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ONE MORE TIME ON THE ARABIZED NOMINAL FORM *IBLĪS*

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INTRODUCTION

The name *Iblīs* appears on eleven occasions in the Qur'ān in reference to the Devil: 2:34; 7:11; 15:31,32; 17:61; 18:50; 20:116; 26:95; 34:20; 38:74,75. In all cases, it is used to denote a figure other than that represented by Satan (*Šayṭān* < ሰይጣን; Nöldeke 1910: 47; Kropp 2005: 93–102) in his role as tempter; specifically, it refers to the chief of the hosts of evil. Moreover, the term was generally employed in Islamic literature to identify – as it does in the Qur'ān – the Devil of Judeo-Christian tradition. Echoing certain classical Muslim commentators and modern Western scholars, Jeffery interprets the form *Iblīs* as a corruption of the Greek διάβολος, basing his view not on the use of שׂטן in the OT (LXX διάβολος; Schleusner 1820–1821 I: 546a–b; Abbott-Smith 1936: 106), but rather on the interpretation of ὁ διάβολος in the NT as "the chief of the hosts of evil" (i.e. the role he plays in the Qur'ān; Jeffery 1938: 48–49).

With regard to the etymology of the Arabic name, the most widely-accepted hypothesis has always been that it came directly from the Greek διάβολος (Rudolph 1922: 35), of which it is a corruption or contraction (Rippin 2001: 524–525; 2002: 473; Wensinck & Gardet 1978: 668–669). Indeed, other possible etymological routes (e.g. through Syriac or Ethiopic) were expressly ruled out by Jeffery (1938: 49) in his day. Even so, some authors insist that, regardless of its particular origin in Greek or Syriac, it certainly came into Arabic through Syriac (Mingana 1928: 89–90).

A few years ago, taking as his starting-point a conceptual model put forward by Mingana, Reynolds (2004: 680–682) suggested that the Syriac *d.b.l.s.* (ܕܝܒܠܘܣ [*dīblūs/diyabulūs*] < διάβολος) was the form introduced into the Qur'ān to denote the rebel angel, *Iblīs*. More recently, Professor Corriente provided a convincing linguistic explanation of the route by which the Greek διάβολος came to yield the Arabic *Iblīs*, indicating that it was derived from the Greek ὁ διάβολος through the

reading *ʾl'blys, from which the article was eventually dropped (Corriente 2009: 35–36).

Admittedly, the view that *Iblīs* derives from the Greek διάβολος is not only convincing but also, from a purely linguistic standpoint, wholly logical (Monferrer-Sala 2011: 227). While linguistics is clearly an essential element in the complex task of teasing out and clarifying concepts and terms in religious texts, however, it is not always the only possible source of enlightenment. The issue under discussion here may be a case in point.

A NEW APPROACH

The present paper seeks to establish the route through which the form *Iblīs* entered Arabic, taking full account of the cultural and textual complexities of the Islamic religious and literary milieu, whose influence has already been highlighted with regard to other terms (Monferrer-Sala 2008: 429–446). The complexity is prompted in part by the difficulty in determining whether, in any given case, certain sequences (*aḥādīth*) transmitted by Islamic tradition were in fact formulated prior to the Qurʾānic texts. On all eleven occasions in which it appears in the Qurʾān, the term *Iblīs* refers to a single figure. By contrast, writings within the Islamic literary tradition – and indeed texts by Christian Arabic authors (Monferrer-Sala 2011: 227) – endow the figure of *Iblīs* with functions that should more properly be assigned to *Šayṭān*, sometimes even merging the two into a single figure with two names (Jung 1926: 34, 62).

The linguistic explanation, while providing a perfectly plausible description of how the Greek term gave rise to the Arabic, sheds no light on the cultural transmission of the figure himself. In other words, the name did not enter Arabic independently or in isolation; it was accompanied by a story, a legend, of which the figure himself was also part. The legend may have entered the Islamic milieu through either a Jewish or a Christian route. In either case, it was transmitted by various groups speaking different languages, and through a whole range of texts; it may even have arisen from the mixing of texts based on different earlier oral traditions. It is therefore crucial to determine which text(s) first provided the image that appears in the Qurʾān of the fallen angel who disobeyed God's order to worship Adam.

