Václav BLAŽEK
Masaryk University

LATVIAN *Ūsiņš* 'BEE-GOD AND PATRON OF HORSES'

The first information about the Latvian deity *Ūsiņš*, variants *Ūsenis*, *Ūsinis* (ME 4, 409–11; Ivanov, Toporov 1988) was related by the Jesuit Joannis Stribingius in his 1606 report on missions in the Latvian part of Livonia (see LPG, 442): *Deo Equorum, quem vocant Dewing Vschinge, offerunt singuli 2 solidos et duos panes et frustum pinguedinis, quem in ignem conijciunt.* "They sacrifice to the God of horses, whom they call *Deviņ Ūšiņe*, each two pieces of money and two pieces of bread and a bit of fat which they throw into the fire." The motif of horses connected with *Ūsiņš* also appears in Latvian dainas (LD ##30082, 30054, 30086, 30079; Jonval 1929, 138–39):

Ūsiņš jāja pieguļā	Ūsiņš rode to night pasture
Ar deviņi kumeliņi.	With nine horses.
Es tev lūdzu, Ūsiņ brāl,	I pray you, brother Ūsiņš,
Dod man pāri ceļa zirgu.	give me a pair of saddled horses.
Ei, Ūsiņ, labais vīrs,	O Ūsiņš, good man,
Jāj ar mani pieguļā;	Ride with me to night pasture.
Es guntiņas kūrējiņš,	I to stoke the fire
Tu kumeļu ganītājs.	You to tend the horses.
Ūsēns stāvu slaistījās,	Ūsiņš stood idle
Muna staļļa galiņā.	at the end of my stable.
Ai, Ūsiņ, vecais tēvs,	O Ūsiņš, old father,
Jāsam abi pieguļā;	Let us both ride to night pasture,
Es guntiņas kūrējiņš,	I to stoke the fire,
Tu zirdziņu ganītājs.	You to tend the horses.
Ūsiņam zirgi zviedza,	The horses neighed to Ūsiņš
Man jājot pieguļā;	As I was riding to night pasture.
Māršavai govis māva,	The cows mooed to Māršava
Man ganos izdzenot.	As I was driving them out to pasture.

The author of *Lettische Grammatik* with a special chapter *Lettische My-thologie* (Mitau / Jelgava 1783) and *Lettisches Lexikon* (Mitau / Jelgava 1789), and one of the first collectors of Latvian folklore, Gotthard F. Stender (1714–1796), recorded (see LPG, 625): *Uhsinsch, swehts uhsiņsch der Bienen Gott, von uhsas, der Bienen gelbe Wachshosen*, i.e. "Ūsinš, svēts ūsiņš – the bee-god; from *ūzas* 'trousers', bee's yellow wax trousers". It is clear that Stender's *Volksetymologie* is mistaken. Latvian *ūzas* "trousers" represents a relatively young adaptation of the Swedish word *huso* "long trousers". Formally closer is Latvian *ūsas* "moustache", adj. *ūsains*, *ūsaîns*, but together with Lithua-nian *ū̃saī*, Estonian *ūz*, they were borrowed from Russian *usy* pl. "moustache". Further, there is no connection between "moustache" and the 'god of bees and horses'[1]. Thus a new solution is necessary. A satisfactory candidate for comparison may be a personage from the Rigveda called *Auśijá-*, appearing in hymns devoted to the divine twin-riders, the Aśvins; from a wider context it is apparent that *Auśijá-* is their protégé. Let us compare the following two passages and their translations:

> *yáb^hiḥ sudānū auśijā́ya vaṇíje dīrg^háśravase mád^u kóśo ákṣarat /*
> *kakṣī́vantaṃ stotā́raṃ yáb^hir ávataṃ táb^hir ū ṣú ūtíb^hir aśvinā́ gatam*

<div align="right">(RV 1, 112.11)</div>

"Whereby the cloud, ye Bounteous Givers, shed sweet rain for
Dīrgʰáśravas, for the merchant Auśija,
Wherewith ye helped Kakṣīvān, singer of your praise,
Come hither unto us, O Aśvins, with those aids."

<div align="right">(Griffith 1889[1987] 1, 155)</div>

"Durch die, ihr Gabenschönen, für den Kaufmann Dirghasravas,
den Sohn der Usij, die Kufe Honig träufte,
mit denen ihr dem Sänger Kaksivat beistandet,
– mit diesen Hilfen kommt doch ja her, ihr Asvin!"

<div align="right">(Geldner 1951–1957 [http://www.thombar.de/1_lk.htm])</div>

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[1] J. Müthel, pastor of Cesvaine, in a letter to bishop Ulmann dated July 1870, tried to explain this connection by identifying *Ūsiņš* with the knight Saint George, depicted with a bearded face. He noted that for Latvians April 23 was a feast for both *Ūsiņš* and Saint George (see B i e z a i s 1976, 21, 34; the identification of *Ūsiņš* and Saint George was first documented by L a n g e 1772, 363).

