

The First Book of Lithuanian Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases

Summary

In 2023, we celebrate the 210th anniversary of the birth of Liudvikas Adomas Jucevičius (1813–1846), a cultural activist, translator, historian, ethnographer, and folklorist. On this occasion, among his numerous achievements, we also remember his contribution to the history of collecting and publishing Lithuanian proverbs and proverbial phrases. The collection “Przysłowia ludu litewskiego” (Lithuanian proverbial phrases) by L. A. Jucevičius, in Vilnius in 1840 is a noteworthy publication in Lithuanian paremiography, as it is the first book of Lithuanian proverbs and proverbial phrases. It, though published in Polish, contained 44 proverbs and proverbial phrases in Lithuanian, and we believe

that this contributed at least a little to the strengthening of Lithuanian national identity. The collection stands out for its originality. Most proverbs are rare or unique, they usually carry regional markers (place and personal names), and as many as one-third of all expressions are proverbs and proverbial phrases related to mythology. The commentaries and explanations make the publication even more exceptional: each proverb or proverbial phrase are accompanied by commentary based on different genres of folklore, mythology, ethnographic facts, and literary works. L. A. Jucevičius’ collection is an important source not only to paremiologists but also to specialists in many other fields.

Keywords: paremiology, paremiography, proverbs, proverbial phrases, genre, folklore, mythology.