The fall of the angel who refused this divine order is narrated in *L.A.E.* (Chapters 12–16) and in *2 En.* 29:4–5; 31:4–5. This episode gave rise to the myth of the fallen angels (*Gen.* 6:1–4; *Jub.* 5:1–11; *1 En.* 69:1–29; *2 En.* 7:2–4 J/A; 18:2–3 J/A; *T. Reu.* 5:6; *T. Sol.* 6:2), who rebelled against God and were subordinated to a leader known variously as Satan, Azazel, Mastema, or Belial (*Jub.* 1:8–11; *T. Ab.* 13:6 A;

3 Bar 56:10–16; on demons, see Langton 1949), whose names and functions are provided in *1 En.* 69:1–14. Although the episode is not found in the Hebrew OT, allusions to the event appear in other texts, such as "the Song of Moses" (*Deut.* 32:1–43), and more specifically in *Deut.* 32:43 (Haiser 2001: 52–74), on which *Heb.* 1:6 is based (McLay 2003: 111). Moreover, the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumrān (4QDeut�q) and the LXX offer a more extended version of *Deut.* 32:43 than that found in MT, whose *lectio longior* is in this case the oldest text (Barker 2000: 216; Tigay 1996: 314–315, 513, 516–518) and is therefore the preferred reading (Fishbane 2003: 80, n. 39). Interestingly enough, a comparison of the three texts – MT, Qumrān and LXX – reveals that they offer different readings:

4QDeutᑫ (frag. 5 ii) (Ulrich et al. 1986: 114)	LXX	MT
[1] הרנינו שמים עם [2] והשתחוו לו כל אלהים [3] כי דם בניו יקום [4] ונקם ישיבלצריו [5] ולמשנאיו ישלם [6] ויכפר אדמת עמו	εὐφράνθητε, οὐρανοί, ἅμα αὐτῷ, καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες <u>υἱοὶ θεοῦ</u>· εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐνισχυσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες <u>ἄγγελοι θεοῦ</u>· ὅτι τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικᾶται, καὶ ἐκδικήσει καὶ ἀνταποδώσει δίκην τοῖς ἐχθροῖς καὶ τοῖς μισοῦσιν ἀνταποδώσει, καὶ ἐκκαθαριεῖ κύριος τὴν γῆν τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ	הַרְנִינוּ גוֹיִם עַמּוֹ כִּי דַם עֲבָדָיו יִקּוֹם וְנָקָם יָשִׁיב לְצָרָיו וְכִפֶּר אַדְמָתוֹ עַמּוֹ
[1] "Praise, O Heavens, his people! [2] Worship him, <u>every god</u>, [3] for he vindicates the blood of his children. [4] He will bring vengeance to his enemies, [5] and he will repay his enemies [6] and cleanse the land of his people."	"Rejoice, ye heavens, with him, and let all the <u>sons of God</u> worship him; rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people, and let all the <u>angels of God</u> strengthen themselves in him; for he will avenge the blood of his sons, and he will render vengeance, and recompense justice to his enemies, and will reward them that hate him; and the Lord shall purge the land of his people."	"Sing out praise, O you nations, for His people! For He will avenge the blood of His servants, inflict revenge upon His adversaries, and appease His land [and] His people."

Whilst the phrase is absent from the MT (Rogerson & Lieu 2006: 587),[1] 4QDeut^q offers the reading כל אלהים ('every god'), which might correspond to the Greek phrases υἱοὶ θεοῦ ('sons of God' < בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים) or ἄγγελοι θεοῦ ('angels of God' < מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים), as used by LXX in the same verse. Although the Hebrew *kol 'elōhîm* clearly does not match the Greek *uhioì theoû/aggeloi theoû*, all the evidence suggests that *kol 'elōhîm* is partly a fusion of the dual reading offered by the Greek text of LXX (Rofé 2000: 164–172).

Evidently, both כל אלהים and υἱοὶ θεοῦ are likely based on the saga narrated in *Gen.* 6; the term appears for the first time in *Gen.* 6:2, although with the article בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים, whose interpretations are well-documented (Wright 2005: 97–104). It may be understood to refer either to part of the lineage of Adam through Enoch (a view that was echoed centuries later in the "Chronicle" of Michael the Syrian (d. 1199); Chabot 1899: 4; 1910: 2a) or to the angels (Manser 2009: 119–120), as it occurs *inter alia* in Ibn al-Ṭayyib's (d. 1043) *Tafsīr* (Sanders 1967 I: 47; II: 45). Moreover, in *Jub.* 11:5 (cf. *1 En.* 8:1–4) we are told that in the days of Abraham the world was ruled by prince Mastema (משטמא > መስቴማ) through various spirits (መንፈስ, 'angels'; see VanderKam 1989 I: 68; II: 65), who descended from the fallen angels.

