CHAPTER 6

The Fall of Iblīs and Its Enochic Background

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The episode of Iblīs's fall occurs in seven Qur'ānic passages, Q 2:34; 7:11–18; 15:26–43; 17:61–65; 18:50–51; 20:116; and 38:71–85, to which one might add a probable allusion in Q 72:4. While differing in the details, these parallel versions of the story follow roughly the same narrative sequence. At God's order to venerate the newly created Adam, all the angels obey but Iblīs, who refuses to bow in front of the first man. Enraged by this act of disobedience, God orders the rebel angel to leave—probably from the divine council (although this detail is not specified). The story is usually set in the framework of more extended narrative segments that typically involve other episodes of the primordial times of history, as the creation of Adam and his expulsion from the Garden.

The Qur'ān's cycle on Iblīs's fall is part of the wider literary stream about the rebellion of Satan elaborated in extrabiblical sources. More specifically, it belongs to the branch of these traditions where the mutiny of the accursed takes place after the creation of Adam. This kind of story appears to have been preponderant in Eastern Christian circles.[1] Its occurrence in Syriac sources is so frequent that the episode may be considered part of a standard "Edessene interpretation," as Minov has efficaciously defined it.[2] This particular hermeneutic for the first mutiny of sacred history explains the fall of Satan as a consequence of his refusal to be subjugated to Adam. The accursed is usually presented as claiming his superiority to the first man by reason of the more noble nature of the material from which he was created.[3] A particular develop-

* *A Eszter, Flavia ed Eduard, per quando camminavamo insieme nei wadi con gli occhi fissi ai fiumi di Palestina.*

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1 Western Christianity instead adopted the version of the story where the rebellion is set before the creation of the first man. See Gary A. Anderson, "The Fall of Satan in the Thought of St. Ephrem and John Milton," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 3, no. 1 (2000): 8–9.

2 See Sergey Minov, "Satan's Refusal to Worship Adam: A Jewish Motif and Its Reception in Syriac Christian Tradition," in *Tradition, Transmission, and Transformation from Second Temple Literature through Judaism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*, eds. Menahem Kister, Hillel I. Newman, Michael Segal, and Ruth A. Clements (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 247–48.

3 In the *Cave of Treasures*, Satan and his rebel order protest that it is not suitable for those who were created from the fire to bow in front of those who were shaped from the powder

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ment of this hermeneutical trend, first certified in the *Cave of Treasure* (henceforth referred to as *CoT*), also contains an explanatory expansion of the story concerned with the command that God issues to venerate Adam and the subsequent refusal by Satan to obey.[4]

As previous scholars have noted, many specific details of the narratives on Satan's fall circulating in the Syriac environment also occur in the Qur'ānic stories on Iblīs. As in the case of Satan in the Syriac sources, the jealousy that Iblīs harbors against Adam is motivated by the same alleged "materialistic" superiority that he claims for himself.[5] As in the specific case of the interpretation provided in *CoT*, Iblīs also receives and disobeys God's order to perform an explicit act of submission toward Adam.[6] Similarly worthy of notice is the fact that in the Qur'ān-related narratives about the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden the deceiver is never presented under the name of Iblīs, but rather as al-Šayṭān.[7] In this detail the Qur'ān apparently follows another exegetical line typical of the Syriac explanations about the fall of Satan. The "onomastic shift" Iblīs → al-Šayṭān in fact reflects the idea often reported by Syriac exegetes that the devil took such a name after having disobeyed God's command to venerate

(~~recs. 1 & 2,~~ III, Syr. text and Fr. trans. in Andreas Su-Min Ri, ed. and trans., *La Caverne des Trésors: Les deux recensions syriaques*, 2 vols. (Leuven: Peeters, 1987). In two homilies by Narsai (d. ca. 502) *On the Creation of Adam and Eve* and *On the Creation of the World*, Satan similarly complains about God's commandment to honor "whom He made of earth," otherwise described as "the son of the powder" (Homilies 29 and 36 according to Mingana's classification system). In Narsai, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliæ et Carmina*, ed. Alphonse Mingana (Mosul: Typis Fratrum Praedicatorum, 1905), 2: 100–13 (esp. 104) and 2:193–207 (esp. 200). The same motif of Satan's "materialistic" claim appears in another Syriac work from the sixth century, namely the *Cause of the Foundation of the Schools* attributed to Barhadbshabba 'Arbaya. Here, after the creation of Adam, Satan asks, "Why me spiritual am I subjected to the corporeal?" (text. in PO IV, 4, 18: 350).

