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WITCHES IN BALTIC FAIRY TALES

Abstract

The following article discusses names for witches in Lithuanian and Latvian fairy tales. For Lith. *rāgana*, Latv. *ragana* the common etymological reconstruction *‘seeress’ is rejected. Instead, Balt. **ragana* is derived from Balt. **rag-* ‘to raise, rise’ < I.-E. **reǵ-*, **roǵ-* ‘to move straight, rule’ leading to Balt. **ragana* ‘who is raised (from death) and has seen, e.g. a ghost’. An alternative interpretation suggests I.-E. *rog-* ‘to rule’ and asks whether Lith. *rāgana* can be compared straightforwardly to Lat. *rēgīna* ‘queen’, Ol. *rājñi* ‘id.’. In any case, *ragana* holds a key position in the semantic transformation from ‘to rise’ to ‘to see’, which sheds light on the origin of Lith. *regėti* ‘to see’. Lith. *lau̯mé* Latv. *lauma* ‘fairy’ has often been seen as representing I.-E. **loudh-mā* : *loudh-* ‘to grow’. The fairy is related to fertility and child-bearing. Lith. *žėžula* and Latv. *spīgana* can be explained on the fact that the witch partially appears with light, i.e. as ‘phantom; ignis fatuus’. Lith. *viedmā*, which commonly seen as a loan from Sl., can be explained purely on Baltic material. Thus, it is to a certain degree a matter of belief whether Lith. *viedmā* is seen as a borrowed or inherited word. In either way an initial meaning *‘who is seen, ghost’ can be assumed.

0. Introduction

Investigating the witch is rather difficult because the witch’s image has been influenced by demonology and inquisition. But it is now clear that the influence of folklore, custom and belief towards the demonology has not been smaller than the influence of demonology towards folklore (cf. Vēlius 2001: 429). This implicates that demonology and Baltic tales lead back to similar or even the same sources. When we discuss witches’ names we have to consider the semantic side of the problem too, e.g. the role of witches in tales, legends and superstition. The main scope of this paper is not only of onomasiological nature: how the witch—a malicious female person—is named in tales and why, but also of semasiological character because the nature of the witch itself experienced a conceptual change.

One difference between tale and legend is that the tale is not believed in, while legends have been believed in until recent times (on the classification of fairy tales cf. Lüthi [1996: 6-15]). Thus, the contents of fairy tales do not have to be proven or verified, while legends are influenced much more strongly by real facts, e.g. the burning of witches, and show a greater variety of witches’ names, which are omitted here, however.

1. *Ragana***1.1. Traditional Hypotheses**

The most common etymology for Lith. *rāgana*, *raganà*, Latv. *ragana* ‘witch’ claims a former meaning *‘clairvoyante, seeress’ relating the type to Lith. *regėti* ‘to see’ (LEW II: 684, LEV II: 98-99). The argumentation of Fraenkel (LEW II: 684) may be summarized in a set of statements, beginning with the most general one and leading to the most concrete one:

- (i) *rāgana* and *regėti* belong to the same root, just in different ablaut grades,

- (ii) since Lith. *regėti* means ‘to see’, *rāgana* must be related to seeing, too,
- (iii) Lith. *rāgana* : *regėti* = Pol. *wiedźma* : *widzieć/wiedzieć* = Russ. *ведьма* : *видеть/ведать* ~ Lith. *žynys* ‘wise man’ : *žinoti* ‘to know’,
- (iv) *rāgana* can therefore be easily interpreted as *‘clairvoyante, seeress’.
- (v) Pokorny (1994: 854) proposes a hypothetical relation between *rāgana* ‘witch’ and *regėti* ‘to see’: Lith. *regėti* ‘to see’, *rāgana* ‘witch’ (cf. evil eyes).

The comparison with Alb. *ruaj* ‘sehe an, schau’ (Pokorny 1994: 854) should be taken in consideration only after a discussion of the Baltic substance.

A different view was offered by Otkupščikov (1977), who proposed that Balt.-Sl. *rog-* ‘horn’, Lith. *rāgas* ‘id.’ were the base of formation: *rāgana* *‘with horns’:

- (vi) *rāgana* ‘horned’ : *rāgas* ‘horn’ = *vařganas* ‘miserable, poor’ : *vařgas* ‘misery’,
- (vii) *rāgana* is a mythic being with horns like the devil.

A new etymology on Lith. *rāgana* has recently been published (Gliwa 2002a) and will briefly be outlined below.

1.2. Discussion of the above mentioned statements (i) - (vii)

Unfortunately, neither etymology, the one of Fraenkel (and predecessors) nor the one of Otkupščikov, can be supported by data from Baltic folklore and ethnography (e.g. Greimas 1990: 142-143).

Opinion (i) seems plausible.