The origin of this and other motifs linked to the fallen angels is the Enochic story of the Watchers,[2] of whom these demons were the offspring (Fröhlich 2005: 144–145; García Martínez 1992: 35). The fall of Satan and his supporters, the Watchers (עירין),[3] a highly fertile theme in Christian thought in late antiquity (Bauckham 1985: 313–330), was a familiar feature of both apocryphal literature and the OT (*2 En.* 7:3 J/A; 29 J; *L.A.E.* 12–16); it also appears in the NT apocrypha (*Gos. Bart.* 1:24–25, 4:51–55) and in the Qumrān scrolls (1QapGen ar col. II 1–2). As in the *(Eth.) Ap. Ps.Greg.* where Satan is mentioned as one "who had been called the good angel" (ዘከን ፡ ይሰመይ ፡ መልአከ ፡ ሠናይ), thus placing the use of that term at a point in time prior to his fall (Grébaut 1918–1919: 138). In its narration of the fall of Satan, the Coptic-Arabic *Hexaemeron* attributed to Epiphanius of Cyprus refers to Satan before his fall as "the good angel" (*malāk al-ḥasan*; Monferrer-Sala 2012b):

ومن بعد سقوط الشيطان الدي الدعا ملاك الحسن رَفع اللـه ميخاييل واختصه لهده الخدمة الكريمه الدين هو كاين فيها

> After the fall of Satan, who was called a good angel, God elevated Michael, appointing him to this noble function which he now holds.

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1 *Deut.* 32:43 is related to *Deut.* 32:8.
2 On the fall of the Watchers in *1 En.,* see Nickelsburg 2005: 46–53.
3 On the term עירין, see Murray 1984: 303–317.

In both texts, Satan was followed by a group of fallen angels (*Jub*. 5:1–11; *1 En*. 69:1–29; *2 En*. 7:2–4 J/A; 18:2–3 J/A; *T. Reu*. 5:6; *T. Sol*. 6:2), who rebelled against God and were subordinated to their leader, known under various names (*Jub*. 1:8–11; *T. Ab*. A 13:6; *Gos. Bart*. 56:10–16).

In fact, the saga narrated in *Gen*. 6 is echoed in *1 En*. 6:1–2, where the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים are called "the angels, the children of heaven" (መላእክተ፡ ውሉደ፡ ሰማይት = οἱ ἄγγελοι υἱοὶ οὐρανοῦ; Charles 1906: 12–13; Knibb 1978 I: 13; II: 67). A few verses later (6:7), we are even given the names of the leaders of those fallen angels (Charles 1906: 14–15; Knibb 1978 I: 15–16; II: 69–74; Milik 1976: 188–189),[4] whose superior in this case is identified in 6:3 as Semyaza (שמיחזה > ሰምያዛ = Σεμειαζᾶς; Charles 1906: 12; Knibb 1978 I: 13; II: 67).

In "the Book of the Watchers" (*1 En*. 6:3–5; cf. 12:4–5; 15:3; 16:3; cf. also 64:2; 86:3), the Biblical tradition depicted in *Gen*. 6:1–4 was interpreted as a kind of rebellion against heaven (Wright 2005: 138–165). For this reading, the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים of *Gen*. 6:1–4 became the בני שמים ('sons of heaven') through the mediation of various sources (Wright 2005: 138–165). These were the beings eventually described by the author of the Enochic text as "Watchers" (עירין), angels of a kind comparable to the archangels, whose name clearly expresses their function: to watch over men. However, the Enochic pre-Flood texts not only equate the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים of *Gen*. 6:1–4 with the "angels", but also – as VanderKam (2000: 134) has noted – take the phrase האלהים as meaning not '(the) God', but 'the angels'.