4 This motif—already attested in a number of Jewish and Christian pseudepigrapha—was inserted in the framework of the Edessene interpretation by the author of the *Cave of Treasure*. According to Minov, that author developed further the "standard" Edessene interpretation "by introducing the apocryphal motif of Satan's refusal to acknowledge the superiority of the first man by participating in an act of obeisance" (see Minov, "Satan's Refusal," 253).

5 He contends that since he was created from fire, he would not bow in front of a being created from mud modeled out of clay (*ṭīn*, Q 7:12; 17:61; 38:76) or, alternatively, of clay of mud (*ṣalṣal min ḥamā'*, Q 15:26, 28, 33).

6 For a recent discussion, see Gabriel S. Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and Its Biblical Subtext* (London: Routledge, 2010), 46–54.

7 On this see Andrew Rippin, "Devil," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Brill Online, 2016, <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-the-quran/devil-EQSIM_00115>).

Adam. In general, it clearly appears that key elements of the Qur'ānic narratives about Iblīs's fall concur with ideas widespread in Syriac hermeneutical explanations about when Satan's primordial act of disobedience occurred and the reasons for it. The aim of the present paper is to illustrate that the Qur'ānic stories also reflect more general literary and theological trends that accompanied and dictated the developments of the traditions about Satan's fall.

6.1 Interactions with the Fallen Angels Traditions

Similarly to many Jews and Christians of the late antique world, the addressees of the Qur'ānic message would also have seen in the episode of Satan/Iblīs's rebellion a key moment in the history of human salvation. This first act of disobedience against God indeed creates the conditions for human sin that is provoked by the rebel angel himself, and it triggers the eschatological process that will culminate with the Final Judgment. However, by the time that the Qur'ānic corpus purportedly came into being, the idea that Adam and Eve's original sin marked the beginning of human perdition had not always been predominant among biblical hermeneutists. Nor had Satan always been identified with the malign entity behind the serpent that primordially tempted Eve in the Garden.

For many centuries, traditions related to the Enochic mytheme of the fallen angels had in fact transmitted an alternative etiology about the origins of evil. The myth of the fallen angels is first certified in the *Book of the Watchers* (*1 Enoch* 6–16) and is related to a cryptic biblical narrative in Genesis 6:1–4. According to this ancient version, the "sons of God" mentioned in the biblical passage are angels who at the time preceding the Flood rebelled against God and taught humans illicit arts. Not satisfied with disobeying God's epistemological prohibition, the wicked angels also transgressed sexual bans between heavenly and human creatures and had intercourse with lascivious women. The promiscuous union generated the mixed race of the Giants who spread violence on the Earth. It is to cleanse the Earth of the presence of the latter that God sent the Flood. However, the spirits of the fallen angels' bastard progeny survived the calamity and, according to the Enochic myth, are the demonic creatures that continued to tempt the human generations of postdiluvian times.

The story of the Watchers exercised an important influence on both Jewish and Christian understandings of the sacred history of salvation, as it is attested by its several successive rewritings and allusions to it by later authors.[8]

8 For a legacy of the story, see the fundamental study by Annette Y. Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge:

However, the idea of the angelic sin gradually came to be perceived as theologically problematic and was consequentially mitigated and later definitively discarded. At the same time, not all elements of the story were lost during the process of dismissal, but some came to be absorbed by the traditions on Satan's fall.[9] As Reed notes, the progressive rejection of the Enochic myth went hand in hand with a process that saw "the increasing importance of the Fall of Adam and Eve in Christian salvation-history, and the resultant transfer of many traditions from angelic interpretation of Gen 6:1–4 to the rebellion of Satan and his hosts at the beginning of time."[10] Following this narrative adjustment, it is Satan, and not other angelic entities in later times, who is to be blamed for first misleading the humans. This procedure is well illustrated in the following passage from Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*:

> I would not dream of believing that it was the holy angels of God who suffered such a fall in the present instance! Nor can I think that it is of them the Apostle Peter said: "For if God did spare the angels that sinned . . . (1 Pet 2:4)." I think that he speaks rather of those who first apostatized from God, along with their chief, the devil, who enviously deceived the first man in the form of a serpent (15.32).[11]

Augustine's words typify the kind of problems that a committed believer in late antiquity would face when reading or listening to the myth of the fallen angels. The literary and theological strategies he adopts to refuse the myth are the same used by many of his precursors and contemporaries: the angelic rebellion is projected back to the beginning of time and attributed to Satan, while the whole episode is linked to that of the human primordial fall. Interactions of this kind and the related projecting back of elements from the fallen angels traditions to those about Satan's fall can be detected in several sources. This is also the case of the Qurʾānic narratives on Iblīs's fall, as the examples below demonstrate.