Opinion (ii) offers more difficulties, since neither the direction of derivation nor details of word formation are known. As *regėti* is already a secondary verb (with the formans *-ė-*) and of different ablaut grade it is hardly the basis for *rāgana*. Additionally, there are only a few Lith. derivations with *-a-na* belonging to the category of agent nouns (nomina agentis). Urbutis pointed out that the majority of derived nouns in *-ana* belongs to the category of results (nomina acti). However, this only holds for nouns made of primary verbs (LKG I: 374). Examples for actual agent nouns in *-ana* are:

- (1) *burzdana* ‘fidget’ : *burzdėti* ‘to fidget, be disturbed’, *burzdėti* ‘id.’
- (2) *dārgana* ‘shameless creature’ and ‘bad, rainy, cold weather’: *darga* ‘rainy weather; retting (of flax); slander’, *dargti* ‘to become wet; to become corrupted’, *dėrgti* ‘to snow and rain together; to soil; to slander’, *dėrgėti* ‘to spoil, soil’,
- (3) *dỹkana* ‘idler’, *dỹkas* ‘naughty...’, *dỹkti* ‘to choke, to desire; to become pure, plain’, *dỹkti* ‘to become corrupted, get out of hand’,
- (4) *draskana* ‘ragamuffin; vagabond; a pugnacious person’ and ‘rag’,
- (5) *draiskana*, *draiskana* ‘ragamuffin; who tears clothes fast’, *draiskanos*, *draiskanos* ‘rag’,
- (6) *driskana* ‘ragamuffin, sloven’,
- (7) *gargana* ‘lean, withered person or animal’,
- (8) *lingana* ‘who walks swinging’,
- (9) *lupana*, *lupena* ‘ragamuffin; trickster’ and ‘peels’,
- (10) *luzgana* ‘ragamuffin’,
- (11) *rukana* ‘spitfire’,
- (12) *traškana* ‘unfortunate, squalid person’ and ‘pus from the eyes’.

In all cases there is a negative flair and the words look like nicknames for which a property is used to name the bearer of it, cf. NHG. *Lumpen* ‘rag’: *Lump* ‘who is clothed with rags’ > ‘bad person’. Thus, derivations in *-ana* are not expected to be *nomina agentis* by origin.

Another question is raised by the etymology of *regėti* ‘to see’. As *regėti* is related to *rāgas* (LEW II: 713) the detour *rāgas* > *regėti* > *rāgana* with *a* > *e* > *a* seems needless. Fraenkel writes, “Die Grundbedeutung von *regėti*, lett. *redzēt* ist, wie Jēgers [1949: 157] annimmt, ‘aufgerichtet sein’; vgl. die mit diesem Verbum abldt. lett. *rēguoties* ‘sich (im Dunklen unklar) zeigen, sich drohend erheben’, *rēgs*, meist Pl. *rēgi* ‘Gespenst, Gesicht, Erscheinung’” (LEW II: 713). This means that *regėti*, lett. *redzēt* originates from *‘to show oneself, exhibit; to be seen’. The idiom Lith. *ant rāgo* ‘to be at a visible, well seen place’ (LKŽ XI: 25) and Latv. *ragā* ‘visible’ confirm this. In the subdialect of Zietela *regėti* means (among other things) ‘to be visible’. The same sense can be demonstrated for *rag-*: *nieko neragēt pro langa* (Vidugiris 1998: 540). A fairy tale tells us *anas nuėjo už kalno ir nereginčiai žiūri: pmonės kad pjauna...* ‘he has gone the hill and now he sees, without being visible: people cut...’ (LTt III: 357). *Nereginėiai* means ‘invisible, secret’ (also LKŽ VIII: 673). Therefore it seems possible to claim an opposite pair *regėti* ‘to see’: verb. Balt. **rag-* ‘to exhibit, to be seen’ (as the pair Lith. *láužti* ‘to break’: *lūžti* ‘to be breaking, to crack’) where the relics of **rag-* now are ascribed to *reg-*. Thus, a transformation of the meaning ‘to exhibit’ > ‘to be seen’ is implicitly assumed and it is not clear whether *ragana* is based on the first or on the second meaning.

The equation (iii) Lith. *rāgana* : *regėti* = Pol. *wiedźma* : *widzieć/wiedzieć* = Russ. *ведьма* : *видеть/ведать* is problematic because there are at least two unknown aspects. It is not evident that *ведьма* in the relation *ведьма* : *ведать* meant ‘seeress’. Moreover, the word formation differs: Lith. *-ana* : Russ. *-ьма* and it is a priori not clear why different suffixes should result in the same meaning or semantic category respectively.

Vasmer doesn’t mention that, because of *ведьма* : *ведать*, the first could be a *‘seeress’ (Vasmer 1996: I 284-285). The Polish example is equally unclear. And the example Lith. *žynys* ‘wise man, sorcerer’ : *žinoti* ‘to know’ doesn’t help to explain anything, since the word-formation is completely different.

As (ii) and (iii) do not allow any clear conclusions, one can not claim that (iv) *rāgana* referred to a *‘clairvoyante, seeress’. This is corroborated by the fact that ethnographic data, even tales, legends, folk songs, and superstition don’t give us any evidence. It is said that in the wide field of ethnography and folklore one can find every detail to support or negotiate any hypothesis (Beresnevičius 1998: 30). This means that it is not possible to prove anything with folklore material only, I agree with that. But how can we deal with this lack of data? Due to the tendency of folklore to collect arbitrary details, a lack of data for proving a hypothesis should be understood as a falsification of the hypothesis.

