioms listed here are well known in Bulgarian). Among the widespread idioms of the first subgroup proper are: *this is the beginning of the end* (with equivalents even in Arabic and Korean!), *much ado about nothing, to tilt at windmills, a storm in a teacup*, *to live in an ivory tower*, and some others. The second subgroup is slightly larger; among the idioms listed in it are: *the law of the*

jungle, the land of limitless opportunity, to bury the hatchet, to smoke the pipe of peace, the last of the Mohicans, *dolce vita*, etc. The origin of many of these idioms should be transparent to people well familiar with world (from a European perspective) literature. Piirainen notes, that the prominence of the writer behind the idiom has little to do with its dissemination index (p. 391). She points to the difficulties in separating some idioms as free, self-contained units from the corresponding literary works in which they appear (pp. 391–392). We learn from this chapter that the history of an idiom is often different from what is generally assumed. Thus, for instance, the idiom *Iron Curtain* was not coined by Sir Winston Churchill, as is usually thought, but had been current much earlier; as Wolfgang Mieder writes in one of his early studies, this idiom was popularized by Churchill in his famous speech of March 5, 1946 (Mieder 1981) (p. 393).

Chapter Nine, "Proverbs and Proverbial Units of Medieval and Reformation Times as Sources of Widespread Idioms" is a continuation of Chapter Five, which deals with the widespread idioms arising from ancient proverbs (the corresponding paremiological terms for denoting this type of idioms is truncated proverbs or proverbial phrases). The focus of this chapter are the idioms originating from medieval and Renaissance (Reformation in Piirainen's terminology) proverbs. Piirainen divides the small number of proverb idioms in this class (23 in all) according to their three main sources of origin: medieval proverb collections (8), medieval [or, rather, Renaissance or Reformation] proverb illustrations (6), and medieval literary texts (9). She starts each section of the chapter with a detailed account of the various sources of these proverbs before tracing their evolution into idioms. To the first subgroup belong idioms like *to foul one's own nest, the fifth wheel of the carriage, to take the bull by the horns, to fall between two stools, to howl with the wolves, to be armed to the teeth*. In the second subgroup we see idioms that have become popularized mostly by the famous painting of Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1520?–1569) and by some painters living before and after him (e.g., *to beat one's head against a brick wall, to put the cart before the horse, to be armed to the teeth*). The main source of the last subgroup of idioms (e.g., *to throw the baby out with the bath(water), to play with fire, to grasp at a straw, to play with fire*) is the vast 13-volume collection of thousands of

medieval proverbs Thesaurus Proverbiorum Medii Aevi with proverbs and proverbial phrases in Germanic and Romance languages, with which the author seems to be very well familiar. We are again reminded that the number of idioms in this group is much larger and that only a small group has reached the status of widespread idioms. In the "Concluding Remarks" (pp. 440–443), the author summarizes the conclusions that have emerged from the analysis of this group of idioms putting them in historical perspective. They are shown as reflecting the way of life of the people in the Middle Ages in all its variety: activities in the marketplace, barbers and bathing customs, archery, knighthood, coinage and minting money, legal matters. Like the remaining chapters, this chapter too can be used as a starting point for conducting further ethnolinguistic and linguocultural research.

Chapter Ten, "Fables, Folk Narratives and Legends as Sources for Widespread Idioms" is devoted to the idioms rooted in fables and jests or legends and folk tales. The part of widespread idioms in this otherwise substantial group is not very large (43). Piirainen conducts her etymological cross-cultural research on the analogy of proverb research into folklore, a theme of long standing in paremiology with which she is well familiar (cf. the number of references on p. 445). Again, we are reminded of the complexities and intricacies of etymological research, of the many stumbling blocks the scholar has to overcome in order to establish the true text that has given birth to an idiom out of several sources all of which seem equally legitimate and reliable, or to ascertain that it is simply a borrowing from another language, a task often next to impossible to accomplish. The following quotation would illustrate some of the hardships involved in this kind of research: "The symbolic function of HARE [in a group of idioms in German, West Frisian, French, West Aromanian, Lithuanian, Russian, Sorbian, Slovene, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Finnish, Udmurt, and Turkish, quoted in their original languages and all translating as 'cowardly/anxious as a hare'] FEAR, COWARDICE, can be inferred from the symbolic aspect of VIGILANCE which was transmitted through Roman authors, the "Physiologus", and once widespread folk narratives, in which the hare acts like a cowardly person […]". The idioms in this chapter are subdivided into four different subgroups. The first ten spring from Aesop's fables (*to dance*

to someone's tune, sour grapes, the lion's share, to fish in troubled/muddy waters), the second subgroup is made up of 18 idioms springing from jests and comical tales (*to carry water in a sieve, to build castles in the air, to search for a needle in a haystack, to sell the skin before you have caught the bear*), the third small subgroup (of 5 idioms) deals with the idioms arising from folk tales (*an ugly duckling, open Sesame!, to run with seven-league boots*), and the last eight idioms (*to play cat and mouse, as poor as a church mouse, to weep with crocodile tears, to lead a dog's life*) are rooted in animal tables and fabled animals. We are told that they were found in the 37-volume "Naturalis Historia" of Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79). One false friend, the Hungarian idiom *hétmérföldes léptekkel meggy* 'with seven-league boots' however should be removed from the list because its figurative meaning, 'making good progress', largely diverges from the core figurative meaning of the WIs group, 'to run in great speed' [i.e., to run at a great speed]. On the whole, such tiny omissions are extremely rare.