Cambridge University Press, 2005). See also James C. VanderKam, "1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs, and Enoch in Early Christian Literature," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Heritage in Early Christianity*, ed. James C. VanderKam and William Adler (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996), 33–101.

9 See Reed, *Fallen Angels*, esp. 51, 115–16, 168n16, 177–78, 187, 220–21.

10 Ibid., 220–21.

11 Trans. in ibid., 220.

6.2 The Case of Q 2:30

The narrative segment in sūrat al-Baqara Q 2: 30–38 consists of a sequence of connected episodes about the creation of Adam, the rebellion of Iblīs, and the human expulsion from the Garden. Unlike other Qur'ānic passages dealing with the same arguments, Q 2:30–38 contains an element that does not occur elsewhere. At the very beginning of the narrative sequence, at v. 30, it describes the reaction that the angels have when God expresses his intention to set mankind on Earth. The angels in fact object: "What, wilt Thou set therein one who will do corruption there, and shed blood, while We proclaim Thy praise and call Thee Holy?"[12] As Reeves notes, these words echo those in Genesis 6:11–13, where the generation of the Flood is accused of having "corrupted the Earth" and "engaged in violence."[13] References to this same biblical passage were included in the myth of the fallen angels (*1 Enoch* 9; *Jubilees* 7:21–26).[14] It is meaningful that, unlike in Genesis 6:11–13 but similarly to Q 2:30, in the *Book of the Watchers* the words in question are emitted by several (righteous) angels. Thus, it is likely that the ultimate source of the angels' words in the Qur'ānic narrative should be looked for in the Enochic traditions referring to Genesis 6:11–13 rather than in the biblical passage itself.

Worthy of special attention is the fact that in the Qur'ān the angels' words do not concern the generation of the Flood as in the biblical and Enochic examples, but rather the first human being. This is consistent with the tendency described above to envisage the primordial human couple, instead of the generation immediately before the Flood, as responsible for the successive world corruption. In fact, with the transposition to another context of the words in question, the target of the related accusation to corrupt the Earth and the shedding of blood changes as well. The burden of this reprehensible behavior is removed from the shoulders of the Flood generation and is loaded onto those of the very first humans.[15] Furthermore, when comparing Q 2:30 with the specific allusion to Genesis 6:11–13 in the *Book of the Watchers*, it emerges that

12 Translations of Qur'ānic passages are by Arberry.

13 John C. Reeves, "Some Explorations of the Intertwining of Bible and Qur'ān," in *Bible and Qur'ān: Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality*, ed. John C. Reeves (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 54.

14 Ibid.

15 On this see also Patricia Crone, "The Book of Watchers in the Qur'ān," in *Exchange and Transmission across Cultural Boundaries: Philosophy, Mysticism and Science in the Mediterranean*, ed. Haggai Ben-Shammai, Shaul Shaked, and Sarah Stroumsa (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2013), 13.

the ultimate cause of human evilness also differs. Evil does not originate as in the Enochic traditions because of the illicit contacts between fallen angels and humans living at the time just before the Deluge. Its origins are to be placed in very primordial times, and its causes are to be attributed to anyone else other than Satan/Iblīs who tempted the first humans. It thus appears that it is not by accident that in Q 2:30 the motif of the angels' words about human corruption is transposed to the beginning of time and linked to the story of Iblīs's rebellion. In fact, this is one of the many elements of the fallen angels story that flew into the myth of Satan's fall. As I will illustrate in the following section, the text of Q 2:30 is not the only case in the Qur'ān where an element normally placed at the time of the Flood in Enochic traditions is transposed to the beginning of time.