To support the etymology *ragana* ‘witch’ < *‘seeress’ Būga (1959: II,257f.) mentions Latv. *paragana*, *pareguone*, *paraguone* ‘seeress’, and *paredzet* ‘to foresee, prophesy’, which equals Lith. *aiškiarėgė* ‘seeress’ (probably a neologism). It has to be remarked that the meaning ‘seeress’ is beyond doubt here but the word formation (*pareguone* < *pa-* + *-reg-*) shows that the words are rather new, which lowers their importance for the question

of the etymology of *ragana*. Since *paragana* means ‘seeress’, a possible conclusion is that the basis *ragana* must have the same meaning. I doubt this since the formal change is accompanied by a semantic change.

Pokorny’s remark (v) about evil eyes is unsuitable because he misunderstands Lith. *regėti*, which doesn’t mean ‘to look at’ but refers to the cognitive side of seeing ‘to see, understand’, even ‘to experience sth. in a dream or vision’, while Lith. *nužiūrėti blogomis akimis* ‘hurt sb. with evil eyes’ uses *žiūrėti* ‘to look (at)’. It is known that evil eyes may harm only while looking at someone.

If *rāgas*, *regėti*, *rāgana* are seen as members of one family, Otkupščikov’s approach, statement (vi), seems plausible. But the question remains: is *rāgas* the base which *rāgana* was made from? Is *rāgana* really a derivation from a noun? Some standard phrases seem to support a process noun > adjective > noun: *darga* ‘bad rainy weather’ > *darganas* ‘rainy, windy’ > *dargana* ‘bad rainy weather’. However, Ambrazas ascribes them to the category deverbative nomina actionis (DDR I: 59).

On the other hand it maybe asked whether words having *-ana* can be mixed with those showing *-anas* in all cases. To illustrate the problem: one may feel the nearness of words in *-sena* and *-ena*, which corresponds to *-ana* via ablaut (DDR I: 62), but neither Lith. *-sena* nor Latv. *-šana* there don’t exist any corresponding forms **-senas* or **-šans*. Additionally, if the *-s-* is the marker of the future tense (DDR I: 61), it will be expected in a verbal paradigm only, where, consequently, *-ana*, *-ena* should belong to. Furthermore, most nouns in *-ana* are derivations from a verb (DDR I: 59, 95, 126), whereas only few examples are given for nouns in *-ana* (exclusively attributive nouns) based on nouns (DDR II: 166-167).

If *ragana* would be *‘horned’ the comparison to the horned devil is just a small step (vii). Usual terms are Latv. *ragains*, Lith. *ragúotas*, *ragingas* ‘horned’. A number of Lith. terms name the devil: *raginis*, *rągius*, *ragótinis*, *raguóčius*, *ragúotas* (LKŽ XI: 33-41). Of course, the relationship of devil and witch are older than medieval demonology. So the idea of horns inherited from the devil seems plausible. But where did the devil get the horns from? In I.-E. mythology the figure of a horned god is well known; and there are reasons to suppose that they are mainly chthonic deities taking care of the deceased in cattle or sheep behaviour (Vėlius 1987: 81-89, 276). From a formal perspective it seems possible to argue that way. But there are no horned witches either in fairy tales or in legends. However the Lith. *ragana* is able to metamorph into animals which are usually not horned: cat, pig, certain fishes, birds (Vėlius 1977: 222).

1.3. Historical use of *ragana*

Before coming back to the linguistic side of the problem I would like to remark that in legal documents on witches’ processes (written in Polish, Slavonic ducal chancery style, Latin) from Lithuania the terms *czarownica* ‘magician, sorceress’, *чародеуцтва* ‘magic, sorcery’ (RagTeis: 202, 337 et passim) can be found, but never the terms *wiedźma*, *jaga* or *jaga* ‘witch’ or the like, which one could expect. That the translators write *ragana* ‘witch’, *raganavimas* ‘witchcraft’ is inexact (and may mislead researchers if they don’t consult the original); e.g. *kerėjoja*, *kerėjimas* would fit better. The *Dictionarium trium linguarum* by Szyrwid (leading member of the Jesuitic academy of Vilnius) omits *ragana* in the 3rd edition (Szyrwid 1642), but had listed it in the first edition (about 1620) (Lyberis et al.

1979: 833). Note that the term in question, Pol. *czarownica*, is translated as Lot. *saga*, *venefica*, *praefigiatrix*, Lith. *čūstininkie*, *nuodininke* and Pol. *czarownik* as Lot. *Praefigiator*, *Magus*, *incantator*, Lith. *čūstininkas*, *nuodinkas* (Szyrwid 1642: 40). Two relevant items are given with Polish synonyms, but without a Latin or Lithuanian translation: *Widz* / *Dozorca* / *Szpieg* (Szyrwid 1642: 476) and *Wiedma* / *Wieszczka* / *wroźka* (1642: 477). I suppose that the renunciation of such translations and the term *ragana* was a result of reforming the terminology of demonology (in which the Jesuit Order was involved) and the knowledge that a mistake in this field could be dangerous.

It is noteworthy that in German legal texts referring to witches *Hexe* ‘witch’ date back to the 16th century; before that only Latin terms had been used (Gerlach 1990: 962). The first attestation of Latv. *ragge* in Latvian legal documents is reported for 1576 (LEV II: 98). In conclusion, both Germ. *Hexe* and Lith. *ragana* did not denote a living human being before the influence of demonology, but a being of folklore, pagan religion and myth.