The final part of Volume One, titled "Conclusions", covers a good seventeen pages. It summarizes the findings of the whole study on several different levels, which is easily seen from the organization of the section and the distribution of its parts: 11.1 Preliminary Remarks (one page), 11.2 Attempts at Explaining Cross-linguistic Similarities of Idioms (9 pages, covering six different causes), 11.3 The Most Widespread Idioms and Probable Causes of Their Wide Spread (5 pages), 11.4 Sociolinguistic and Areal Linguistic Aspects (5 pages), and 11.5 Outlook (one page), which recalls the main goal of the research – to identify the totality of equivalent (or similar) idioms across the European languages (as well as beyond Europe, an addition coming as a natural extension of the study). The author reminds us of the fact that this volume deals with only half of the collected widespread idioms, 190 in number (those originating from identifiable sources), and that therefore all conclusions about the whole class must be considered preliminary until the remaining part of idioms are analyzed in the forthcoming second volume. But even at this stage, some tendencies have already made themselves felt (p. 513). Next, Piirainen gives a balanced and rigorous account of the results of this stage of the study. They are viewed in relation to a set of approaches suggested by other scholars of con-

trastive studies, which Piirainen tests against the new data. The conclusions are aptly exemplified by means of the 66 most widely disseminated idioms (p. 515). The author is well familiar with the major research in this field and demonstrates once again impressive knowledge of the subject, of which she makes brilliant use in building her argument. The approaches, which are dealt with in section 11.2, are as follows: genetic affiliation, influence of English, common European cultural heritage, polygenesis, the contact linguistic model, and independent recourse to the same textual source. Piirainen places the terms analogous or parallel proverbs/idioms within the framework of polygenesis. She tackles each individual approach from different angles to conclude that much more research has to be done to prove or disprove its validity. She then looks at the dissemination factors of the six most widely spread idioms in the European languages (those whose dissemination index is within the range of 69 and 62): *night and day, to be/fight like cat and dog, to be someone's right hand, to play with fire, to take someone under someone's wing, to tear/pull one's hair out* (pp. 522–523), before dealing with the group of sixty idioms just below the top of the WI list, looking for common features that may have underlain their dissemination. For the first small group of 6 idioms, the dissemination factors appear to be very diverse, while the ones in the second group of 60 owe their dissemination to textual sources ranging from works from antiquity, the Bible, various ancient sources, post-classical literature, medieval and later proverbs, and fables, tales and legends (pp. 524–525). These facts too may be used as a starting point for further ethnolinguistic and linguoculturological research aimed at discovering some even more fundamental reasons behind them. One particularly interesting discovery is that the dissemination of a large part of the idioms across Europe is due mostly to two prominent figures: Erasmus of Rotterdam and Pieter Bruegel the Elder (p. 525). The section closes with a discussion of the different sociolinguistic aspects of idiom distribution among the major languages as opposed to the lesser-used ones as well as with the problem of idiom uniformity and gaps [i.e., lacunas] across the languages in Europe, all with a view to the idea of a European core and a periphery, taking us to still another discovery, namely that "[t]he West Romance languages, considered to belong to a "core Europe" from the viewpoint of

structural linguistic disciplines do not always share the important similarities of the European languages in the realm of the figurative lexicon, while the Slavonic languages and other languages spoken in Southwestern Europe contribute greatly to the uniformity of the languages in Europe" (p. 529). This kind of rigorous and extremely detailed and exhaustive logical reasoning characterizes the whole study. Piirainen is never quick to come up with generalizations. She closes the volume with a warning about a most urgent task: "Figurative units such as idioms are among the most vulnerable elements of language; they begin to vanish in the first phase of a language becoming endangered. The documentation and research on these "vanishing figurative units" is an even more urgent task for linguists in the future than is the study of widespread figurative units in Europe and beyond" (p. 530).

The section titled "References" is truly vast. It covers 29 pages of works mostly in German and English and several other languages (most of the works of the Russian phraseologists, ethnolinguists and linguocultirologists, apart from several studies translated into English or German, are however missing). It itself requires a separate review describing the great diversity of valuable sources used for this exemplary study.

Before closing the review of Volume One, I would like to return to the beginning of the "Conclusions" part. This section right at the start recalls the main goal of the study: to demonstrate the great degree of sameness of a large number of idioms across many languages, a fact that, as the author reminds us again, strongly undermines the supposition that "idioms of one language had no parallels in the idioms of other languages and that they were ultimately untranslatable" (p. 513). Piirainen then adds in the same line of thought that the idea that "the figurative lexicon of a given language provides the basis for an idiosyncratic cultural worldview that mirrors some national-cultural character and mentality originating in national romantic thinking, which thought of nations as being identical to languages and cultural communities – something that even in Europe is nowhere the case – … has largely been disproved and abandoned since" (ibid., emphasis mine, R.P.). The present review is hardly the place to start a debate "in defense of" the basic tenets of ethnolinguistics and linguoculturology, the disciplines that aim specif-

ically at exploring the strong bond between a given language spoken by a human community (a tribe, an ethnic group, or a whole nation) and its culture, which the author does not accept. The findings from the plethora of works (many of them however in Russian, a language still largely unfamiliar to many Western scholars) in these two disciplines powerfully attest to the existence of peculiar and unique linguocultures. But individual research is very much a question of choice. If one agrees that there are thousands of idioms in the natural languages, hundreds of thousands of words in their lexicons and innumerable precedent texts in these languages, one would probably admit that although many of them could be very much alike across diverse cultures, many others may probably be different and specific. If we choose to look for the differences across languages instead of to the similarities, we would most certainly find them. Communication among the people across Europe and, indeed, the world is made possible via the common assumptions reflected in and denoted by the words and phrases in the natural languages as this study of stupendous scope abundantly proves, but the energy which maintains the dynamics and provides the life, diversity and growth that make communication possible, meaningful and worthwhile, springs from the differences. Why not suppose then that this magisterial study may inspire another study of its kind and – perhaps – scope, pursuing the twin idea – the explication of the specific cultural differences of the idioms in their individual languages.