«Какими (силами), о вы двое с прекрасными дарами, для купца Диргхашраваса,
Сына Усидж, бочка сочилась медом,
Какими - вы помогли восхвалителю Какшиванту,
С этими самыми поддержками приходите сюда, о Ашвины!»

(E l i z a r e n k o v a 1999, 135)

"Mit welchen (Hilfen), ihr Gabenschöne, für den Kaufman Dīrghaśravas,
den Sohn des Uśij, das Faß von Honig floß,
mit denen ihr dem Sänger Kakṣīvān halfet,
- mit den Hilfen, ihr Aśvins, kommt doch recht her!"

(W i t z e l , G o t ō 2007, 197)

utá syā́ vām mád^human mákṣikārapan máde sómasyauśijó huvanyati
yuváṃ dad^h̄icó mána ā́ vivāsat^hó ,t^hā śíraḥ práti vām áśvyaṃ vadat

(RV 1, 119.9)

"To you in praise of sweetness sang the honey-bee: Auśija calleth
you in Soma's rapturous joy.
Ye drew unto yourselves the spirit of Dadhyac, and then the
horse's head uttered his words to you."

(G r i f f i t h 1889[1987] 1, 173)

"Und euch verriet jene Fliege die Süßigkeit.
In der Begeisterung des Soma sagte es der Ausija laut:
Ihr gewinnet des Dadhyac Sinn
und der Pferdekopf stand vor euch Rede."

(G e l d n e r 1951–1957 [http://www.thombar.de/1_lk.htm])

«А та пчела прошептала вам связанное с медом.
В опьянении сомой сын Усидж громко говорит:
'Вы хотите расположить мысль Дадхьянча.'
Тогда конская голова вам поведала.»

(E l i z a r e n k o v a 1999, 148)

"Und für euch schwatzte jene Fliege hier aus, was der Honig enthält.
Im Rausch des Soma sagt (es) der Auśija laut:
Ihr versucht den Gedanken des Dadhyañc herauszugewinnen.
Dann redet der einem Pferd gehörige Kopf euch entgegen."

(W i t z e l , G o t ō 2007, 218)

These two passages, in spite of their ambiguous translations, indicate a relation of *Auśijá-* to honey and bees. And the verse about the horse's head is revealing. For Ralph G r i f f i t h (1889[1987] 1, 173), one of translators of the Vedic texts, it a reason to identify *Auśijá-* with the honeybee. This double functional parallelism (horse & honeybee) in both Latvian and Vedic traditions supports the etymological correspondence between *Ūsiņš* and *Auśijá-*, as opposed to the solution of E l i z a r e n k o v a and T o p o r o v (1964, 66–84) who seek in *Ūsiņš* a connection with the root **aus-*, designating the morning star in Baltic traditions, e.g. Lithuanian *Aušrinė*, Latvian *Auseklis*. From the etymological point of view, *Auśijá-* is a patronymic derivative from Vedic *uśíj-* 'epithet of sacrificers and also of the god Agni', corresponding to Avestan *usiǰ-* designating 'sacrificer rejecting the Zoroastrian religion', lit. probably "incantator". The derivational suffix *-ij-* appears e.g. in Vedic *vaṇíj-* "merchant", *bhuríj-* "arm" etc. (B r u g m a n n 1906, 510). The root proper has been connected with a verb of the type Vedic *vaś-* / *uś-* "to will, command; desire, wish, long for". B a i l e y (1979, 279) demonstrated that the probable meaning of the Avestan word "incantator" is better compatible with the Indo-Iranian verb expressing various human and animal sounds, including "singing" and "praying": Vedic *vāś-* "to roar, howl, bellow, sing (of birds)", Khowar *bašeik* "to sing"; Avestan *vās-* "to bellow", Khotanese *bāsä* "noise", Sogdian *w's('y)* "to shout", *γwβty' ptwysd'rt* "he recited praises", Yaghnobi *waast* "noise of cattle", Ossetic Digor *wasun* "to sing (birds), croak, neigh, bellow; whistle", *wasæṅgæ* "cock", Parachi *wâšina* id. (EWAI 1, 234–35; 2, 527–28, 547–48; A b a e v 1989 4, 57–58; B a i l e y 1979, 279). The Indo-Iranian verb **u̯āć-* represents the lengthened full-ablaut grade, just as Latvian *Ūsiņš* is in the lengthened zero-ablaut grade. A non-lengthened counterpart probably appears in Vedic *vaśā́-* "cow", interpretable as "bellowing". The semantic range of the verb **u̯āć-* joins not only various animals, birds or even insect through their sounds, but also priests singing prayers or incantators shouting magic formulae.

