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. *regh-, *rogh- ‘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. *rogh- ‘to rule’ and asks whether Lith. rāgana can be compared straightforwardly to Lat. rēgīna ‘queen’, Ol. rējīni ‘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. rēgēti ‘to see’. Lith. laūmē Latv. lauma ‘fairy’ has often been seen as representing I.-E. *loudh-ma : loudh- ‘to grow’. The fairy is related to fertility and child-bearing. Lith. žiežula 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. Velius 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 on 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. regēti ‘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 regēti belong to the same root, just in different ablaut grades,
(ii) since Lith. *regéti* means ‘to see’, *rągana* must be related to seeing, too,

    *видеть*/*видеть* ~ Lith. *øjnys* ‘wise man’ : *žinoti* ‘to know’,

(iv) *rągana* can therefore be easily interpreted as *‘clairvoyante, seeress’.*

(v) Pokorny (1994: 854) proposes a hypothetical relation between *rągana* ‘witch’ and  
    *regéti* ‘to see’: Lith. *regéti* ‘to see’, *rągana* ‘witch’ (cf. evil eyes).

The comparison with Alb. *riaj* ‘sehe an, schaue’ (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. *rągas* ‘id.’ were the base of formation: *rągana* *‘with horns’:

(vi) *rągana* ‘horned’ : *rągas* ‘horn’ = *vařgas* ‘miserable, poor’ : *vařgas* ‘misery’,

(vii)*rągana* is a mythic being with horns like the devil.

A new etymology on Lith. *rągana* 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 *regéti* is already a secondary verb (with the formans -é-) and  
    of different ablaut grade it is hardly the basis for *rągana*. Additionally, there are only a few  
    Lith. derivations with -a-na belonging to the category of agent nouns (nomina agentis).  
    Urbūtis 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’ : *bruzdēti* ‘to fidget, be disturbed’, *burzdēti* ‘id.’
    (2) *dārgana* ‘shameless creature’ and ‘bad, rainy, cold weather’: *darga* ‘rainy weather;  
        retting (of flax); slander’, *dargti* ‘to become wet; to become corrupted’, *dērgti* ‘to  
        snow and rain together; to soil; to slander’, *dērgēti* ‘to spoil, soil’,
    (3) *dýkana* ‘idler’, *dýkas* ‘naughty…’, *dýkti* ‘to choke, to desire; to become pure, plain’,  
        *dýkti* ‘to become corrupted, get out of hand’,
    (4) *draškana* ‘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) *lużgana* ‘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 regéti ‘to see’. As regéti is related to rāgas (LEW II: 713) the DETOUR rāgas > regéti > rāgana with a > e > a seems needless. Fraenkel writes, ‘Die Grundbedeutung von regéti, lett. redzēt ist, wie Jēgers [1949: 157] annimmt, ‘aufgerichtet sein’; vgl. die mit diesem Verbum abltd. lett. rēguoties ‘sich (im Dunklen unklar) zeigen, sich drohend erheben’, rēgs, meist Pl. rēgi ‘Gespenst, Gesicht, Erscheinung’” (LEW II: 713). This means that regéti, lett. redzēt originates from *to show oneself, exhibit; to be seen’. The idiom Lith. ant rāgo ‘to be at a visible, well seen place’ (LKŻ XI: 25) and Latv. rāgā ‘visible’ confirm this. In the subdialect of Zietela regéti means (among other things) ‘to be visible’. The same sense can be demonstrated for rag-: nieko neraugēt pro langa (Vidugiris 1998: 540). A fair tale tells us anas nuėjo už kalno ir nereginčiai žūtri; įmonės kad pjauna... ‘he has gone the hill and now he sees, without being visible: people cut...’ (LTT III: 357). Nereginčiai means ‘invisible, secret’ (also LKŻ VIII: 673). Therefore it seems possible to claim an opposite pair regéti ‘to see’: verb. Balt. *rag- ‘to exhibit, to be seen’ (as the pair Lith. ląžti ‘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 rāgana is based on the first or on the second meaning.