6.3 The Case of the Negotiation with God

Between the moment of his expulsion by God and his reappearance in the Garden under the name of al-Šayṭān, Iblīs is the protagonist of a curious entr'acte. He asks God "to be granted respite" until the Day of Judgment, and he obtains his request. During this span of time, he declares, he will lead humankind away from the path of righteousness (Q 7:14–18; 15:36–40; 17: 62–65; 38:79–85). This "license to tempt," whose first achievement is the success in misleading Adam and Eve, appears to be a real divine mandate. Particularly meaningful are the texts of Q 38:82, where the Qur'ān explicitly recognizes that it is by God's might (*bi-ʿizzatika*) that Iblīs perverts humans, and of Q 17:64, with God inciting Iblīs to tempt whomever he wants of human beings. At the same time, the Qur'ān constantly specifies that Iblīs has no power over God's servants against whom his attempted temptations are destined to fail (see Q 15:39–40; 17:64–65; 38:80). This aspect of the Qur'ānic theology is repeated, outside of the narrative lines of the negotiation scene between Iblīs and God, in Q 34:20–21: "Iblīs proved true his opinion of them, and they followed him, except a party of the believers. Yet he had no authority over them, but that We might know him who believed in the Hereafter from him who was in doubt thereof. Thy Lord is Guardian over everything."

Iblīs then emerges as a primary actor in a very deterministic conception of sacred history. The role he plays has the twofold function of affirming God's absolute control over human actions and, at the same time, of providing an explanation for thorny issues of theodicy. This specific characterization of the figure of the accursed as the recipient of a divine mandate is not a Qur'ānic peculiarity. The mission that Iblīs is assigned in the Qur'ān has a possible

parallel in Job 1:6–2:7, where God allows Satan to tempt Job. Another similarity can be detected in Zech 3:1–2, with Satan figuring as an appointed accuser of humans before God. However, the Qur'ānic episode of Iblīs's divine appointment finds its closest parallel—from both narratological and conceptual perspectives—in the Enochic traditions on the fallen angels. More specifically, in the rewriting of the story found in the *Book of Jubilees*, the evil angel Mastema asks God to spare some of the demonic entities at his service that God has ordered the angels to destroy. Otherwise, he protests, he would be unable to perform the task of tempting the sons of men. God agrees that a tenth of the demons may stay at Mastema's orders (*Jub.* 10:1–14).[16]

There are a number of parallels between the episode about Mastema in *Jubilees* and that concerning Iblīs in the Qur'ān. Both Mastema and Iblīs appear to be invested of a divine mandate to lead humankind astray. In both cases, however, the influence of the license to tempt is limited from the beginning. Iblīs has no influence over God's servants, much as Mastema cannot pursue the elected people of Israel (*Jub.* 15:32). Another point common to both appointed tempters is their relationship with demons. In fact, as I will show later, the Qur'ānic Iblīs also appears to be related to evil beings, much as Mastema is in *Jubilees*. For the sake of argument, I should admit that the traits that the figures of Iblīs and Mastema have in common coincide with frequently recurring features with which Satan is credited in several biblical and extrabiblical sources. What marks a quite unique parallel between the two episodes in *Jubilees* and the Qur'ān is the negotiation that the two evil entities undertake with God. In both cases, a wicked angel asks God something concerning his ability to exercise a negative influence on humans. In both cases, God agrees, an agreement that appears to be a real investiture of the devil as a divinely appointed tempter. These are narrative elements that, as far as I was able to find, do not occur in other traditions—neither in the fall of Satan nor in the fallen angels.[17] The only real difference between the episodes in *Jubilees* and in the Qur'ān is

16 The chief of the demonic troupe who appears under the name of Mastema is none other than Satan, "the Satan" being indeed a title referring to him in *Jub.* 10:11. On the episode concerning Mastema, see in particular Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 93–95; idem, "Enochic and Mosaic Traditions in Jubilees: The Evidence of Angelology and Demonology," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 357–58; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The Book of Jubilees and the Origin of Evil," in ibid., 298–306; Michael Segal, *The Book of Jubilees: Rewritten Bible, Redaction, Ideology and Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 174–80.

17 A scene similar to that in *Jubilees* occurs in the fallen angels tradition preserved in the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*. Here after the Flood the demons receive from an angel permission to tempt those who do not follow the law of God and who decide to subject

the moment of sacred history when the scene of the negotiation occurs: at the time around the Flood in Jubilees, and at the beginning of human history in the Qur'ān. This, however, concurs with the process already mentioned of projecting elements from the Enochic myth back to primordial times. The negotiation between Iblīs and God in the Qur'ān appears to be another one of the many elements from the fallen angels traditions that came to be absorbed by traditions about the fall of Satan.