Volume Two (pp. 776) of the study came out in 2016, four years after Volume One was published. It opens with a short Preface and Introduction (Chapter One) (pp. 5–28), which contains a large theoretical section. These parts are followed by thirteen chapters (Two through Fourteen) dedicated to the lexicon proper (pp. 29–666), a Conclusions and Main Results section (pp. 667–696), References (pp. 697–720), Abbreviations of the language names and maps (p. 721), a list of the documentation texts (p. 722), eight indexes (pp. 723–772) and a list of participants (pp. 773–776). This organization is an almost exact replica of the organization of the previous volume. As the author states in the Preface (pp. 1–4), this book is a continuation of Volume One, but also "clearly differs from it". Chapters Two through Seven (pp. 29–333) directly adjoin Volume One. The factor ac-

counting for the inclusion of the idioms in these additional chapters however is not intertextuality: as the author explains, the choice for inclusion is "not because the idioms originate in certain text passages (which may well be known through cultural contexts) but because the idioms have their origin in other aspects of human culture [e.g., art, games, historical events, skills and culture techniques, popular beliefs, symbols, aspects of material culture etc.]" (p. 2). Chapters Eight through Twelve (pp. 335–574) deal with an entirely new type of idioms, those representing nature in five of its major aspects, which can be seen from the titles: "Forces of Nature, Weather, Plants and Animals", "Time and Space", "Gestures, Postures, and Facial Expressions", "Physical Reactions and Sensations", and "The Human Body". Chapter Thirteen, "Textual Sources from Ancient, Medieval and Modern Times" (pp. 575–665) is a supplement to Volume One, while the last chapter of the lexicon, Chapter Fourteen, "Quotations, Terms and Views of Recent Modern Times" (pp. 635–666) covers the widespread idioms from some of the most recent sources (which makes it also part of Volume One). The part titled Conclusions and Main Results in this volume is longer than the one in Volume One since it summarizes the findings of this phase of the study as well as the whole work. The final parts of Volume Two are the same as those in its predecessor: "References" (pp. 697–720), "Abbreviations of the Language Names and Documentation Texts" (pp. 721–722), "Indexes" (pp. 723–772) and List of Participants (pp. 773 – 776).

In Introduction (Chapter One), the author presents once again the objectives and terminology of the study (pp. 5–9) before giving a summary of the empirical and theoretical approaches of the investigation (pp. 9–12); these sections repeat much of the basic information from the corresponding parts in Volume One in a condensed form. The definition of the term widespread idioms and the six criteria on which it is based is an indispensable part of the book, making it a self-contained work. Piirainen notes that the number of languages covered in this volume is now greater: the 73 European languages have now grown to 78; of them, 40 are well-established standard European languages and 32 are smaller, lesser-used languages. As in Volume One, Austrian German is not regarded as a separate language or as a variety of German, but is subsumed under the umbrella term

"German". In the same way, English with all its varieties is viewed as one single language (another proof of the supposition proposed by Wierzbicka and others of the existence of a historically and culturally rooted Anglo core uniting all of the various Englishes on the planet). This chapter, like its predecessor, lists all of the 58 (for this volume) Indo-European, 11 Finno-Ugric, 6 Turkic, 1 Caucasian and 1 Semitic languages participating in this phase of the project, together with five isolated languages spoken in Europe (Greek, Armenian, Basque, Albanian, and Yiddish), to which are added Esperanto (an artificial language), three Arabic dialects, six Asian languages, another six languages (Farsi, Bété, Mansi, Khanty, Thai, and Aklanon) plus seven new languages, which were the last to be included: Fruilian, Mirandese, Lower Sorbian, Montenegrin, Bashkir, Hindi, and Māori. The inclusion of Montenegrin, a Slavonic language traditionally indistinguishable from Serbian (Sussex, Cubberly 2006: 73), as a separate language however stands in sharp contrast with the lack of differentiation among the other standard languages that have long existed in several varieties, the most widely known example being the varieties of English just quoted, each of which notably has its own specific set of idioms. An explanation is very much needed here for clarifying this rather striking disparity, all the more so because the examples of the idioms in Montenegrin (as well as almost all of the examples in Croatian and Bosnian) are practically the same, unless we admit that the author has let the facts speak for themselves. The chapter continues with the distribution of the 280 new idioms analyzed in the book. Their organization is based on the true etymological origin of the idiom, which is often different from its image motivation (i.e., some idioms are not semantically transparent, like for example the idiom *to lick one's wounds*, whose image assigns it to the source concept animal behavior). The author illustrates the etymological approach with the idiom *to strike the nail on the head*, which as research shows derives from medieval archery and not from the practice of hammering nails as its image component might suggest (p. 20–21). In this phase of the project, Piirainen is even more keenly aware of the gradual nature of the semantics exhibited in some WIs (e.g., *to hold/put a gun/pistol to sb.'s head* and *to hold a knife to sb.'s throat*) (p. 26) as well as of the cases where the common figurative meaning is represented by a varie-

ty of different images (very much like in the proverbs *No rose without a thorn, No meat without bones, No land without stones*) (p. 27). She reiterates that what determines the inclusion of similar idioms in a WIs group is the combination of both a common structural model and a common figurative meaning (ibid.). Piirainen chooses to present the idiom equivalents of many languages in full length by including all of the "extra" information too (e.g. in footnotes, etc.), regardless of the length of the entry in order for future researchers into an idiom to be able to have access to the entire amount of data related to a particular idiom for conducting their own research (ibid.).

