

more than "the adversary", and particularly in the ecclesiastical writers he becomes the chief of the hosts of evil. It is in this sense that

ابليس appears in the Qur'ān, so we are doubly justified in looking for a Christian origin for the word.

One theory is that it came through the Syriac, the ܐ being taken as the genitive particle,¹ a phenomenon for which there are perhaps other examples, e.g. ܡܨܬܐ for διαφωνάς (ZA, xxiv, 51), ܩܨܬܐܢ for δικαστής (ZDMG, I, 620), ܙܢܬܐܪܝܐ for δυσεντερία (Geyer, *Zwei Gedichte*, i, 119 n.). The difficulty is that the normal translation of ὁ διάβολος is ܐܠܚܡܝܐ, the *accuser* or *calumniator*, both in the Peshitta (cf. Matt. iv) and in the ecclesiastical literature. There is a form ܒܚܕܐ, a transliteration of διάβολος, but *PSm*, 874, quotes this only as a dictionary word from *BB*. There is apparently no occurrence of the word in the old Arabic literature,² so it was possibly a word introduced by Muḥammad himself. If we could assume that some such form as ܒܚܕܐ was colloquially used among the Aramaic-speaking Christians with whom Muḥammad came in contact, the above explanation might hold, though one would have to assume that the ܐ had been dropped by his informants. The alternative is that it came into Arabic directly from the Greek, and was used by the Arabic-speaking Christians associated with the Byzantine Church.³

Grimme, *ZA*, xxvi, 164, suggested that it might have come from S. Arabia, perhaps influenced by the Eth. ጸያብሉስ. This, however, is apparently a rare word in Eth., the usual translation for διάβολος being ሰይጣን, though sometimes ጸጺን is used (James iv, 7; 1 Pet. v, 8, etc.). Moreover, even if there were anything in Grimme's theory that this was the form that crossed over into Arabia, his further supposition that the ጸያ was taken to be the S. Arabian ܕܝ = ذى is very far fetched.

¹ So Horovitz, *KU*, 87. Mingana, *Syriac Influence*, 89, thinks rather that it was the fault of some early scribe or copyist who mistook the initial *Dal* for an *Alif*.

² The verses in Ibn Hishām, 318 and 516, noted by Horovitz, are from the period of the Hijra and so doubtless influenced by Muhammad's usage. They would seem fatal, however, to Mingana's theory.

³ Künstlinger, "Die Herkunft des Wortes *Iblīs* im Kurān," in *Rocznik Orientalystyczny*, vi (1928), proposes the somewhat far-fetched theory that *Iblīs* is derived from the Jewish *Belial* by deliberate transformation.