1.4. New etymology

It has become common opinion that the Baltic languages are not pure satem-type languages (e.g. Dini 2000: 84-85). So we are allowed to see *rāgas* to I.-E. *reg-* ‘to move in a straight line, lead, rule’ as a centum reflex (LEV II: 99, Mažiulis 1997: 8).

The same seems true of Lith. *rāgana*, *regėti* because they are related to *rāgas*. As there is no direct way either from *rāgas* or from *regėti* to *ragana* I suppose a verb (intrans.) Balt. **rag-* ‘to stand up, to exhibit oneself’ < I.-E. **rog-* ‘to move straight...’, from which a transitive partner was derived > *regėti* *‘to see (who stood up), cognize’.

Since *rāgana* didn’t refer to a living human (in legal documents) and as the witch in tales is particularly identified with death (Toporov 2000: 207-208, Gliwa 2003) and as *regėti* ‘to see, cognize’ means also ‘to see sth. in a vision, dream’, I suppose that the initial meaning of *ragana* was *‘what is exhibited, raised (resurrected) and therefore seen (in a dream)’ i.e. a ‘haunting ghost’. The following fragment of a legend illustrates this: *Naktį ta merga atėjo gnaibyti. Kai tas senis sužinojo, kas čia yra, pasikvietė du vyrus, nuėjo ant kapų, iškasė jos lavoną, sudegino, o pelenus išbarstė.* ‘At night the girl came and pinched him. When the old man learned what the reason for it was, he went with two men to the cemetery, exhumed her corpse, cremated it and scattered the ashes away.’ (LTR 1770(20)). It is a main aspect of funeral rites to ensure peace between the dead and the living, and in this example one sees not only the ability of the dead to come and be dreamed of (thus, dreaming is an action of the one dreamed of, not of the one dreaming—cf. Gliwa 2002a) but also that suitable burying may avoid such unwelcome visits.

From a semasiological viewpoint, one may compare NHG. *Hexe* ‘witch’ < OHG. *hagzussa* < WGmc. **haga-tusjo*. The first element is **haga* ‘fence, ridge; area around the farmstead, beyond the borders’. The second element **tusjo* goes back to I.-E. **dhwes* ‘ghost, soul’, which yielded Lith. *dvasia* ‘ghost, soul’, MHG. *ge-twas* ‘ghost, phantom’, maybe Germ. dial. *dus* ‘devil’ (Kluge 1999: 348, 373).

The semasiological relation of Latv. *rēgs*, pl. *rēgi* ‘ghost, vision, spectre’ and Lith. *rāgana* ‘witch’ seems to be paralleled by G. *Geist* ‘ghost’ and its connotation ‘witch’.

It is noteworthy that the Latin term *resurgere* ‘to resurrect’ and the loan NE. *resurrection* use the same I.-E. root (just in a different grade and with prefixes) **reg-* ‘to move straight, rule, lead’ for that meaning.

From what was said above it follows that *ragana* may be derived from a verb. What does *-ana* mean here? If the hypothesis is correct, Balt. **ragana* ‘who is resurrected and thus seen’ could be the result (nomen actium) in relation to *regėti* ‘to see’. But the base of the derivation should be **rag-* ‘exhibit, resurrect, rise’ and it should be asked whether *ragana* is *‘who is raised, rising’ or *‘who is raising’? Usually ghosts (of the dead) are not visible (they are seen by dying people only, *dvasregiai* ‘ghostseers’, dogs and horses) (Basanavičius 1998: 161-188), so they have to be made visible, but it is exactly the dead person that makes himself visible. Thus *ragana* can be both *‘who is raised’ and *‘who is raising’. To express such a complex meaning the Lithuanian language uses reflexive verbs in *-si-*: *kas prisikelė* ‘who is resurrecting himself’, which mainly has a medio-passive meaning.

To reconsider the comparison with Russ. *ведьма*, Pol. *wiedźma* have a look at these short sentences: Lith. *Ragana regima.*, Pol. *Wiedźma widziana.*, Russ. *Ведьма видена.* (which have the same meaning differ only in tense). Morphologically, Lith. *regima* equals Pol. *wiedźma* and Russ. *ведьма*, and in the same way Lith. *rāgana* equals Pol. *widziana*, Russ. *видена*. But the current meanings are *ведьма* ‘witch’ and *видена* ‘has been seen’. So the development of meaning in relation to morphemes happened in Baltic contrarily to that in Slavonic languages. It must therefore be concluded that the meanings of *regima*, *ragana*, *ведьма* and *видена* have to be very close and the morphemes Sl. *-(i)ma* and Balt. *-(a)na* had to be removed from verbal paradigms (if they had been incorporated at all).

Ambrazas (citing Liukonnen 1987) writes that Slavic nouns (nomina agentis) with *-ma* could represent nouns derived from adjectives formed with I.-E. **-mo-* from which present tense passive participles were developed in Baltic and Slavonic (DDR II: 161). As the root vocalism is the same as in the words for ‘to know’ Russ. *ведьма*, Pol. *wiedźma* should originate from *‘who is known, recognized’, which clearly speaks in favour of the meaning ‘to know’ and not of the meaning ‘to see’. Thus, application to vision and dreaming seem possible.

When we return to equation (iii) Lith. *rāgana* : *regėti* = Pol. *wiedźma* : (*widzieć*)/*wiedzieć* = Russ. *ведьма* : (*видеть*)/*ведать* we understand both *rāgana* and *ведьма* as *‘who is recognized’.