In their handling of the apocryphal literature, Christian authors writing in Arabic used the name *Iblīs* to denote the fallen angel who disobeyed God's command by refusing to worship Adam. This is evident, for example, in the following account from the *Kitāb al-Maǧāll* (Gibson 1901: 5/5; Bezold 1883: 10/4):

وكان خلق اللّٰه لادم فى الساعة الثالثة من يوم الجمعة سادس الايام وكان ادعى
ابليس الربوبية الذى دخلته فى الساعة الثانية من هذا اليوم فاهبطه اللّٰه من السما الى
الارض

God had created Adam in the third hour of Friday the sixth day. Iblis had laid claim to the Godhead which had entered him in the second hour of the day, and God had hurled him down from heaven to earth.

A particularly interesting and relevant feature of the Arabic recension of this apocryphal work is the distinction that it draws between the names *Šayṭān*, *Sāṭānā* and *Iblīs*. It describes *Šayṭān* as the one who rebelled against God, and it says literally of *Sāṭānā* (a calque on the Syriac ܣܛܢܐ, see Smith 1901: 2601;

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4 On the list of the fallen angels, see Charles 1906: 227–228.

Whish 1883: 129) that "he opposed himself to the ways of the Lord" (*li-anna-hu šaṭana min ṭuruq Allāh*). With these definitions, the author of the *Kitāb al-Maǧāll* offers the same theological distinction as that made in the Qur'ān between *Iblīs* and *Šayṭān* (Reynolds 2010: 39–54; 2004: 682), but this time between Satan (Σατάν/Σατᾶν < Aram. שָׂטָן; Liddell & Scott 1897: 1376; Jastrow 1903 II: 973; Levy 1866 II: 155) and Satanas (ܣܛܢܐ [< Σατανᾶς] < Aram. סָטָנָא 'one lying in ambush for' = 'the adversary'; Liddell & Scott 1897: 1376; Moulton & Milligan 1914–1929: 70; Lampe 1961: 1226). This distinction is also made in the NT, which additionally includes ὁ διάβολος ('the accuser', hence the meaning of 'the chief of the evil spirits', the Devil, cf. the Syriac rendition as ܐܟܠܩܪܨܐ, 'the accuser'). Of the third figure, *Iblīs*, we are told that God called him by this name because He took his dignity (*al-waqār*) from him. In making this threefold distinction, the author of the *Kitāb al-Maǧāll* is clearly following a Syriac NT text, as evidenced by the Arabized transliteration of *Sāṭānā*. The text runs as follows (Gibson 1901: 6–7/7):[5]

وسمعت الملايكة والقوات صوت اللـه جل وعز وهو يقول لادم ياادم انى قد جعلتك
ملكا وكاهنا وونبيا ومولى وريسا ومدبرا لكل الخلايق المصنوعة فلك تسمع كل
الخليقة ولقولك تتبع وتحت قبضتك تكون ولك وحدك اعطيت هذا السلطان وخولتك
جميع ما خلقت «» فلما سمعت الملايكة هذا القول من الرب ازدادت لادم اكراما
وهيبة «» ولما راى الشيطان الموهبة التى اعطاها ادم من الرب حسده منذ ذلك اليوم
واعمل المارق من اللـه الفكر فى الاحتيال عليها ليطغيه بجراته ولعنته وانه لما
كفر بنعمة الرب التى كانت عليه صار وقاحا حربا فنزع اللـه تقدست اسماوه عن
الشيطان ومنه لباس السبح والوقار ودعا اسمه شيطانا ثشيطن على اللـه وساطانا
لانه شطن من طرق الرب وابليس لانه نزع منه الوقار

The Angels and Powers heard the voice of God, may He be glorified and exalted! Saying to Adam: "O Adam, I have made thee king and priest and prophet and ruler and chief and governor over all creatures that are made. All creation shall obey thee and follow thy voice. Under thy grasp they shall be. To thee alone I have given this power; I have placed thee in possession of all that I have created." When the angels heard this saying from the Lord they redoubled honour and respect to Adam. When the Devil saw the gift that was given to Adam from the Lord, he envied him from that day and the schismatic from God set his mind in cunning towards him to seduce him by his boldness and his curse; and when he denied the grace of the Lord towards him, he became shameless and warlike. God, may His names be sanctified, deprived the Devil of the robe of praise and dignity and called his name Devil, [because] he is a rebel against God, and Satan, because he opposes himself to the ways of the Lord, and Iblis, because He took his dignity from him.

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5 Mistakes in Mrs. Gibson's edition have been amended in the quotation.