The equation (iii) Lith. rāgana : regéti = Pol. wiedźma : widzieć/widzieć = Russ. ведьма : видеть/вглядеть is problematic because there are at least two unknown aspects. It is not evident that ведьма in the relation ведьма : вглядеть meant ‘seeress’. Moreover, the word formation differs: Lith. -ana : Russ. -ма 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 : вглядеть, the first could be a *‘seeress’ (Vasmer 1996: I 284-285). The Polish example is equally unclear. And the example Lith. 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 proof 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 rāgana ‘witch’ < *‘seeress’ Būga (1959: II,257f.) mentions Latv. paragana, pareguone, paraguone ‘seeress’, and paredzet ‘to foresee, prophesy’, which equals Lith. aškiaurėgé ‘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. regeti, 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. nužūrėti blogomis akimis ‘hurt sb. with evil eyes’ uses žūrėti ‘to look (at)’. It is known that evil eyes may harm only while looking at someone.

If rągas, regeti, rągana are seen as members of one family, Otkupščikov’s approach, statement (vi), seems plausible. But the question remains: is rągas the base which rągana was made from? Is rągana 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. ragūotas, ragingas ‘horned’. A number of Lith. terms name the devil: ruginis, rągius, ragótinis, ragučius, ragūotas (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 1.-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 (Velius 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’, чародейство ‘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. keretoja, 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, praefetiatrix, Lith. ėistininkie, nuodininkē and Pol. czarownik as Lot. Praefetiator, Magus, incantator, Lith. ėistinikas, nuodinikas (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 / wroţka (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. ragane 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, Mažulis 1997: 8).

The same seems true of Lith. rāgana, regéti because they are related to rāgas. As there is no direct way either from rāgas or from regéti to ragana I suppose a verb (intrans.) Balt. *rāga- ‘to stand up, to exhibit oneself’ < I.-E. *roga- ‘to move straight...’, from which a transitive partner was derived > regéti *‘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 regéti ‘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: Nakši ta merga atėjo gniaibytį. Kai tus senis sužinojo, kas čia yra, pasikviestė du vyrus, nuėjo ant kapy, iškasė jos lavoną, sudegino, o pelemus 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. *dhves ‘ghost, soul’, which yielded Lith. dvasia ‘ghost, soul’, MHG. ge-twaz ‘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 ressurrect’ 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 actuum) in relation to regęti ‘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 regimą, Pol. Wiedźma widziąna, Russ. Ведьма виденя (which have the same meaning differ only in tense). Morphologically, Lith. regimą equals Pol. wiedźma and Russ. ведьма, and in the same way Lith. rągana equals Pol. widziąna, Russ. виденя. But the current meanings are ведьма ‘witch’ and виденя ‘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 regimą, ragana, ведьма and виденя 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 Liukkonen 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. rągana : regęti = Pol. wiedźma : (widzieć)wiedzieć = Russ. ведьма : (видеть)вглядать we understand both rągana 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. dovana ‘gift’ : duoti ‘to give’, liekana ‘remainder, rest’ : likti ‘to remain, stay’, trąškana ‘pus from the eyes’ : trekšti ‘to squeeze out’, kišana ‘soft material pushed between the horses’ neck and the collars’ : kišti ‘to push, shove’ (cf. DDR I: 95), lupana ‘peel, bust’ : 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 -äna 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 vel 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. Вед.*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. prautis ‘to have a wash’, NHG. sich waschen ‘id.’, OGr. λοόμενα ‘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 regēti rose from the same origin as Latin rēx ‘king’, regere ‘to rule, erect, straighten’ < I.-E. *rēĝ-/*reg-/*rōĝ- ‘id.’. Is it possible to compare Balt. *ragana to OI. rājni ‘queen’, OIr. rigain ‘id.’, Cymr. rhain ‘queen, lady’, Lat. regina ‘queen’ (cf. Pokorny 1994: 854-856)? Could this be the origin of Lith. Ragainę ‘goddess of the forest’? However, the meaning ‘queen’ is usually derived from the grade I.-E.*rēĝ-, while Lith. ragana should originate from *rōĝ-. 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. *rąžytis* ‘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, laūmė, Latv. lauma*

There are numerous remarks on the phonology and morphology of *laūmė* (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. *aulūnā* ‘to die’ (cf. LEV I: 509). Thus, Jasiuaitė (2000: 177) points out that it seems strange that the origin of such a popular mythic being is rather unclear.