I have mentioned that Balt. *ragana* and Sl.**vědima* are expected to have similar meanings. As the bases Balt. **rag-* ‘to raise, exhibit’ and Sl. **věd-* ‘to know’ differ in their meanings, the suffixes Balt. **-ana*, Sl. **-ima* have to differ in their meanings, too, so that the first difference can be levelled out. Sl. **-ima* seems to be a passive marker, so *-ana* may be interpreted as a medium participle. Unfortunately, in the Baltic languages there are no traces of a medium voice. So it can hardly be claimed that *-(a-)na* is a relic of such a form.

Most nouns with *-ana* are deverbal and express results: Lith. *dovanà* ‘gift’ : *duoti* ‘to give’, *liėkana* ‘remainder, rest’ : *likti* ‘to remain, stay’, *trāškana* ‘pus from the eyes’ : *trekšti* ‘to squeeze out’, *kīšana* ‘soft material pushed between the horses’ neck and the collars’ : *kišti* ‘to push, shove’ (cf. DDR I: 95), *lupana* ‘peel, bast’ : *lupti* ‘to peel, bark’.

But the Baltic suffixes **-ana* and **-ena* have been used in deverbal nouns leading to abstract nouns like Lith. *eisena* ‘walk, step, procession’ : *eiti* ‘to go’ too (cf. DDR I: 60-62). Thus, it is not completely impossible that the suffix of *ragana* Balt. *-(a)na* < I.-E. **-no* could originate from the same source which yielded passive participles in Sl., Gmc. and partly Indo-Iran. languages (Ambrazas 2001: 13) and medium participles in *-āna* in OI. (Morgenroth 1989: 197). It should also be noted that the accent is always on the final vowel or on the root. The question arises whether there are more words supposing such an origin for *-ana*. I would mention *dirbana* (*Ateis wel dirbana diena* Bretkūnas Postille I 97,14 cit. Būga) which is usually corrected (misprint) to **dirbama* (Būga 1959: II 118). The collocation **dirbama diena*, literally ‘worked day’, seems rather artificial because one uses *dirbamas laukas* ‘field which is ploughed’. Another candidate could be Lith. *kāmanos* ‘bridle’, which has recently been interpreted as a derivate from Balt. **kam-* ‘to bend, subdue’ (Gliwa 2002b). To develop that thought further I would suggest a close relationship to neuter participles (for Lith. *-ena*, *-ana*, *-sena*, Latv. *-šana*) of Sl. languages as used in the short example above Russ. *Ведьма видена*. (Ambrazas 2001: 27-28).

What is the *medium*? The medium is said to be the diathetic category between active and passive. In the medium we express actions which are started by the subject and directed towards it (Conrad 1978: 164). Such actions are usually described by reflexive verbs like Lith. *praustis* ‘to have a wash’, NHG. *sich waschen* ‘id.’, OGr. *λούομαι* ‘I have a wash’. These construction simply express both active ‘I wash’ and passive ‘I am washed’.

The medium category may also be supposed behind the forms *ragana* *‘who is raising and raised’, *kamanos* *‘what is benched (around the head of the horse) and benching (subduing the horse)’. The phrases *dirbana diena* *‘the day is decided to be a working day, on this day one has to work’ is more difficult to interpret because *dirbti* ‘to work’ stands neither in active nor in passive relation to *diena* ‘day’, where it would also be necessary that we assume a causative meaning.

1.5. Alternative etymology

Lith. *rāgana*, *rāgas* and *regėti* rose from the same origin as Latin *rēx* ‘king’, *regere* ‘to rule, erect, straighten’ < I.-E. **rēǵ-/reǵ-/roǵ-* ‘id.’. Is it possible to compare Balt. **ragana* to OI. *rājni* ‘queen’, OIr. *rigain* ‘id.’, Cymr. *rhiain* ‘queen, lady’, Lat. *regina* ‘queen’ (cf. Pokorny 1994: 854-856)? Could this be the origin of Lith. *Ragainė* ‘goddess of the forest’? However, the meaning ‘queen’ is usually derived from the grade I.-E. **rēǵ-*, while Lith. *ragana* should originate from **roǵ-*. But let us have a look at possible semantic developments.

Using the argumentation from section 1.3. I would assume that **ragana* ‘ruling goddess, ancestress’ or ‘any ancestor’ is asked for her orders etc. in visions (a common process in religions). Then, especially if the deity is dethroned by masculine gods, she undergoes a process of change for the worse. And it would then be possible to denote not the divine being but the vision. Of course in that case *-ana* has to be explained in a different way than above.

It has to be remarked that elements of necrocultus are omnipresent in the unofficial religion of Baltic peasants. The departed is remembered and worshipped on any of the religious holidays (cf. Balys 1993).

How did the terms *ragana*, *Hexe* become a matter of demonology and court? One aspect are the negative characteristic features ascribed to the witches, such as their evil influence on childbearing, fertility, and weather. The influence of witches on weather, childbearing and fertility can be seen both in a positive and in a negative way. If, with religious reforms, the positive sides are transferred to other deities, the negative sides remain. On the other hand, a person dreamed of will be expected to be a witch if one accepts the claim that a dream is an action of people dreamed of, not of people dreaming.