The MS used by Mrs. Gibson (*Sin. ar.* 508), datable by its script to the ninth century CE (Atiya 1955: 18; Kamil 1970: 45, n. 532; Gibson 1901: x), differs in several *lectiones* from the Arabic text edited by Bezold on the basis of four later MSS (*Vat. ar.* 165; *Par. ar.* 54; *Hunt.* 514; *Bodl.* 294, compared with *Monac. arab.* 243; Bezold 1883: V–VI); certain variants in this specific passage are of interest for the story of the fall of the rebel angel, reproduced below (Bezold 1883: 15, 17):

<div dir="rtl">

وسمعت الملايكة والقوات صوت اللـه وهو يقول لادم ياادم اننى قد جعلتك ملكا
ونبيا وكاهنا ومولى وريسا ومدبرا لكل الخلايق المصنوعة ولك تسمع كل الخلايق
ولقولك تتبع وتحت قبضتك تكون ولك وحدك اعطيت هذا السلطان وخوّلتك جميع
ما خلقت فلما سمعت الملايكة هذا القول من الرب ازدادت اكراما واجلالا لادم هيبة
[...] اللـه عز وجل اسمه نزع منه لباس الخير والوقار ودعا اسمه شيطانا لانه
تشيطن على اللـه وسماه ساطاناييل⁶ لانه اسطاه وسماه وابليس لانه نزع عنه لباس
الكرامه

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The Angels and Powers heard the voice of God saying to Adam: "O Adam! I have made thee king and prophet and priest and ruler and chief and governor for all creatures that are made. All the creatures shall obey thee and follow thy voice. Under thy grasp they shall be. To thee alone I have given this power; I have placed thee in possession of all that I have created." When the angels heard this saying from the Lord they redoubled honour and respect to Adam [...] God, may His name be glorified and exalted, deprived the Devil of the robe of good and dignity and called his name Šayṭān, because he rebelled against God, and named him Sāṭānā'īl, because he opposed to Him, and called his name Iblīs, because He took from him the robe of honour.

The variants in this passage are found in all the Arabic MSS of the *Kitāb al-Maǧāll*; one striking variant is the form *Sāṭānā'īl*, presupposing a Syriac ܣܛܢܐܝܠ, from the Hebrew שטנאיל (Gaylord 1982: 303–309). These name games are by no means a rare occurrence; in fact, they date back to the source of *Kitāb al-Maǧāll*, the well-known *Me'arat Gazzē* ("Cave of the Treasures") which, according to all the evidence, can be dated between the fifth and sixth centuries CE (Leonhard 2001: 255–292, especially 288). In narrating the fall of the devil from heaven, this text makes use of a comparable device, distinguishing between and accounting for the various names given to the devil (Bezold 1883: 14, 16, 18/4):

<div dir="rtl">

ܘܩܡܘ ܚܝܠܘܬܐ [ܘܐܣܬܟܠ] ܡܠܟܐ ܕܐܕܐܝܠ [ܚ.] ܐܪܟܐ [ܐܠܐ ܐܪܒܥ ܗܘ
ܚܕܒܝ ܚܠܟܐ ܘܚܡܘܫ ܡܘܪܒ ܡܘܪܣܐ ܘܣܪܐ ܘܗܝܘ ܡܘܕܘܕܟܐ] ܕܚܠܘܢ ܚܘܐܬܐ
ܘܕܬܟܐ [ܘܠܝ ܘܦܘܚܘܕ ܘܗܠܝ ܗܘܢ (ܚܠܘܣܪܝ) ܘ(ܠܝ) ܢܪܟܐ [ܠܝ]
ܘܥܠܝܟܐ ܚܠ ܚܠ ܡܘܪ ܕܒܪ ܗܘܕ ܒܪܘܘ ܒܘܪܐ [ܘܗܕܐ ܘܘܚܘܘ ܚܠܟܐ ܘܘܗ
ܕܢܐ ܡܘ ܒܘܚܘ ܚܠܘ ܘ ܘܡܘܥܘܝ ܠܘ [...] ܘ ∻ [ܠܝ] ܘܗܘܢ ܡܘܠܘܣܐ ܚܘܘܘ]ܠܚܢܥ܂

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6 Bezold 1883: 17, misread as ساطابابييل.