6.4 Demon or Fallen Angel (or Both)?

In sūrat al-Kahf Q 18:50, the story of Iblīs's fall is briefly evoked. This is the only instance in the whole Qur'ān where Iblīs is said to belong to the specific category of beings known as *ǧinn*s. While no other explicit mention is made elsewhere, an implicit connection between Iblīs and the *ǧinn*s occurs in several Qur'ānic passages. Just like Iblīs, *ǧinn*s are said to be created from fire and are opposites of humans who are by contrast shaped out of clay (Q 15:26–27; 55:14–15).[18] The name al-Šayṭān that Iblīs apparently assumes after his fall is also connected to that of *šayāṭīn* with which the *ǧinn*s are alternatively and indiscriminately referred to in several Qur'ānic passages.[19] As Iblīs/Šayṭan has the power to lead humans astray, the *ǧinn*s/*šayāṭīn* also do. In Q 15:17 the demons (*šayāṭīn*) who attempt to reach heaven and eavesdrop on the divine council's decisions are labeled with the adjective *raǧīm*, namely the same one used to designate Iblīs/Šayṭan at the moment of his ban (Q 15:34; 38:77; 3:36; 16:98; 81:25). In Q 72:4 the *ǧinn*s—who are later presented as similarly attempting the heavenly ascension (vv. 8–9)—complain about "the fool among us spoke against God's outrage." This appears to be an allusion to the episode of Iblīs's primordial rebellion.

The depiction of Iblīs as one of the *ǧinn*s originated a fair amount of exegetical speculation. *Ǧinn*s/*šayāṭīn* are, in fact, commonly understood to

themselves to evil entities (Hom. 18–20). The tradition reported in the *Homilies*, however, lacks the motif of the negotiation between Satan and God.

18 It is notable that in one case this information immediately precedes the story of Adam's creation and Iblīs's rebellion (Q 15:26–27). This indeed suggests the intention of stressing the figures of Iblīs and Adam as the prototypes of the two distinct categories of God's creatures, *ǧinn*s and humans.

19 For instance, Q 21:82 and 38:37 mention the *ǧinn*s as being at the service of Solomon, while Q: 27:12, 39 and 34:12, 14 credit the *šayāṭīn* with the same function.

be demonic entities.[20] In the Qur'ān, Iblīs's assignment to the "*ǧinn*ic" kind goes hand in hand with the implication that he was one of the angels before his rebellion. This bivalent and ambiguous nature, demonic and angelic at the same time, became a crux for Muslim exegetes who had to explain how a character included among the angels could also be listed as one of the *ǧinn*s. Alongside the cosmological implication about how to envisage God's primordial creation, the issue also had a moral impact. In fact, the question arose how an angel supposedly incapable of disobeying God could eventually revolt against him.[21] The question is made still more complex by the Qur'ān's statements that the *ǧinn*s existed as such before the creation of humankind (Q 15:26–27; 55:14–15) and that at the moment of his rebellion Iblīs belonged to the "*ǧinn*ic" kind (Q 18:50). These elements, in fact, apparently invalidate the possible solution that Iblīs was an angel who turned into a *ǧinn* as a consequence of his misconduct.

Western scholars have also dealt with the ambiguous description of Iblīs in the Qur'ān. Crone observes that the fact of Iblīs being "envisaged now as an angel and now as a demon is presumably an Enochic legacy."[22] While considering the Enochic traditions as possible background can help us to solve the puzzle, some complications still remain. In the myth of the Watchers, demons are in fact the indirect result of the fallen angels' illicit union with women, and not the rebel angels themselves. In much the same way, in *Jubilees* demons are subject to the satanic figure of Mastema, but Mastema is not presented as one of the demons. Another issue, raised during the Qur'ān Seminar meetings at Notre Dame University in 2013, concerned whether the description of Iblīs as a fallen angel could be extended to the whole category of beings, the *ǧinn*s, to which he is said to belong. In other words, are the *ǧinn*s fallen angels?[23]

As I have suggested during the seminar at Notre Dame, the situation can be better envisaged when comparing the information on Iblīs and the *ǧinn*s not with the Watchers story in its most ancient versions in *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*, but rather with how the myth evolved until the period of the alleged redaction of

20 Many aspects of how these beings are described in the Qur'ān actually concur with familiar representations of demons in late antiquity. On this point, see my commentaries in *The Qur'an Seminar Commentary—Le Qur'an Seminar. A Collaborative Study of 50 Qur'anic Passages; Commentaire collaboratif de 50 passages coraniques,* ed. Mehdi Azaiez, Gabriel S. Reynolds, Tommaso Tesei, and Hamza M. Zafer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 324–25, 392–93.