1.6. Conclusion

I cannot decide at present whether 1.4. or 1.5. is more preferable. In any case, *ragana* holds a key position in the transformation of **rag-* ‘rise, raise’ into Lith. *regėti*, Latv. *redzēt* ‘to see, cognize’. The transformation probably happened earlier or while satemization happened, as the meaning ‘to move straight’ was kept in Lith. *ražytis* ‘to stretch oneself’.

The interpretation of *ragana* as *‘seeress’ took part in a ‘rehabilitation’ of witches allowing to found a witches’ association (*raganų sąjunga*) in Lithuania and allowing healers to name themselves *ragana*, *raganius* (e.g. Giedraitis et al. 2001: 1-2). Thus, here we have an instance of formation usually called folk-etymology. I completely agree with Grzega (2002: 12) that folk-etymology should be considered as a type of word formation too. As folk-etymology results from associations of any level, a term “associative word formation” could be taken into consideration.

2. Lith. *Laumė-Ragana*, *laūmé*, Latv. *lauma*

There are numerous remarks on the phonology and morphology of *laūmé* (e.g. LEW I: 345-346, LEV I: 509, Hamp 1998: 58 and references) in which a pre-form I.-E. **loudh-mā* < **leudh-* ‘to grow’ is constructed and related to Venetian *Louderai*, Gr. Ἐλευθερος, an epithet of Dionysos and Zeus (Hamp 1998: 58), or to Lith. *lavonas*, OPr. *aulāut* ‘to die’ (cf. LEV I: 509). Thus, Jasiunaitė (2000: 177) points out that it seems strange that the origin of such a popular mythic being is rather unclear.

Usually the Lith. *laūmé* would be more similar to fairies than to witches. But in a considerable number of cases she substitutes the *rāgana* in fairy tales. Or both names can be used together *laumė-ragana*. Principle functions of *laūmé* in belief and legends are to substitute children with changelings (Lith. *laumiukas* ‘changeling’) or to protect lost children and provide them with clothes (Vėlius 1977: 100-104). Furthermore, they may come as nightmares, help or harm weaveresses, spinneresses (as they carry out any work related to flax and textiles very fast and very well), or wish to approach men in either dangerous or amorous ways (Vėlius 1977: 96-100, 104-108). The close relation between *ragana* and *laumė* is also shown by a considerable number of plants, animals or natural phenomena named either *raganos spjaudalai* ‘fungus, *Merulis lacrimans*’, *raganos tiltas* ‘ensemble of mushrooms’, *raganos papas* ‘belemnite’, *raganos šluota* ‘witches’ broom’, *raganos kaulai, taukai* ‘glittering snow’ or *laumės spiaudalas* ‘fungus, *Merulis lacrimans*’, *laumatilčiai* ‘line of mushrooms’, *laumarykštis, -šluotė* ‘witches’ broom’, *laumės papas* ‘belemnite’, *laumės taukai* ‘glittering snow’ (LKŽ).

The majority of Lithuanian tales where *laumė* substitutes *ragana* are related to children, especially where children are kidnapped. This is the only distinct function (of the above mentioned) of *laumė* in tales (the other functions appear mainly in legends and superstition). In an approach of cultural anthropology *ragana* and *laumė* are related to the process of death, funeral, reincarnation and birth (Gliwa 2003). From this investigation, if we keep in mind that dolls were made to influence (in either way) procreation and childbearing, it is a very small step to suppose that the change of the real child into the changeling originates from the change of the lucky charm doll into the real child after birth. That is one aspect of *laumė* only which will be discussed in a more comprehensive study (Gliwa/Šeškauskaitė 2003). Of course, it doesn't explain all aspects of the complex nature of *laumė*.

Consequently, the comparison with I.-E. **leudh-* 'to grow' and goddesses of birth and vegetation seems correct. But the question remains: does *laumė* refer to a deity of fertility and/or birth as the comparison with Venetian *Louderai* (dat.) suggests? At this stage it cannot be decided whether this is true. An alternative interpretation for *laumė* could be *'pregnant woman' or *'mother after delivering'. This would correspond with the fact that *laumė* can't enter a field of flax (in a number of legends; this is unexpected of a goddess of fertility but well known of women six weeks after delivering) or—as Jasiunaitė (2000: 178) suggests—with Lith. *laūmas* 'who walks clumsily' etc. I don't agree, however, when Jasiunaitė relates Lith. *laumė* via *laūmas* with I.-E. **lou-* 'to bench'. Instead, I could imagine some connections with the behaviour and kind of walking of a pregnant woman. *Laumė* is also a character in nuptial plays (Urbanavičienė 2000: 169-171). *Lauminėtis* means 'to play blind man's buff', which is reported for Lithuania as an adults' game of the winter cycle (cult usually dedicated to ancestors); in Latvia and elsewhere the game was directly related to the rites of burying (Urbanavičienė 2000: 47-50, 254-255).

3. *Žiežula-Ragana*

Žiežula is an exclusively Lithuanian witch and mostly appears together with *ragana*: *žiežula-ragana*. Fraenkel sees *žiežula* and *žiežara* as derivations from a probably onomatopoeic verb *žiežti* 'brummen, murren, böse sein' (LEW II: 1308). Vanagas, dealing with a number of Lithuanian hydronyms as *Žiežmuo* (a lake), *Žižmojus* (a river), *Žiežmara* (a river) etc., adds that they could be derived directly from the witch's name or from *žiežti* 'brummen, murren, böse sein' and thus mean evil waters (Vanagas 1981: 402). If *žiežti* were an onomatopoeic word, it should have originated from the related acoustic notion 'to hum, buss, drone', not from 'to be bad' itself. In that case a direct derivation of the hydronyms from the sound could be taken into consideration (cf. Petėraitis 1992: 226).