ܟܬܒܘܬܐ ܐܘܬܒ[ܘ]ܗܝ ‏, ܡܘܬ ܡܠܟܐ ܟܕ ܐܡܪ ܡܠܟܐ ܠܟܕ ܕ ܐܕܡ‏,
ܠܟܕ ܐܡܪ ܟܕ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܕܡ ܐܕܡ ܐܬܒ(ܘ)ܗܝ

And the angels and powers heard the voice of God saying to Adam: "O Adam!
I have made thee king and priest and prophet and master and chief and leader
for all the natures and creatures that are made. All the creatures shall serve thee
and follow thy voice. Under thy grasp they shall be. To thee alone I have given
this power; I have placed thee in possession of all that I have created." When
the angels heard these words they redoubled honour and kneeled before him
[...] (God) deprived (the devil) of the robe of glory and called his name Sāṭānā,
because he turned aside [from the right way], and Šēdā, because he was cast
out, and Daywā, because he lost the robe of his glory.

Like other texts, when referring to the fallen angels the *Kitāb al-Maǧāll* alludes
to the saga narrated in *Gen.* 6 (Gibson 1901: 18/18; Bezold 1883: 43):[7]

وكان سبب تسمية اللـه ولد شيث بن ادم بنى اللـه كما يقول الكتاب ما كان اعلنه الى
شيث من النقا والطهارة فخصهم الرب بهذا الاسم وهو اجل الاسما لفضلهم عنده
وخولهم ان يبدلوا الطغمة من الملايكة التى تشيطنت وسقطت من السما

The reason for God's calling the children of Seth Ben-Adam, "the sons of
God", was as the Book says what He revealed to Seth about godliness and
purity. The Lord appropriated them to Himself by this name; it is the most
famous of names on account of their favour with him. He appointed them to
replace the choir of Angels, which had rebelled and fallen from Heaven.

Exactly the same information is provided by the *Meʿarat Gazzē* in the following
passage (Bezold 1883: 42/10):

ܘܡܛܠ ܕܟܝܘܬܗܘܢ ܘܩܘܕܫܗܘܢ (ܩܒܠܘ) ܫܡܐ ܗܘ [ܕ]ܗܠܐ ܕܛܒ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܫܡ̈ܗܢ (ܗܘܐ
ܠܗ[ܘ]ܢ) ܡܢ ܟܠ ܫܡܗܬܐ ܘܗܘܘ ܡܬܩܪܝܢ ܒܢܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܘܢܫ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܘܒܢ̈ܝܗܘܢ
ܘܐܝܬ ܗܘܘ ܒܗܘ ܛܘܪܐ ܒܟܠܗ ܕܟܝܘܬܐ [ܘܩܘܕܫܐ ܘܕܚܠ]ܬ ܐܠܗܐ
ܐܠܗܐ ܚܠܦ ܗܘ ܠܓܝܘܢܐ ܕܫ̈ܐܕܐ ܕܢܦܠ[ܘ] ܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ

And because of their purity and holiness they received the name, which is the
best of all names, and were called "the sons of God", they and their women and
sons. They lived in that mountain in all purity and holiness and in the fear of
God. And they went up on the borders of Paradise, and they praised and glori-
fied God instead of that host of devils who fell from heaven.

Although we have retained here the reading offered by Bezold, the evidence of
two MSS suggests that the *lectio* ܒܢܝ ܐܠܗܐ 'the sons of God' should be replaced
by ܒܢܝ ܐܠܗܝܡ (i.e. 'the sons of Elohim'; Leonhard 2001: 270, n. 52). This allusion
to *Gen.* 6 is found in a number of Syriac texts, not only Biblical commentaries

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7 Variants in Bezold's edition are not relevant for the contents of the story.

and compilations (Bar Bahlūl 1888–1901 II: 169), but also in a key Syriac historiographic text, the "Chronicle" of Michael the Syrian. The "Chronicle" tells us (citing as its source the ܟܬܒܐ ܕܚܢܘܟ, "the Book of Enoch"!) that these ܒܢܝ ܐܠܗܐ appointed a king called ܣܡܝܐܙܐ (i.e. Semyaza; Chabot 1910 IV: 2b/I, 5; Bar Hebraeus 1932 II: 2b/I, 4):