21 Cf. Rippin, "The Devil," 527.

22 Crone, "The Book of Watchers," 32.

23 The results of that discussion are now available in *The Qur'an Seminar Commentary*, 382–94.

the Qur'ān. Our sources in fact document a progressive conflation between demons and fallen angels. A first step in this direction can be detected in the work of Justin (d. 165 CE), who identifies the demons as the offspring of the Watchers themselves and not of their bastard progeny.[24] Something similar occurs in one of Pseudo-Eupolemos's fragments (second century BCE) where it is some of the Giants, and not their demoniacal spirits, who survive the Flood (9, 17.2).[25] Pseudo-Eupolemos evidently conflates Giants and demons.[26] As a step further, we can consider the attempt of some authors to subordinate the figure of the Watchers to that of Satan.[27] According to this view, Satan was able to subvert the Watchers who had originally been sent to fight him. The myth being turned around in this way, the fallen angels now come to assume the role of demons as Mastema's subordinates in *Jubilees*. In the works of other authors, however, the conflation of rebel angels and demonic entities is still advanced and, in fact, accomplished. This is the case in Tatian's (d. 180 CE) receptions of the myth of the Watchers, where the demons *are* the angels who fell.[28] In much the same way, in a Coptic homily attributed to Basil of Caesarea (d. 379 CE), we read about the "angels who have become satans."[29]

These evolutions of the Watcher traditions must have generated great confusion about the nature of the different categories of evil beings involved in the story, to the extent that at a given moment the difference among them was not clear anymore. We have a testimony of this in the *CoT* where fallen angels and demons are not clearly distinguished but rather assimilated. For instance, when refuting the angelic lineage of the Giants, the Syriac author infers that the supposed intercourse between fallen angels and women would be impossible because of its inconsistence with the asexual nature of spiritual beings. Notably, while refusing the idea that angels could engage in sexual relations with women, his focus is de facto limited to evil entities. In fact, he reasons, no woman would have remained uncorrupted if demons could have copulated

24 VanderKam, "1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs," 64; Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 163.

25 Greek text available at <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/die-fragmente-der-griechischen-historiker-i-iii/anonymos-pseudo-eupolemos-724-a724>.

26 It is notable that according to the story in the fragment, these Giants built the tower in Babel. This information is interesting for two reasons: [1] The Giants are consequentially linked to the theme of the attempt to reach heaven, something that *ǧinn*s in the Qur'ān also try to accomplish. [2] The mention of Babel is made in the Qur'ān's own version of the fallen angels myth in Q 2:102.

27 Ibid., 175–77; VanderKam; "1 Enoch, Enochic Motifs," 72, 85.

28 Cf. ibid., 65.

29 Quoted in Emmanouela Grypeou and Helen Spurling, "Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and Eastern Christian Exegesis," *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 4 (2007), 226n33.

with the daughters of men (15:7–8). It appears that the fallen angels of the Enochic tradition are assimilated here to demoniacal beings.

However, it is in the way Satan that is described that the confusion between the two categories appears most evidently. The accursed is in fact presented at first as the chief of the lesser order that rebelled against God (rec. II 3:1–4). A later passage also informs us that this is "the order of demons that fell from heaven" (~~recs. I&II,~~ 7:4). Still further in the text, however, this information is made ambiguous by the description of Satan as "one of the cherubim who fell (rec. II, 18:15). In *CoT*, Satan is thus described simultaneously as an angel and as a demon. This ambiguous information about his nature also concerns the order of beings whom he is supposed to lead. His hosts are in fact presented as both demons and cherubim. In this we can find a clear parallel to the figure of Iblīs. From this perspective, the twofold angelic and demoniac nature that the Qur'ān confers on him appears to be dictated, as much as in *CoT*, by the confusion that came to surround the figures of the demons and of the angels who fell.