Beside *žiežula* 'witch, evil person' one finds homonyms from *žiežula*, *žiežulė*, *žiežarkė* 'Scardinius erythropthalmus', a fish with silver flanks and reddish fins and eyes. As the synonym *raudė* 'id.' suggests (*raudonas* 'red') that the fish may have been named on the basis of the red fins or eyes (Urbutis 1981: 169-172), we may connect *žiežula* to Lith. *žaižarà* 'aurora, dawn', *žaižaras* 'red'. Taking into consideration phenomena of light, colour, and glimmering, which are quite common bases for hydronyms, we should also take into account Lith. *žiežara* 'spitfire', *žiežebė* 'spark', *žiežilba*, *žiežirba* 'id.', *žaižaringas* 'gleaming', *žaižas* 'lightning', *žiežbti* 'to light, set fire', *žibti* 'id.', *žibutė* 'a flower, *Hepatica nobilis*...', *žibirktis* 'spark'... (LKŽ XX).

The words *žižėti* ‘to flame; to grumble, mutter’, *žižti* ‘pykti’, *žižė* ‘spark, fire, spitfire’ and others can be compared to Lith. *žaižarinė* ‘very energetic girl or woman’, *žaižarōkas* ‘energetic person’ (LKŽ XX), as there are quite a lot of words referring to both light and sound impressions, e.g. NHG. *grell* ‘bright; shrill’ (more examples in Urbutis 1972: 58) so that parallel formations in Lithuanian cannot be excluded completely. The meaning ‘angry, mad’ can be derived from ‘sparkling’ via the a context ‘with sparkling eyes’ (without taking acoustics into account). If we look at the words for the witch, associations with *žiburinė* ‘fatuus ignis’, *žiburinis* ‘spectre’, *žyželka* ‘baidyklė, šmekla’, *žižilpa* ‘spark; ghost, phantom’, *žižilpos, vos pamatytos, tujaus išnyksta* ‘a ghost immediately disappears after being noticed’, *Pasirodė nabakštikikės žižilpa* ‘the ghost of the departed showed itself to oneself’ (LKŽ XX: 829) are triggered off, which resembles the discussion on *ragana*. Thus, it seems reasonable to explain *žiežula-ragana* as *(shining) ghost’. Nevertheless, the influence of derivations of *ži(e)ž-* ‘spitfire’ is also conceivable for a later stage of the development.

Some remarks on the word formation shall be added here. While *žiežula* and *žaižara* show the common suffixes *-ula*, *-ara*, *žiežirba* has often been seen as the result of reduplication (LEW II: 1307). However, as Smoczyński (1994: 484-54) pointed out, words like these are more likely to be compounds.

The words *žiežula* and *žiežti* show an extended root I.-E. **ǵ(h)ei-ǵ(h)-*, and ablaut grades also show meanings related to ‘scolding’ as shown above. Hence the root I.-E. **ǵ(h)ei-ǵ(h)-* is limited to light and colour and their derivations. The root **ǵ(h)er-/*ǵ(h)or-* appear to be very semantically and formally close to **ǵ(h)ei-ǵ(h)-*, as it is the basis of Lith. *žara* ‘aurora, dawn’, *žerėti* ‘to shine, sparkle, burn’, **ǵ(h)el-* > Lith. *žilpti* ‘to be dazzled; glame, shine’. Even more related roots are offered by Karulis (LEV II: 556). The form *žaižara* could be either a derivation with *-ara* from *žaiž-* like *kaukara* ‘hill’ or a compound of *žai-* ‘shine’ and *žara-* ‘dawn’.

4. Latv. *spîgana*

Karulis traces *spîgana* ‘witch, ignis fatuus’, *spîgaia* ‘ignis fatuus’ back to Balt. **sping-* < I.-E. **sp(h)ng-* (zero grade of **sp(h)eng-* ‘glitter, shine’) (LEV: II 263; Pokorny 1994: 989). There is no doubt that *spîgana* and *spîgot*, *spîguiot* ‘to twinkle, shimmer, sparkle’ bear a meaning related to visual impressions, as do Lith. *spingėti* ‘to shimmer, sparkle’, *spingulys* ‘sparkle’.

Besides, there are a number of related words concerning acoustic effects: Latv. *spindzēt* ‘to hum, buzz’ *spiegt* ‘to whistle, pipe’, Lith. *spiñgti, speñgti, spiēgti* ‘squeal, shriek’—a usual coexistence of meanings for sound and light (cf. Urbutis 1972: 58, LEV II: 261-265).

Pokorny (1994: 990) discusses how NHG. *Spuk* ‘apparition, ghost’ may be related to the root mentioned and asks whether MLG. *spakeren* ‘spit, sparkle, drizzle’ could be related to this family as well. Because of the parallel forms from I.-E. **spend-* and **speng-* he says that it is difficult to suppose a nasal-free root I.-E. **speg-* /**spog-* > NHG. *Spuk*. However, Lith. *speigas, spiegti* shows a nasal-free version (LEW II: 869, Urbutis 1972: 58) and Latv. *spogāt* ‘to shine’ requires the *ō*-grade of the root which *Spuk* goes back to (LEV II: 268).