ܒܫܢܬ ܗܕܐ ܢܚܬܘ ܒܢܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܐܝܟ ܬܪܝܢܡܐܐ ܢܦܫܢ ܡܢ ܛܘܪܐ ܕܚܪܡܘܢ
ܘܡܛܠ ܕܐܬܛܥܝܘ ܟܠܗ ܣܒܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܦܘܢܝܐ ܕܠܦܪܕܝܣܐ ܫܒܩܘ ܚܝܐ ܡܠܐܟܝܐ ܘܐܬܝܗܒܘ
ܠܪܓܝܓܬܐ ܦܓܪܢܝܬܐ ܘܐܩܝܡܘ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܫܡܗ ܣܡܝܐܙܐ ܀

In this year the sons of God (*běnay ʾElūhīm*), about two hundred souls, came down from the mountain of Hermon. Because they had lost all hope of a return to Paradise, they forsook the angelic life, and gave themselves up to carnal pleasures, and they set up a king over them whose name was Semyaza.

Equally explicit, in keeping with this tradition, is the information compiled by Bar Hebraeus in his *Maḵtbanūth Zaḇnē*, which includes the following text (Bar Hebraeus 1932 II: 2a/I, 3):

ܒܝܘܡܝ ܕܝܢ ܕܫܝܬ ܟܕ ܐܬܕܟܪܘ ܒܢܘܗܝ ܚܝܐ ܗܢܘܢ, ܠܣܠܩܘ ܠܛܘܪܐ ܕܚܪܡܘܢ ܘܬܡܢ ܗܠܟܘ
ܠܝܐܠܝܐ ܕܢܟܦܘܬܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ ܟܕ ܡܦܪܩܝܢ ܡܢ ܙܘܘܓܐ ܦܓܪܢܝܐ ܘܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܬܩܪܝܘ ܥܝܪܐ
ܘܒܢܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܀

In the time of Seth, when his sons remembered the blessed life in Paradise, they went up into the mountain of Ḥermôn, and there they led a chaste and holy life, being remote from carnal intercourse; and for this reason they were called ʿîrê and sons of ʾAlôhîm.

This information was evidently not restricted to the Syriac milieu. The account of the Watchers – being familiar to Syriac authors – was in turn transmitted to Christian Arabic writers. Evidence of this comes from a text held in the British Library (BMOr 4402), which contains a *karšūnī* version of Michael the Syrian's "Chronicle", in which these "sons of God" are rendered as *banū Ilūhīm* (ܒܢܘ ܐܠܘܗܝܡ) (Bhayro 2001: 374).

CONCLUSION

The name *Iblīs*, applied to the angel that rebelled against God, entered the Arab milieu through a transmission process in which the name was just one element of an elaborate narrative myth. As is the case with other texts and genres (Macdonald 1920: 115–116), this myth – monotheised by Judaism – is rooted in the angelological and demonological constructs of what might be termed "Semitic mythology".

As indicated earlier, although the name might be accounted for independently of the larger narrative, as a derivate of the Greek διάβολος it would be shorn

of the necessary textual and literary contextualisation surrounding the concept, its *Sitz im Leben*. It is indeed this conviction that has prompted all the information provided above, intended to furnish just such a textual and literary – or mythical – framework. Having entered the Arab (and particularly the Islamic) milieu during its formative period,[8] the term then spread to other Islamic and non-Islamic language areas, in all probability being corrupted en route through oral transmission. Thus, for example, while Selṭi has the nominal form *Iblīs*, in Wolane the form *ilbís* has been documented, resulting from contiguous metathesis (Leslau 1979: lxxxi).

If our hypothesis is correct, the name is not in fact the result of a direct adaptation of the Greek διάβολος to the Arabic *Iblīs*, but rather the result of the adaption in Arabic of a name used to refer to those fallen angels who rebelled against God and whose plurality was eventually singularised under the name of their leader. Those angels, known by the formula *bĕnê 'Elôhîm* (cf. Syr. *bĕnay 'Elūhīm* > Ar. *banū Ilūhīm* and *banū Lūhī*; Lagarde 1867 I: 64–65; Monferrer-Sala 2007a: 361), eventually lost the *bĕnê* and became simply *'Elôhîm*, giving the Syriac *'Elūhīm*.