Chapter Two, "Theatre, Music. Sports and Games" (pp. 29–71) discusses the small group of 20 idioms originating from various cultural domains subsumed under the more general domain of entertainment (e.g., performing arts, sports, public entertainment and games). From them, the most productive ones appear to be theatre and music. The widespread idioms in this chapter are subdivided into 8 idioms pertaining to stage production and music (*behind the scenes, to be in the spotlight, the iron curtain, to play the second fiddle, to play the same old record*), 7 idioms from the domain of sports (*a blow below the belt, to throw in the towel, a race against the clock*), and 5 idioms related to games, playing and gambling (*to have an ace up one's sleeve, to be child's play, the game is up/over)*. In the "Conclusions" section Piirainen observes, that the cultural domain of fine arts does not seem to be productive at all since not even one widespread idiom has originated from it. She draws the reader's attention to the chronological discrepancies observed in the origin of the individual idioms in this category, many of which turn out to be quite recent, and to the difficulty in identifying their specific texts of origin; for two idioms, however, *to sing the same old tune/song, and the game is over/up*, the text of origin has been found: they are mentioned in Erasmus' "Adagia" (p. 71). This chapter gives ample opportunity for further etymological research.

Chapter Three, "History and War" (pp. 73–133) is made up of several parts. It starts with a short introduction, 3.1 "History and Armed Conflicts as Source Domains: Preliminary Remarks" to go on with the arrangement of the idioms according to their more specific domains: 3.2 "History of Ancient Times" (*the na-*

vel of the world, to cut the Gordian Knot, to rest on one's laurels, to cross the Rubicon), 3.3 "History of Medieval and Modern Times" (*to have blue blood, to play (the) devil's advocate, after me the deluge),* 3.4. "Fighting and Knighthood in the Middle Ages" (*to throw down the gauntlet, to pick up the gauntlet, to overshoot the mark, to beat others with their own weapons, to rule with an iron hand/fist, to take the reins*), 3.5 "Warfare and Weapons of Modern Times" (*to hold/put a gun/pistol to someone's head, to keep one's powder dry, cannon fodder, to be sitting on a powder keg, the alarm bell is ringing, the time bomb is kicking*) and summarize the results of the analysis in section 3.6 "History and War: Summary". There are many references to Volume One, especially in the concluding comments. These entries too are elaborately documented and very interesting to read and the author often engages in insightful reflections about the possible reasons underlying the linguistic phenomenon discussed. Let me illustrate this with an example from p. 133. "Medieval CHIVALRY, the outstanding culture of courtesy, did not extend to the whole of Europe in today's geographical sense. However, equivalents of the idiom with its special cultural background also penetrated languages of other European areas where the scenarios of chivalry have never been practised (e.g. Finnish, Balkan languages, Georgian, Maltese, Basque). From this, we can draw important conclusions. A WI like (H 14) [*to throw down / pick up the gauntlet*] gives evidence that the figurative lexicon does not primarily mirror the speaker's own environmental conditions or historical circumstances but tends to reflect fragments of world knowledge from foreign and distant cultures as well. Assumptions of an alleged congruence between the imagery underlying the figurative lexical units of a language and the world of experience of the language community in question may be rejected."

The number of widespread idioms (31) in this chapter is greater than the number of idioms originating from art, sports and games. This and the sheer size of the chapter speak volumes to the linguoculturologist in that it provides ample opportunity for further research, which can spread on linguistic items belonging to the same cultural domain on other levels (e.g., words, proverbs, jokes and anecdotes, narratives, etc.).

Chapter Four, "Intellectual and Technical Achievements" (pp. 135–177) dwells on 19 widespread idioms originating from the spheres of intellect and technology (*in black and white, from a to z, to read between the lines, to find a/the common denominator, the squaring of the circle, to reinvent the wheel, to roll back the wheel of history, to be only a cog in the wheel, at full steam, to give sb. the green light, to see the light at the end of the tunnel, to recharge one's batteries*). They are separated in two thematic subgroups. The closing of the "Conclusions" section is worth quoting, as it provides an insight into the author's typical way of reasoning about the causes that underlie the features of the idiom under discussion: "Several languages [Dutch, Yiddish, and Hungarian] created their own versions [of the English idiom *to give someone the green light,* whose equivalents in Dutch, Yiddish, and Hungarian translate literally as 'to set the light at green', 'to give [for sth.] a green street', and 'to provide green road for somebody']. The source domain of all of them is the signal system of traffic lights, which emerged in the 1920s, and spread gradually from the USA to other regions of the world. This is a good example to illustrate how various languages, independently of each other, used this – already widespread – image to create their own new idioms. The wordings of a number of idioms show that they cannot be 'Anglicisms': calques, borrowings or loan translations of the English idiom" (p. 177). The author again appears to be drawn to the idea of the great creative potential of the natural languages.

Chapter Five, "Special Concepts of the World" (pp. 179–238) deals with 16 widespread idioms related to folk beliefs, superstitions and religion, and 8 idioms related to birth and death. Among the idioms of the first group are *Speak of the devil (and he will appear), Go to the devil!/Go to hell!, to give someone (the husband) horns, old wives' tale, if looks/eyes could kill, the irony of fate, to draw/pick the short straw, to have a sixth sense, a black day, the/a sacred cow*, whereas examples of the second subgroup include the idioms *to cut the umbilical cord, to the last breath, to dig one's own grave, someone to turn in one's own grave, to sign one's own death warrant*, among others. The "Conclusions" section provides detailed and insightful ethnolinguistic and linguocultural comments on the bond between the image components of the idioms in this chapter, the cultural con-

cept encoded in them, and the natural environment and historical conditions that have given rise to them and in which they continue to thrive. In closing, Piirainen discusses the idiom *the/a sacred cow* (which is however the only idiom in this chapter that is related to religious customs that did not originate and are not practiced in Europe) as proof for the contrary thesis that "the experience of one's own community and the images that have penetrated the figurative lexicon of the language concerned must not run parallel; rather, the images of foreign cultures are especially popular as a basis of figurative expressions" (p. 328).