On the other hand, Latvian *Ūsiņš*, with variants *Ūsenis*, *Ūsinis*, can represent proto-Baltic **ūśinja-* or **ōśinja-* (the vacillation of Latvian *ū ~ uo* is attested e.g. in *dūre* vs. *duore* "hohler Waldbaum"; *ū* has been interpreted as an East Latvian dialectism - see ME 1, 529, 534). The theonym is analyzable as a merging of the roots **ūsᵒ* with the cognates described above, and **ōsᵒ*, reflected in Old Latvian *ôssa* "equa" (K a r u l i s 1985, 19–21) with initial **ō-*, while Old Lithuanian *ašvà*, *ešva* "mare", *ašvis* "foal", *ašvíenis* "stallion", Old

Prussian *aswinan* "horse milk" (To p o r o v 1975, 135–138) are derivable from protoforms with initial **e-* which was later changed into *a-*. The proto-Baltic variant **ōśin°* corresponds to Old Indic *āśviná-* "belonging or devoted to the Aśvins" or *áśvina-* "like riders or horsemen", a *vṛddhi-*formation from the theonym *Aśvín-* or the corresponding appellative "possessed of a horse, consisting of horses". Important also is the same suffixal extension in **-in-*. Summing up, the Latvian deity *Ūsiņš* (~ *Ūsenis*, *Ūsinis*) 'bee-god and pa-tron of horses' represents a functional and etymological counterpart of both the Vedic mythic personage *Auśijá-*, connected with "honeybee", and divine twins Aśvins, connected with horses, respectively.

Appendix

Harald B i e z a i s (1976) has summarized the most important information about *Ūsiņš*, including a detailed survey of etymologies which were for-mulated after S t e n d e r (1783) and before E l i z a r e n k o v a and T o p o r o v (1964). A u n i ņ š (1881, 41f.) was probably the first to identify *Ūsiņš* with a god of light. In his argumentation he mentioned the cock and eggs sacrified to *Ūsiņš* as symbols of daylight and fertility respectively. V o l t e r s (1890, 21) and Ķ i p a r t s (1892, 260) compared the theonym *Ūsiņš* with the Vedic word *uṣás-* "morning light, dawn, evening light", personified as the daughter of heaven and sister of the Ādityas (cf. M o n i e r - W i l l i a m s 1899, 220). A de-cade later E n d z e l ī n s (1902, 330) offered quite a new solution: an adaptation of the German designation of a house-god, known e.g. from the Old High German nom. pl. *hūsingā* 'penates'. But already six years later E n d z e l ī n s (1908, 134) rejected this etymology and preferred an adaptation of Russian *ovseń*, *useń* "the first day of spring" (originally **ovesenъ*, cf. the dialect form *óbveseń* "time close to spring", all from *vesna* "spring" – see V a s m e r 1986 1, 59; 4, 170). Abandoning his own etymology, A u n i ņ š (1913, 14f.) modi-fied the later solution of Endzelīns, assuming a common origin of *Ūsiņš* and *ovseń*. On the other hand, Š m i t s (1903, 172) entered into this discussion with the opinion that the folklore texts presented by Auniņš are falsified. But he also changed his opinion, even twice. First he accepted the Russian ori-gin of the theonym (1911, 20) and finally he returned to the German origin (1926, 43), in both cases in agreement with E n d z e l ī n s (1908 and 1902 respectively). The "light"-etymology was criticized already by E n d z e l ī n s (1908, 134) from the point of view of incompatibility of Latvian *ū* vs. Old Indic *u*. The most detailed critical arguments were formulated by Wolfgang

S c h m i d (1963, 134f.). He supported Endzelīns' criticism. To the comparison of *Ūsiņš* and *useń* he added that if *useń* was a derivative of the root **aus-*, one would expect **-x-* here as in Russian *úxo* vs. Lithuanian *ausìs* "ear". Finally Schmid offered a new etymology. The only possibility to connect *Ūsiņš* and *useń* is to derive them from Baltic **unśinias* and Slavic **ǫsьnъ* respectively. Their common starting point could be **n̥k̑inịo-*, which is compatible with the Germanic theonym known as *Ing* in the Old English song on runes, the Gothic rune-name *Enguz* attested in the Salzburg-Viennese Alcuin manuscript, and the god of fertility *Ingvi-Freyr* in Nordic tradition. To support his "fruitful" etymology, Schmid added Tocharian A *oṅk*, B *eṅkwe* "man", but this is usually interpreted as **n̥k̑ụo-* "mortal", cf. Old Irish *éc* "dead" < **n̥k̑u-* (A d a m s 1999, 79). Schmid's solution is undoubtedly best argued from the point of view of historical phonetics, but does not answer the most important questions of semantics.

LATVIŲ *Ūsiņš* 'BIČIŲ DIEVAS IR ARKLIŲ GLOBĖJAS'

S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas latvių teonimas *Ūsiņš* istorinių šaltinių (Stribingijus, Stenderis) pagrindu ir folkloro tekstų perspektyvoje. Etimologinis ryšys su Vedų mitiniais personažais – *Auśijá*, siejamu su naminėmis bitėmis, ir *Aśvínau*, dieviškaisiais dvyniais bei arklininkais (pažodžiui „raiteliais") – ir jų funkcijų paralelės rodo, kad šis teonimas gali liudyti abiejų minėtų funkcijų ir vardų sinkretizmą.

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Václav BLAŽEK
Department of Linguistics and Baltic Studies
Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University
A. Nováka 1
CZ-60200 Brno
Czech Republic
[*blazek@phil.muni.cz*]