6.5 A Different Etiology of the Origins of Demons

The parallel case of *CoT* provides us with another interesting element. As in the Qur'ān, where the creation of Iblīs and the *ǧinn*s predates that of Adam and the humans, in *CoT* Satan and his kind already appear as a separate class of beings at the moment of the creation of humankind. *CoT* and Qur'ān thus share an etiology about the origins of evil entities that is different from that of the fallen angels traditions proper. The presence in both texts of this particular view about the origins of demons does not appear to be accidental but rather as concurring with what has emerged so far.

As said above, the general explanation promulgated by the Watchers story as a theodicy was gradually rejected. Within this process, the story of the Giants, as well as the related idea about the angels' responsibility in the naissance of demons, came to be dismissed too. This occurred parallel with the adoption of a hermeneutic of Genesis 6:1–4 that was different from that at the base of the Enochic traditions on the fallen angels. The idea that wicked angels are the protagonists behind the obscure biblical passage was substituted with a different explanation identifying the "sons of God" with the antediluvian generation of the Sethians.[30] In accordance with this trend, in *CoT* it is not the angels but the sons of Seth who had intercourse with the daughters of men, and more

30 Cf. Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 221–25.

specifically with the descendants of Cain.[31] It is against the offspring originating from this union that God later sends the Flood. Notably, unlike the fallen angels of the Enochic tradition, in *CoT* the Sethians have nothing to do with the origins of evil entities. The Sethians are instead presented as the typological opposite of demons. Their climbing back toward the top of Paradise is in fact described as the reciprocal event of the fall from heaven of the demonic order (7:4). Moreover, when confuting the theory of the Giants' angelic lineage, the author adds as an argument that the number of demons never changed since the moment they fell from heaven (rec. 1: 15:7).

It thus appears that the idea of the early existence of demons is complementary to the refutation of the Giants story. The concomitance of these two concepts is not surprising, for the rejection of the Enochic story of the Giants has the consequence of leaving unsolved the problem of how demons originated.[32] The pre-existence of demonic creatures provides an explanation that is an alternative to the embarrassing concept of illicit union between angels and humans. In this different etiology we can also glimpse a reflex of the procedure observed above. Ill-fated events that are consequences of the angelic sin and happen around the time of the Flood in the Watchers traditions

31 To refute the idea of the Giants' angelic lineage, the author of *CoT* elaborates a kind of genetic theory. This begins with the description of Seth as "a giant, perfect as Adam" and as "the father of all the Giants of before the Flood" (6:2–3). Seth's physical qualities then appear to have been transmitted to his descendants, who are described as "mighty giants" (12:9). The Sethians' gigantic stature then passes on to the sons who are engendered by their union with the daughters of the Cainites. These are in fact described as "men [rec. I also describes them as giants], sons of giants (*gbr' bn' gnbr'*), similar to towers" (15:3). It is by reason of this genetic heritage and related gigantic stature that, according to the author of *CoT*, previous authors wrongly believed that these giants were from the seeds of the angels descended from heaven (15:4).

32 The case of *CoT* is not an isolated one. In several sources the rejection of this particular element of the Enochic myth is accompanied by the presentation of demonic entities as a category of beings that rebelled at the beginning of human history and not as resulting from an angelic illicit act accomplished at a later time. This is the case, for instance, with Augustine, who rejects the myth of the Giants' angelic lineage (cf. *De Civitate Dei* 15.22) and simultaneously envisages the activity of "Satan and his hosts" from the beginning of time (cf. the passage from the *De Civitate Dei* quoted above). In much the same way, in the Pseudo-Clementine literature, and more specifically in *Recognitiones*, we read about a chief demon appointed by God at the beginning of time (*Rec.* 29). The implied idea that demons already exist in primordial times concurs with the reference in the same work to the non-angelic interpretation of the fallen angels myth (*Rec.* 45). Notably, elsewhere in the Pseudo-Clementine corpus, i.e., in the *Homilies*, we find by contrast the angelic interpretation of the story (cf. *Hom.* 13–17).

are projected back to the beginning of time and associated with the figure of Satan.