Chapter Six, "Cultural Symbols", (pp. 239–279) is an extension of Piirainen and Dobrovol'skij's earlier work on symbols, which resulted in the development of a framework that makes possible "to relate very different occurrences of symbols to each other" (p. 239). The author illustrates the symbolic knowledge behind the literal meaning of the motivational constituent of the idiom and the cultural codes outside language (myths, religion, folk beliefs, popular customs, fairy tales, iconography, fine arts, etc.) with the image of the wolf as a popular symbol of danger, malice, aggressiveness, evil, greed, poverty, economic despair (as in the idiom *to keep the wolf from the door* 'to ward off starvation or financial ruin; to maintain oneself at a minimum level') (p. 240). Apart from participating in idioms, the wolf as a negatively loaded symbol appears in other cultural codes such as fairy tales, where he is depicted as greedy, ravenous and murderous (p. 240). Piirainen stresses the difference between the symbolic and the metaphorical motivation of the image component of idioms, which bears on the difference between its symbolic function and the real characteristics it denotes. She explains that in the cases where the motivation of animal images in idioms springs from the real characteristics of the animals, these idioms are treated within the framework of "Nature". The hare as a symbol in cultural codes for example (and not as a real animal in nature) stands for a diverse range of qualities such as fertility, cyclic growth, tricky behavior and vigilance, among other things. Piirainen has discovered that the symbols most frequently motivating widespread idioms are those of animals and colors; other symbols are some precious metals (gold), and parts of the human body (heart, head and tongue). This chapter deals specifically with the idioms motivated by the symbols of animals and colors.

The widespread idioms motivated by animal symbolism make up a subgroup of eight idioms: *as proud as a peacock, as meek/gentle as a lamb, afraid / fearful / anxious / cowardly as a hare / rabbit, to feel like a fish in water, as busy as a bee*, etc. The entry of each idiom is again richly documented and the borderline cases and false friends are also shown, which is of great help to further researchers. Piirainen next discusses the idea of color symbolism by going back to the set of criteria that enables a color (or any other entity) to acquire the status of a symbol: "the color constituent must be separable from its phraseological context; the symbolic function must appear in several figurative units and be supported by symbols in cultural codes outside language" (p. 258). She illustrates the symbolic nature of the colors black and white via analyzing the idiom *to see everything in black and white* 'to characterize everything as either very good or very bad, without intermediate levels', comparing it to the idiom *in black and white*, which was discussed in Volume One (p. 259). Other widespread idioms dealt with in this subgroup are *to paint someone / something black*, *to paint someone / something white, the / a black list, the black market, the black death, the / a gray area, as white as snow, to see / look through rose-colored glasses, etc*. In the "Conclusions" section the author first summarizes the main points that have emerged as a result of the comparative analysis of all the individual idioms explained in this chapter, and then goes on to discuss the literary and religious origin of the symbolism motivating this class of idioms. Taken in their entirely, they seem to reveal a common (one might add, a characteristically European) outlook, that was "coined and handed down through writings of classical antiquity, Christianity, works on natural history, legends and other cultural codes" (p. 278).

In Chapter Seven, "Material Culture, Money and Living" (pp. 279–333), the widespread idioms are grouped according to the two most productive source domains that have emerged as a result of the comparative analysis of the largest groups of idiom equivalents obtained: money, trade and commerce (10 idioms), and food, clothes and housing (13 idioms). The discussion of each subgroup once again unfolds along historical lines, which is evident also from the quoted specialist literature in the field. Among the plethora of diverse referenced sources used for eluci-

dating the true origin and meaning of these idioms stands out the insightful study about the role of finance in economics, "The Ascent of Money. A Financial History of the World" by the world renowned contemporary historian Niall Ferguson (p. 282). Piirainen constantly demonstrates a very wide range of interests in many different spheres of knowledge, a truly unbounded inquisitiveness, a quality so typical of the archetypal scholar. To substantiate her claims, she resorts to a vast array of diverse sources some of which at first glance may seem to have very little in common with linguistics. Among the idioms assigned to this category we see *to pay someone in their own coin, to pay back in the same coin, the other side of the coin, at any price, to have a score to settle with someone, to launder money*, and some others. The second subgroup includes idioms such as *to let someone stew in his/her own juice, a milch* [sic] *cow*, *to put all one's eggs in one basket, to be grist for the mill, to wash one's dirty linen in public, to lose one's thread,* and *to have a roof over one's head*, to quote but a few. The "Conclusions" section of the chapter once again opens with a detailed comparative analysis of the idioms described, followed by a linguocultural commentary on the conclusions emerging from this part of the study focusing on the intrinsic bond between the different languages and the specific ways of life they represent: "The second part of this chapter examines idioms which go back to images of domestic life and everyday activities, how people prepare their food, manufacture their clothes or build their houses. These areas may vary regionally by concepts that the speakers of a given language community feel belong to their traditional culture, a fact that is also reflected in figurative lexical units. Idioms including constituents denoting culture-specific realia (e.g. English idioms with *apple pie*, Russian idioms with *samovar* or Finnish idioms with *sauna*) tend not to be common to other languages; on the contrary, the concepts behind the widespread idioms must be of a more general nature" (p. 332). Further, Piirainen postulates the proverb origin of a group of idioms (e.g., *to put all eggs in one basket, to pay someone in their own coin, a milch* [sic] *cow, to talk to a brick wall, and within one's four walls* (p. 333)), but provides supporting evidence for the first idiom only, leaving to other researchers the opportunity to discover the proverbs from which the remaining idioms have evolved.