Latv. *spalgs* completes the set of expanded roots from I.-E. **sp(h)e-* ‘to shine, sparkle’ bearing very similar meanings (cf. Urbutis 1972: 57-61).

Note that *spîgana* is again a derivation with the suffix *-ana*. Both interpretations, *‘who is lighted up’ and *‘who is glimmering’, are possible. If we take into account the common belief that will-o’-the-wisps are ghosts of dead people (cf. Vēlius 1979: 203-207) (especially of those who were drowned) and that the circumstance that it is not the corpse itself, *spîgana* could be interpreted as medium voice from a semantic point of view.

Due to the tradition of Latvian linguistics, who frequently use folk texts, Karulis adds some remarks about the function of Latv. *lauma* and notes that differences between *lauma*, *ragana*, *spigana* and female ghosts are extinct. They figure as mythic beings, as well as magicians or healers (LEV I: 509).

5. Lith. *vedma*, *vedzma*

It is asserted that *vedmà*, *vedzmà* are loan words from W.-Russ. *ведьма* or Russ. *ведьма*. This seems plausible, especially because these names appear usually in East and South Lithuania. Russ. *ведьма* belongs to I.-E. *u(e)di-* ‘to see; knowledge’ etc. (Pokorny 1994: 1125) like Lith. *vaizdas* ‘view, sight, image’, *vėidas* ‘face, look, cheeks’, *veizėti* ‘to look’, *vydėlė* ‘pupil (of the eye)’, *vy(z)dỹs* ‘id.’ (LKŽ XVII-XIX).

Excluding discussions of origin of details like varying root extensions *-z-*, *-zd-*, *-d-*, we can suggest a basic word *vedmà* from the root Balt. **veid-* > Lith. *ved-* (like Lith. *deivė* ‘goddess’: *dievas* ‘god’). That derivations in *-mà* are a common type of word-formation is shown by the following examples: *brūkšmà* ‘line’, *glėima* ‘slime’, *retmà* ‘gap’ as action nouns (cf. DDR I: 91). We can also propose that *vedmà* *‘phantom, spectre’ belongs to Lith. *vidmà* ‘phantom’. According to the LKŽ the latter is a loan from Pol. *widmo* ‘ghost’ (LKŽ XIX: 85) and shows the same suffixation, only from the zero-grade. However, we cannot decide from these data, whether *vedmà*, *vedzmà*, *vidmà* are loanwords or Baltic heritage. Their frequency in South and East Lithuania could be explained by a similar use of the Slavonic words in neighbouring areas. In East Lithuania, for example, where *vedmà* is used for the witch, the term *rāgana* frequently denotes the *laumė* ‘fairy’ (Vēlius 1977: 90). This shows that *rāgana* and *vedmà* are not synonyms here. On the other hand, if we assume that, in manner and age, *vedma* is similar to Lith. *laumė* < I.-E. **loudh-mā* a form **veima*/**viema* could be expected, which is actually not attested. The form *vedzmà*, which looks like W.-Russ. *ведзьма*, could get the *-z-* from either *-zd-* as in *vaizdas* (e.g. *māzgas* ‘knot’, *mazgýti* ‘to make knots’ : *mėgzti* ‘to knot’). Another explanation is dialectal variability: in South Lithuania the Dzukai replace *-d-* regularly with *-dz-*.

However, at this stage there are no proofs for either variant. It is a matter of belief to prefer “loan view” or the “heritage view”. Only *veidlauma* (Daukantas, cit. in LKŽ XVIII: 507) speaks for the Baltic origin, because *veid-* cannot be a result of any Sl. loan. But *veid-* and *laume-* are of different origin and the blending of the two appears rather unexpected. So, was *veidlauma* a creation of Daukantas?

6. Conclusion

The semantic filiations of *žiežula*, *spīgana* and *viedma* seem very close to each other. They originally denote the visual aspect ('what is seen, vision, phantom') of the being (with only minor differences in meaning). Usually they appear without any special purpose at any time, but preferably at places and times where and when people were killed, where and when they died or where they spent their lifetimes.

Ragana does not denote the result (a glimmering being) but the origin (who is resurrected, raised), which is connected with a complaint about an incorrect funeral. On the other hand, *raganos* 'witches' are active during calendar festivals: Easter, Whitsuntide, St. John, All Saints, Christmas, when they can be seen after special preparation. These events are related (in a peasant's belief) with both fertility and ancestry cult (cf. Beresnevičius 2001: 145-155). The interpretation of the word formation of *ragana* seems to be the key to understand the development of Lith. *regėti* 'to see' from the root I.-E. **reg-* 'to move straight, rule'.

Laumė is of a completely different character. The term is by origin related to fertility. *Laumė* is mixed up with witches because of their partial similarities of functions.

Mixing up these mythical beings with living persons occurred—at the latest—with the outbreak of demonology. At this stage, it is possible to use all these malicious names to denote people, especially old women, midwives. This means that *žiežula* 'bad woman', *ragana* 'id.' have probably existed not earlier than the 17th century.

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