We can now go back to the question of the early existence of *ǧinn*s in the Qurʾān. In the Qurʾānic corpus we find no explicit rejection of the myth of the Giants. It is notable though that when evoking the story of the fallen angels, namely in Q 2:201, the Qurʾān does not make any allusion to the motif of the illicit intercourse between angels and human women. Demons are mentioned, but they apparently bear no connection with the two angels Hārūt and Mārūt. The former rather appear to be the antithesis of the latter.[33] In light of what has emerged from the analysis of the parallel case in *CoT*, the absence of the motif of illicit intercourse appears to be quite meaningful. I should admit that evidence deduced from Qurʾānic internal parallels might be problematic from a methodological perspective, given the incertitude surrounding the origins of the corpus and the related difficulties to safely attribute all of its materials to a single author. However, as a matter of fact, anxieties about the status of angelic and demonic creatures constitute an important part of the Qurʾān's agenda. It is easy to trace in the Qurʾān theological needs comparable to those brought forward by previous and contemporary authors to reject the embarrassing implications of the fallen angels story. The very identification of angels as sons of God naturally jars with the Qurʾān's profession of a strict monotheism.[34] Recent studies have indeed highlighted the centrality of the polemic against angel-worship practices in the Qurʾān[35]. From this perspec-

33 The whole passage is marked by some of the same tendencies observed in this study. It is in fact remarkable that the idea of angelic sin is mitigated and de facto omitted. The Qurʾān in fact absolves Hārūt and Mārūt of any accusation of teaching people magic, which is instead attributed to demoniacal entities. Still, the two angels are said to tempt humans under divine mandate, something that somehow parallels the ambiguous mission that Iblīs is charged with. However, in Q 2:201 the concept of divine permission to tempt humankind appears to be used to justify the two angels' conduct. Here the Qurʾān echoes attempts to absolve the fallen angels from revealing illicit teachings that are already present in the earliest rewritings of the myth (e.g., in *Jubilees*, cf. Reed, *Fallen Angels*, 87–95).

34 This possible issue behind the Qurʾānic echoes from the *Book of the Watchers* has already been investigated by Crone, who also points out how the Watchers myth had been similarly rejected in rabbinic circles by reason of the angel-worship practices that it could encourage (cf. Crone, "The Book of Watchers").

35 Cf. Patricia Crone, "The Religion of the Qurʾānic Pagans: God and the Lesser Deities," *Arabica* 57, no. 3 (2010), 151–200; idem, "Angels versus Humans as Messengers of God: The View of the Qurʾānic Pagans," in *Revelation, Literature, and Community in Late Antiquity*,

tive, it might be observed that from the Qurʾān's point of view the Enochic traditions would also imply a direct "family link" between the demons and God. This is in fact the idea that results when combining the Watchers' status as divine sons with that of demons originating from their bastard progeny. The combination of these two factors would in fact place God in a kind of grandparental relationship with respect to demons! In some instances the Qurʾān actually seems to directly address and reject this possible implication of the Enochic myth. In fact, the establishment of a lineage (*nasab*) between God and the *ǧinns* is reckoned among the accusations that the Qurʾān directs against its opponents (Q 37:158; cf. Q 6:100). If this reading is correct, the Qurʾān's reference to the early existence of demons would concur, as in the case of *CoT*, with the parallel rejection of the etiology for the origins of evil beings as transmitted in the Enochic traditions.

6.6 Concluding Remarks

The present study has shown how particular elements of the stories about Iblīs's primordial rebellion can be better understood when read in the light not only of literary parallels on the fall of Satan but also of the more general process of interaction between traditions of this kind and the Enochic myth of the fallen angels. A main propulsive force for these evolutions seems to have been the necessity to mitigate the impact of some embarrassing core elements of the Watchers story. The frequent solution with which to face problematic concepts such as that of angelic sin was to attribute illicit acts to Satan, the demons, and the primordial generations. As seen in the previous pages, similar dynamics can be observed in the story of Iblīs's fall. The Enochic legacy detectable behind these Qurʾānic traditions should be understood as part of a process in which two rival traditions about the origins of evil came to interact with one another. While the present work has mostly focused on the presence of an Enochic literary heritage in the story of Iblīs's fall, other traces of this complex process might be found in the Qurʾān. As has been suggested, rejection of particular elements and ideas from the traditions on the fallen angels can in fact be detected in the Qurʾānic corpus. Finally, it might also be observed that the narratives about Iblīs display elements traceable back to the Watchers myth that

ed. Philippa Townsend and Moulie Vidas (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 315–36; Gerald Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

do not appear in other literary parallels on Satan's fall. From this perspective, the Qur'ān can be taken as a useful source of information to elucidate the same literary process that has been used here to elucidate the Qur'ānic narratives. Put in different terms, as a document from the Near East in late antiquity, the Qur'ān can be used as a precious source of information to understand theological and literary developments that have left no traces in other sources from the same historical period and cultural area.

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