Chapter Eight, "Forces of Nature, Weather, Plants and Animals" (pp. 335–398), starts with a reiteration of the well familiar culture vs. nature debate in the European tradition, which Piirainen deliberately ignores saying that she lets herself be guided by the data and the findings that emerge from their analysis rather than trying to uphold certain predetermined beliefs[3]. The idioms in this chapter fall into two subgroups: 11 idioms whose images are grouped around concepts of natural forces and weather (i.e., fire, water, snow, storm, thunderbolt), and another 9 idioms with plant and animal concepts related to "typical or innate behavior of animals, as they act in nature [i.e., not functioning as symbols]" (p. 365). The following examples serve as illustrations of these two subgroups of idioms: *to be caught between two fires, to keep one's head above water, a drop in the ocean, like a bolt from the blue, the calm before a storm, to lick one's wounds, rats leaving the sinking ship, to be dropping like flies*, etc. Piirainen's discussion of the imagery of the idioms is very much in line with the well-established ethnolinguistic and linguocultural models, e.g.: "Plants species vary regionally, so not many widespread idioms are to be expected in this area. As Māhina's (2004) collection of Tonga idioms (a Polynesian language) shows, the source domain of a large number of idioms consists of plants partly unknown in Europe, especially trees with their leaves and fruits such as the breadfruit tree, pandanus tree, coconut tree and the like" (p. 337, footnote 5). When conducting her etymological analysis, Piirainen looks for confirmation of her hypotheses in a truly wide range of historical sources while at the same time never losing sight of the probability of a spontaneous growth of the idiom. For example, when tracing the origin of the idiom *to be caught between two fires*, she tries to establish a link between it and another idiom, *between Bel's two fires*, popular in Lancashire, England, which is reminiscent of the pagan custom of human sacrifice to the sun god Baal as part of the fertility rites performed on May Day, Midsummer Day, and All Saints' Day, when the men chosen for the sacrifice had to pass between two fires (ibid., footnote 6). A further illustration of Piirainen's rigorous research method is the explanation of the idiom *as quick as a flash / at lightning speed* where she once again makes use of the most relevant reference sources, but also suggests natural causes. I am going to quote it in full: "This

comparison is among the oldest in written literature. It can be found in Akkadian poetry (23rd to 6th centuries BC) as well as in verses of the Bible, cf. "Clouds of death rained down, arrows *flashed as lightning*" (Anzu", Tablet II, 55); Ez 1: 4 "And the living creatures ran and returned *as the appearance of a flash of lightning"* and in classical works [Cf. Ovid ("Amores 3", Elegia 4, 7–8): "*Vidi ego nuper equum* […] *fulminis ire modo*" "It was only the other day I saw a horse […] rushing along with the speed of lightning" (footnote 25). The rapidity of a flash of lightning is a phenomenon known to everyone in the world. Therefore, the wide dissemination of the idiom may be due to polygenesis, among other things" (p. 358).

In Chapter Nine, "Time and Space" (pp. 399–447) the author introduces the theme of time and space in linguistic literature by quoting and discussing a wide range of contemporary studies before undertaking the arrangement of the idioms into two thematic subgroups: 12 widespread idioms pertaining to time, day and hour (e.g. *to kill time, to be a child of one's time, from time to time, slow but sure, to bring something to light, someone's last hour has come*, etc.), and another 9 idioms related to spatial extent, distance and resistance (e.g. *to go one's own way, it's a small world, to force an open door, behind closed doors*). The conclusions section summarizes the findings that have emerged at this stage of the investigation and suggests lines for further research, e.g., in relation to the idioms with *way*, for which, as the author explains, more data are needed for conducting a systematic analysis. An especially interesting point in this chapter is the identification of specific structural patterns of idioms (e.g., from – time – to – time, now – or never, etc.), which can become an object of special research. Let me close this section with one more example, which illustrates the typical way Piirainen's reasoning proceeds: "The wide spread of the idiom [open doors] may be attributed to the US slogan of an "Open Doors Policy" towards China since the end of the 19th century, but also to verses of the New Testament" (p. 447). Again we see the author's capacity to easily spot just any relevant information that can serve her argument. She closes with the conclusion that there is a lot of evidence confirming her initially proposed assumption, namely, that "the widespread idioms are often reinforced by certain texts or other extra-linguistics factors" (ibid.),

an idea strongly reminiscent of the basic premise of linguoculturology.

Chapter Ten, "Gestures, Postures and Facial Expressions" (pp. 449–496) covers the widespread idioms related to the most productive domain – the human body. Piirainen discusses a wide range of related terms hitherto used in specialist literature (pp. 449–451) before embarking on her task of identifying and describing the most commonly used idioms of this type. They are duly distributed under two headings: "Semiotized Gestures" (10 idioms, among which *to take off one's hat to someone, to roll up one's sleeves, not to lift a finger (to help someone), to pat someone on the back, to turn one's back on someone, to welcome / greet someone with open arms*, etc.), and "Body Postures and Facial Expressions" (7 idioms, e.g. *to hang one's head, to hold up one's nose / (to walk) with one's nose up in the air, behind one's back, something is written on someone's forehead / all over someone's face, to save (one's) face, to lose (one's) face*). The "Conclusions" section draws broad comparisons across all the idioms listed in this chapter in terms of their frequency and distribution and offers additional information about their origin.