In Arabic transcriptions, the Syriac ܐܠܗܝܡ/ܐܠܗܝܡ (< אלהים) is sometimes transcribed as اليم (i.e. /'eloyim/). The realisation of this term could never have been *Iluyim* (= /*Eloim*/) but rather *Elīm*; we believe that it is this form which may have given rise to *Iblīs*. It should be noted in this respect that although the form اليم is not directly related to the Hebrew אלים (*'Elîm*), *Ps.* 89:7 uses the phrase *bĕnê 'Elîm* (= *bĕnê 'Elôhîm*) which, significantly, is interpreted in Pešīṭtā 89:6 – though not in LXX – as ܒܢܝ ܡܠܐܟ̈ܐ (*bĕnay malākē*, 'the sons of the angels'), rendered in Arabic as *banū l-malā'ikah* (i.e. 'the sons of the angels'; cf. *abnā'Allāh* 'the sons of God', in translations made from a Greek original; Lagarde 1876: 142–143).

The main point is that both of these possibilities would give rise to the Arabic form اليم. If we are not mistaken, the step from اليم to ابليس may be the result of two palaeographical alterations:

1. The first involves a case of *Analogiebildungen*, consisting in the inclusion of a *bā'* after the *alif* by analogy with the *yā'* following the *lām* (Lindberg 1897: 156–157). Moreover, the diacritics of the *yā'* (if in fact present) were in all probability placed on either side of the *lām*, which led the copyist to include a *bā'* before the *lām*, following it with a *yā'*.

2. Confusion of final *mīm* and *sīn*, perfectly plausible in non-Arabic words where the morphology of the *sīn* is unclear (Robertson 1920: 81–83) and the copyist in question has not understood the name, a frequent occurrence in works

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8 The presence of the OT in the Qur'ān is an old and complex issue, see Bell 1945: 1–20.

of multiple genres (Monferrer-Sala 2002: 335–341) and authors of different creeds (Monferrer-Sala 2007b: 73–108).

As was the case with אלהים (which, as we saw earlier, came to mean 'angels' in the Enochic text) and with אלים (also interpreted as 'angels' in the Hebrew *Ps.* 89:6, which also occurred in the Pešīṭtā and some of the Arabic versions based on one of these two *Vorlagen*), اليم acquired the meaning of 'angels' as well, when applied to the mythical account of their fall, in both the Jewish and the Christian traditions. But because the fall from heaven of these rebel angels eventually became that of a single figure (i.e. the main rebel, the chief of the angels), the term took on a singular rather than a plural meaning and was used to refer only to the fallen angel who acted as leader, whether called Satan, Mastema, Beliar, Semyaza, or simply the Devil (ὁ διάβολος).

The account of the fallen angels, as narrated by Jewish and Christian texts, became known during a formative period of Islam and was later echoed in the Qur'ān. It may have entered Islam through either Jewish or Christian circles, both of which were feverishly busy with apocalyptic texts, including the Book of Enoch, whose repercussions were to last much longer, as evidenced by the *excerptum* from this apocryphal text reproduced in Michael the Syrian's "Chronicle" in the twelfth century CE and transmitted via a *karšūnī* copy of the "Chronicle" produced after the fourteenth century CE.[9]

ABBREVIATIONS

Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

3 Bar   3 Baruch (Greek Apocalypse)
1 En.   1 Enoch (Ethiopic Enoch)
2 En.   2 Enoch (Slavonic Enoch) [J: larger recension; A: shorter recension]
Jub.   Jubilees
L.A.E.   Life of Adam and Eve
T. Ab.   Testament of Abraham (recension 'A')
T. Reu.   Testament of Reuben
T. Sol.   Testament of Solomon

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9 On the *karšūnī* (< *ġaršūnī*) MSS, see Samir 1982: 42–46. See also Monferrer-Sala 2012a: v–xii.

New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

(Eth.) Ap. Ps.Greg. Ethiopic Apocalypse of Pseudo-Gregory
Gos. Bart.   Gospel of Bartholomew

Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumrān

1QapGen ar   Aramaic Genesis Apocryphon from Cave 1
4QDeut[q]   Remains of the "Song of Moses" from Cave 4

Sources and Manuscripts

Bodl.   Bodleian (Library)
Hunt.   (R.W.) Hunt (Ms., later Bodleian ar. christ. Uri 99)
LXX   Septuaginta
Monac. arab.   Monacensis arabicus (codex)
MT   Masoretic (Hebrew) Text
Par. ar.   Paris Arabic (Ms. from the Bibliothèque national de France)
Sin. ar.   Sinai Arabic (Ms. from St Catherine)
Vat. ar.   Vatican Arabic (Ms.)

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