Usually the Lith. *laūmė* 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 *laūmė* 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 spiaudalai* ‘fungus, Merulis lacrimans’, *raganos titlas* ‘ensemble of mushrooms’, *raganos papas* ‘belemnit’, *raganos šluota* ‘witches’ broom’, *raganos kaulai, taukai* ‘glittering snow’ or *laumės spiaudalas* ‘fungus, Merulis lacrimans’, *laumatičiai* ‘line of mushrooms’, *laumarykštis*, -šluotė ‘witches’ broom’, *laumės papas* ‘belemnit’, *laumės taukai* ‘glittering snow’ (LKŽ).
The majority of Lithuanian tales where laumé substitutes ragana are related to children, especially where children are kidnapped. This is the only distinct function (of the above mentioned) of laumé in tales (the other functions appear mainly in legends and superstition). In an approach of cultural anthropology ragana and laumé 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 laumé only which will be discussed in a more comprehensive study (Gliwa/Šėkkauskaitė 2003). Of course, it doesn’t explain all aspects of the complex nature of laumé.

Consequently, the comparison with I.-E. *leudh- ‘to grow’ and goddesses of birth and vegetation seems correct. But the question remains: does laumé 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 laumé could be *‘pregnant woman’ or *‘mother after delivering’. This would correspond with the fact that laumé 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 Jasiuniétė (2000: 178) suggests—with Lith. laūmās ‘who walks clumsily’ etc. I don’t agree, however, when Jasiuniétė relates Lith. laumé via laūmās with I.-E. *lou- ‘to bench’. Instead, I could imagine some connections with the behaviour and kind of walking of a pregnant woman. Laumé 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. Žėžula-Ragana

Žėžula is an exclusively Lithuanian witch and mostly appears together with ragana: Žėžula-ragana. Fraenkel sees Žėžula and Žėžara as derivations from a probably onomatopoetic verb Žėži ‘brumen, murren, böse sein’ (LEW II: 1308). Vanagas, dealing with a number of Lithuanian hydronymas as Žėmuo (a lake), Žėmojus (a river), Žėmara (a river) etc., adds that they could be derived directly from the witch’s name or from Žėži ‘brumen, murren, böse sein’ and thus mean evil waters (Vanagas 1981: 402). If Žėži were an onomatopoetic 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 hydronymas from the sound could be taken into consideration (cf. Petėraitis 1992: 226).

Beside Žėžula ‘witch, evil person’ one finds homonyms from Žėžula, žėžulė, žėžarkė ‘Scardinius erythrophthalimus’, a fish with silver flanks and reddish fins and eyes. As the synonym raude ‘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 Žėžula to Lith. žaįžarà ‘aurora, dawn’, žaįžaras ‘red’. Taking into consideration phenomena of light, colour, and glimmering, which are quite common bases for hydronymas, we should also take into account Lith. žaįžara ‘spitfire’, žėžėbė ‘spark’, žėžilba, žėžirba ‘id.’, žaįžaringas ‘glimmering’, žaivas ‘lightning’, žibti ‘to light, set fire’, žibti ‘id.’, žibūtė ‘a flower, Hepatica nobilis...’, žibirkšitis ‘spark’... (LKŽ XX).
The words ņūžiti ‘to flame; to grumble, mutter’, ąži ‘pykti’, ąžē ‘spark, fire, spitfire’ and others can be compared to Lith. žaižarūnė ‘very energetic girl or woman’, žaižarūkas ‘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 āburinē ‘fatius ignis’, āburinis ‘spectre’, źyželka ‘baidykle, źmekla’, ąžīlpa ‘spark; ghost, phantom’, ązīlpos, vos pamatytos, tujaus išnyksta ‘a ghost immediately disappears after being noticed’, Pasirodė nabakščikēs źūlpa ‘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 ņežula-ragana as ‘*(shining) ghost’. Nevertheless, the influence of derivations of ąž(e)ź ‘spifire’ is also conceivable for a later stage of the development.