Chapter Eleven, "Physical Reactions and Sensations" (pp. 497–532), deals with an intermediary type of idioms, which, together with the ones described in Chapters Ten and Twelve in this volume, apart from the one dealt with in another similar chapter in Volume One, all make up the large class of somatisms. Piirainen writes that what distinguishes the WIs in this group from the rest is their specific imagery, which is primarily associated with "physical weakness, involuntary body reactions, the medical area and unpleasant body-based feelings such as pain, caused by heat, cold and other factors, but also pleasant sensations through healing" (p. 497) while denoting a more abstract core figurative meaning. The idiom *to have one's hair stand on end* 'to feel very frightened, nervous or angry' is a good illustration of this specific structure: "a bodily reaction as a source concept to denote an abstract emotion" (ibid.). This small group of idioms is further subdivided into 8 idioms related to involuntary bodily reactions *(to tighten one's belt, in the blink (twinkling) of an eye, to frighten someone to death, to be unable to stand on ones feet,* etc.) and 10 idioms related to pain, soreness and relief (*to rub salt in / into the wound, to put one's finger*

on the sore point, to touch the sore point / wound, the ground burns under someone's feet, to swallow a bitter pill, (like) balm to one's soul, this is too good to be true, etc.). The author has done her very best to distribute this class of very diverse idioms into neat and reader-friendly groups and subgroups, but her arrangement still leaves some questions to be answered, e.g., on what grounds are the idioms *to tighten one's belt* and *this is too good to be true*, which is even without an image component, also included. We can see that her desire to obtain a well-ordered system is sometimes frustrated by the very nature of her material, which does not always lend itself easily to even the most sophisticated attempts at classification.

As can be seen from the title, Chapter Twelve, "The Human Body" (pp. 533–574) deals once again with somatisms. Piirainen opens the chapter with the reiteration of the history of long-standing interest in this type of phraseological units and provides extensive background information on the subject, focusing on two important findings: about the striking uniformity of somatisms that has been discovered across many languages, and the existence of many false friends among them (p. 534). In her analysis of this type of idioms (as in several other parts in the study), she resorts to Lacoff and Johnson's theory of the conceptual metaphor, adapting it to her investigation. We are reminded that the idioms discussed in this chapter make up a small selection of the much larger pool of somatisms already obtained. They fall into two subgroup: 7 idiomatic conceptualizations of heart, head, nerves and skin (e.g. *from the bottom of one's heart, to have a heart of gold, to lose one's head, to save one's skin, to get on someone's nerves*) and 13 idioms grouped under the heading "Hand and Face with its Parts" (e.g., *with empty hands, to know something first-hand, to tell someone something straight to their face, with a naked eye, not to believe one's own eyes, to be all ears, something is on the tip of someone's tongue, to have swallowed one's tongue, not to see beyond one's nose*, etc.). The chapter closes with a concise summary of the main points and an interesting note about the most widespread somatism, *to get on someone's nerves*, which appears to exist in 60 languages. This chapter, like the preceding ones, provides large amounts of invaluable information, which can be used by other linguists for their own studies.

In Chapter Thirteen, "Textual Sources from Ancient, Medieval and Modern Times – Supplement to WI Volume One" (pp. 575–633), are investigated the data which the author was able to access after the publication of Volume One. This chapter is structured in the same way as chapters Five through Ten in Volume One, but the newly identified widespread idioms are distributed among only three of the previously identified six textual sources of origin. We are again reminded that the idioms included in it are selected from a much larger pool of idioms many of which haven't reached WI status. Piirainen finds out that six newly found idioms originate from Antiquity (e.g. *said and done, to stir up a hornet's nest, to fear one's shadow, poetic license*), another ten derive from the Bible (e.g. *(to be) a fig leaf for something, to measure with two measures, which is not found in English, to come / fall like manna from heaven, to give up the ghost, to bear fruit, to be one heart and one soul*), while nine newly identified idioms can be traced back to post-classical proverbs, narratives and literary works (e.g. *to reckon without one's host, I would not wish that on my worst enemy, to be one's own master, to be all Greek/Chinese/Hebrew etc. to someone, to be like a living corpse*). The "Conclusions" section points to a much larger range of texts than previously thought that have given rise to such idioms as well as to the dominance of biblical idioms in this group, which can serve as a starting point for linguocultural research, including also the less widely spread biblical idioms for achieving greater completeness. An interesting observation about the kind of texts and authors that have given rise to the origin of some of the idioms in this group of idioms is the prominence of works like the oriental tale "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp" and of writers like Rudyard Kipling, Leo Tolstoy and Agatha Christie (p. 633).

The last chapter, Fourteen, of Volume Two, is titled "Quotation, Terms and Views of Recent Modern Times" (pp. 635–665). It deals with a familiar group of idioms as regards their type of origin, which makes this chapter very much part of Volume One: these idioms either spring from, or were popularized by, speeches and statements of prominent public figures who however belong to the present or recent past. The author arranges the small group of 18 widespread idioms chronologically under two separate headings: "From the 19th century to World War II" (9), and

"After World War II" (9). After carefully tracing the growth and development of each idiom, Piirainen comes to the conclusion, that the anglicisms among the widespread ones are fewer than previously claimed by some other researchers (although their number among the less disseminated idioms may be great) (p. 636). Among the examples of the first subgroup we see listed many familiar phrases: *the opium of the masses, round table, a banana republic, flea market, a soap opera, a fifth column* and a few others, whereas the second subgroup discusses *a paper tiger, to give someone a brainwashing / to brainwash someone, a flying saucer, the Cold war, a cold war, the / a glass ceiling*, the silent majority, etc. The "Conclusions" section provides further arguments that attest to the very diverse origin of this type of idioms (from French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese rather than English or American sources) as well as to the very long history of some of them (the idiom *round table* can be traced back to the Arthurian legend while *the silent majority* and to *vote with one's feet* date back to Roman antiquity) (pp. 664–665). It also stresses the lacunas in the place of these idioms in many of the lesser-used languages.

Chapter Fifteen, "Conclusions and Main Results" (pp. 667–696) reiterates the initial goal of the study and the tasks proceeding from it and presents the ways in which they were accomplished. It is noteworthy that the first section of this chapter is titled "Suggestions for Future Work" (pp. 668–671), another proof of the author's desire for this study to attain maximum completeness. Six topics for further research are outlined: near-synonymous idioms and blending similes, figurative lexical units of recent times, epithets and proper names of the type *the country of a thousand lakes, the Golden City, Parkinson's law*, figurative compounds such as *bottle-neck, one-way street, springboard*, a type named "barely idiomatic lexical units" (*from time to time, word for word, not only – but also*), and idiomatic construction patters such as to *make – an X – out of – a Y* [as in *to make a mountain out of a molehill*], *in plain X* [as *in plain English*], idiom patterns with a core meaning 'never' such as *when X fly* [as in *when pigs/donkeys, etc. fly*], etc. In the second section, the author discusses the widespread idioms from an areal perspective with a view to their gaps in certain languages. She then suggests several causes for their uneven distribution which she

compares to the causes suggested by some other linguists. We learn for example that Spanish equivalents are missing for 51 widespread idioms, English for 22, and Russian and French for 21 (p. 674). The most widely disseminated idioms in this book are to *roll up one's sleeves* (recorded in 67 languages), *to turn one's back on sb./sth*. (62), *to play a role / no role (for sb./sth)* (62), *in black and white* (61), *to dig one's own grave* (61), *to lose 0ne's head* (61), *to get on sb.'s nerves* (61), and *a black day* (60) (some more idioms with a gradually declining distribution, down to 58 languages, are quoted) (p. 675). They are compared to the 60 most widely disseminated idioms from Volume One. The author suggests some reasons behind this fact to eventually conclude that "no single factor is responsible for the wide distribution […]" (p. 677). In the third section, "Source Domains and Intertextuality" (pp. 677–686), the reader is reminded of one of the important outcomes of the study, namely, of the importance of intertextuality as a source domain, which accounts for the high currency of half of the 280 idioms described in this book (ibid.). This claim is substantiated by a long and detailed list of the idioms and their literary sources, arranged chronologically (pp. 678–686). Next, in Section 4, Piirainen presents a brilliant, highly elaborated and very profound scholarly analysis of the possible causes that underlie the wide distribution of the idioms, by first adducing the theses of some major researchers in the field and then checking them against her much broader empirical base, to come up with a rather different conclusion, which on the whole suggests much more complicated factors (pp. 686–695). The section titled "Outlook" (pp. 695–696) stresses once again the fact that comparative linguistic research of figurative lexical units is not the same as that of lexical units; it should run along its own specific lines, which must take into account the source concept evoked by the "literal reading" of the idiom and its interpretation (this takes us again to Potebnya's basic premise). In closing, the author suggests "polygenesis including independent recourse to the same ideas and monogenesis including diverse kinds of borrowing processes" as the main reasons for the existence of this group of idioms. The volume ends up with the wish that this study should contribute to a Theory of Figurative Lexicon, but "more scholarly work could be done to understand even

better the multifaceted aspects of widespread idioms in Europe and beyond" (p. 696).

Discussing the various merits of this tremendous work in a review of several pages is a rewarding and exciting but practically almost endless endeavor. It is also a most challenging task in that at one point one has to stop "enjoying the ride", look back and make choices. This review tried to follow closely the way the study unfolds, pointing to the various aspects of Piirainen's research method as they emerged, in an attempt to attain some degree of coherence and completeness. In closing, I would like to try, however inadequately for such a voluminous work, to summarize and evaluate it in general terms. Besides being a superb scholarly achievement in terms of method and scope, this encyclopedic study, as its name *Lexicon* suggests, should be seen first and foremost as a superbly well-arranged treasure trove of knowledge about the history, culture, past, and present of Europe. While following the long and interesting chapters and delving into the exciting history of each idiom in all its diversity, the reader can't but recall Goethe's undying words: *Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie. Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum*. This work has managed to reconstructs a detailed and multifaceted picture of Europeanness as it has been preserved in the diverse figurative languages of Europe. In addition, even its creation is an embodiment of the idea of diverse but unified Europe. The books began as an international project which in many ways resembled a virtual research institute. Through the sheer force of her determination and drive, Elisabeth Piirainen managed to unite a very large number of scholars and several research institutes from all over Europe and inspire them to work together toward a common goal: to record and preserve for future generations hundreds of figurative expressions in their own native languages. She used her profound knowledge and extraordinary skills in organizing, analyzing and describing the data obtained to achieve a most worthy result: the construction of a lexicon that represents the figurative languages and cultures of Europe shown in all their complexity and diversity. Taken as whole, the large group of common European idioms discussed in this study powerfully attests to an identifiable conceptual common ground shared by the peoples of Europe. To what extent this common

ground extends beyond the geographical boundaries of Europe will be a question for future researchers to answer.

Notes

[1] The cultural-anthropological school of linguistic research can be traced back to the works of Wilhelm von Humboldt in Germany, whose ideas were taken up and developed further by a long line of outstanding linguists, among whom Alexandr A. Potebnya (Russia), Franz Boas, Eduard Sapir, Benjamin Lee Whorf, and, in more recent times, Lera Boroditsky (USA), Leo Weisgerber (Germany), Jerzi Bartminski (Poland), Anna Wierzbicka (Poland/Australia) as well as the Russian and Eastern European scholars of ethnolinguistics and linguoculturology, to name but a few of its numerous proponents.

[2] My own research in Bulgarian and Anglo-American proverbs seems to validate the thesis about the direct relationship between the number of biblical proverbs and the mainstream religion of the Bulgarian and the American people (cf. Petrova 2013, 2016).

[3] One of my first teachers of linguocuturology, the established Bulgarian scholar in cross-cultural ethnolonguistic studies Zoya Barbolova, used to advise me of this fundamental rule in ethnolinguistics by looking first and foremost for data and studying the data.

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