Some remarks on the word formation shall be added here. While ņežula and žaižara show the common suffixes -ula, -ara, ņežirba 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 ņiežula and ņiežti show an extended root I.-E. *g(h)ei-g(h)-, and ablaut grades also show meanings related to ‘scolding’ as shown above. Hence the root I.-E. * g(h)ei-g(h)- is limited to light and colour and their derivations. The root * g(h)er-/* g(h)or- appear to be very semantically and formally close to *g(h)ei-g(h)-, as it is the basis of Lith. žara ‘aurora, dawn’, žerēti ‘to shine, sparkle, burn’, *g(h)el- > Lith. žilpti ‘to be dazzled; glare, 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. spīgana

Karulis traces spīgana ‘witch, ignis fatuus’, spīgāža ‘ignis fatuus’ back to Balt. *sping- < I.-E. *sp(h)ęg- (zero grade of *sp(h)eng- ‘glitter, shine’) (LEV II: 263; Pokorny 1994: 989). There is no doubt that spīgana and spīgot, spīguot ‘to twinkle, shimmer, sparkle’ bear a meaning related to visual impressions, as do Lith. spingēti ‘to shimmer, sparkle’, spīngulīš ‘sparkle’.

Besides, there are a number of related words concerning acoustic effects: Latv. spindžūt ‘to hum, buzz’ spiegt ‘to whistle, pipe’, Lith. spingti, spenšt, spiekti ‘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. sparkeren ‘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. *spēg-/*spog- > NHG. Spuk. However, Lith. speigas, spiegti shows a nasal-free version (LEV 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 *spīgana 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. Velius 1979: 203-207) (especially of those who were drowned) and that the circumstance that it is not the corpse itself, *spīgana 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, spīgana and female ghosts are extinct. They figure as mythic beings, as well as magicians or healers (LEV I: 509).

5. Lith. viedma, viedzma

It is asserted that viedmà, viedzmà are loan words from W.-Russ. *vedÌma or Russ. *vedÌma. This seems plausible, especially because these names appear usually in East and South Lithuania. Russ. *vedÌma belongs to I.-E. *ved- ‘to see; knowledge’ etc. (Pokorny 1994: 1125) like Lith. važdas ‘view, sight, image’, vèidas ‘face, look, cheeks’, veizèiti ‘to look’, vydèlè ‘pupil (of the eye)’, vy(y)dzìys ‘id.’ (LKŻ XVII-XIX).

Excluding discussions of origin of details like varying root extensions -z-, -zd-, -d-, we can suggest a basic word viedmà from the root Balt. *ved- > Lith. vied- (like Lith. deiè ‘godess’: dievas ‘god’). That derivations in -mà are a common type of word-formation is shown by the following examples: brûkšmà ‘line’, glèima ‘slime’, retmà ‘gap’ as action nouns (cf. DDR I: 91). We can also propose that viedmà *‘phantom, spectre’ belongs to Lith. vidmà ‘phantom’. According to the LKŻ the latter is a loan from Pol. widmo ‘ghost’ (LKŻ XIX: 85) and shows the same suffixation, only from the zero-grade. However, we cannot decide from these data, whether viedmà, viedzmà, 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 viedmà is used for the witch, the term rágana frequently denotes the laume ‘fairy’ (Velius 1977: 90). This shows that rágana and viedmà are not synonyms here. On the other hand, if we assume that, in manner and age, viedma is similar to Lith. laume < I.-E. *lōudh-mà a form *veima/*viema could be expected, which is actually not attested. The form viedzmà, which looks like W.-Russ. *vedÌma, could get the -z- from either -zd- as in vaizdas (e.g. māzgas ‘knot’, mazgìti ‘to make knots’: mègti ‘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 LKŻ 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, spūgana 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 occured—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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Sargeliai
Raseinių raj.
4404 Žaiginys
Lithuania
berndgliwa@yahoo.de


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