Two names and one title for a she-demon
A note on the ‘queen of the demons’ in TestSal(ar)∗

[Dos nombres y un título para una demonia. Una nota sobre la ‘reina de los demonios’ en TestSal(ar)]

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Resumen: En este artículo nos ocupamos del nombre al-Ardamīs y del título Malikat al-ǧinn que la versión árabe del Testamento de Salomón (TestSal[ar]) da a una demonia, con la intención de ofrecer una hipótesis sobre el posible original de ambas denominaciones.

Abstract: Our aim in this article is to offer a hypothesis about the origin of both the name al-Ardamīs and the title Malikat al-ǧinn given to a she-demon in the Arabic version of the Testament of Solomon (TestSal[ar]).


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Introduction

The apocryphal work known as the Arabic Testament of Solomon (TestSal[ar]) represents one of the numerous versions known in the Christian Orient, where this legendary text enjoyed great popularity. In the Christian Arabic tradition a quite different version from the Greek Διαθήκη or ‘Testament’ has survived. The various recensions transmitted by the Greek textual tradition are famous for the demonological element contained in this apocryphal work, a narrative feature which is obviously based on the esoteric power attributed to King Solomon in the Jewish and Christian traditions, although in the Islamic one as well.

However, although TestSal(ar) does not focus specifically on demonology, but on other narrative elements, some of them narrated in the Greek Vorlage or in motifs which are exclusive of TestSal(ar), several demonological references are gathered in the Arabic text. Among these demonological references that occur in TestSal(ar) we find the allusion to a she-demon, to which two names and a title are assigned by the author of the Arabic text which will be briefly analyzed below.

1. Taʾudūrā and al-Ardāmīs

In the narrative of the she-demon named Taʾudūrā, i.e. from Greek Θεοδόρα ("God’s gift"), the author of TestSal(ar) says that this she-demon is known by two names. Paradoxically, the theophoric Taʾudūrā,7 according to the Arabic author, was the name by which she was known among the demons,8 since people knew her under the name al-Ardāmīs.

At first glance, one notices that Taʾudūrā is a Christian anthroponym used in the Byzantine Middle East,9 whereas al-Ardāmīs is a pagan name. This feature is rather remarkable and perhaps it is the result of (copyist’s) lapsus calami of a scribe who could change the order of the names because of an homoiouteleuton. Two hypotheses are probable: the first one (comes from the possibility) is that Taʾudūrā was the name used by the people to refer to the she-demon, whereas al-Ardāmīs was the form used for the demons to call her. This hypothesis is based on the idea that perhaps the author featured this story by taking the OT motif of the fallen angel. In this case, the original name of the she-demon would be Taʾudūrā, but after she fell down from heaven it was changed into al-Ardāmīs. As for the second hypothesis, there seems to be another explanation, since after the fall of the she-demon the demons under her power still followed using the name Taʾudūrā, whereas people changed it into al-Ardāmīs, because of her fall and the subsequent loose of her divine gift.

Be it as it were, the identification of the Arabic form al-Ardāmīs is not easy to be explained. At first glance, it seems to be that Ardāmīs represents a transliteration of the Greek Ἀρτεμίς (also known as Diana),10 the name of the

goddess of the hunting and the nature, and lady of the beasts as well in Greek mythology.

However, another possibility arises through the lectio mendosa al-Ūdīs, a name which as far as we know has no correspondence in Greek. Perhaps, the form Ūdīs could represent the name Ūrīya[n]s due an error of the scribe as a result of the shift /d/ < /t/ and the ellipsis of the nūn for the lack of the dot. If this hypothesis is correct the lectio Ope[rt]īs could represent the original Greek form, since this name is attested in the Greek Testament of Solomon (TestSal[gr] C X,15).¹¹

All in all, this is not the only possibility for explaining the Arabic form al-Ardamīs. If we take into consideration that the consonants /w/ and /d/ both represent a misreading or an error of the scribe instead of an only /t/ we have the reading al-Arīs, i.e. the Greek Ἄρης, the name of the god Mars, the son of Hera and Zeus.¹² Together with the previous hypothesis, this possibility seems to be quite likely, since the reading al-Arīs can be related to the form Ὕρης (Ŭrēs), which is attested in Arabic by the Ps. Mağīṯ.¹³ Since Hera was the goddess of the menstruation, we certainly wonder if an association of Hera with the impure/unclean things (as the demons are described in the NT and in Christian works)¹⁴ would be another feature in favor of this hypothesis,¹⁵ since this association occurs in demonological contexts.¹⁶

Two names and one title for a she-demon

2. Malikat al-ǧinn

The title malikat al-ǧinn (“the queen of the demons”) used for naming the aforementioned she-demon in TestSal(ar)\(^{17}\) is, as far as we know, neither attested in the Greek textual tradition of the Testament of Solomon, nor in the Old and New Testaments, nor in the apocryphal literature.

As in the Sumero-Akkadian pantheon demoniacs are planet-gods,\(^{18}\) in some ancient Near Eastern iconographical representations, the term “queen” can be ascribed in parallelism with the word “goddess” for referring a goddess of the demons or the evil spirits.\(^{19}\) For instance, the title “goddess” is used to describe a she-demon in a Babylonian incantation text,\(^{20}\) and a Babylonian goddess is known under the name Allat, who has a servant-demon called Namtar, the Akkadian demon of the plague.\(^{21}\) It must not be forgotten that in (the) old Mesopotamian beliefs demons played an important role in the social life and they had titles of specific officials.\(^{22}\)

On the other hand, one of the earliest mentions of a she-demon appears in a Sumerian king list. In rabbinical literature, for instance, Noah’s Naamah is described as one of the seductive she-demons who tempted Solomon.\(^{23}\) The aforementioned she-demon of the Sumerian king-list, which is called Lilitu (Lilith), belonged to the group of the storm-demons that later (they) became (in) night-demons as a result of a wrong etymology.\(^{24}\) Later on, the formula “queen of the demons” applied to the she-demon Igrath is found in a fifteenth century text BC.\(^{25}\)

As it is know, the influence of Mesopotamian demonology trespassed frontiers and

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\(^{17}\) Testamentum Salomonis arabicum, pp. 154-155 (Arabic text), 75-76 (Spanish trans.).


\(^{21}\) François LENORMANT, La magie chez les chaldéens et les origines accadiens (Paris: Maisonneuve et Cie., 1874), p. 34, and n. 2.


reached other areas and cultures, like it occurred with the ‘Islamic’ she-demon called *Umm al-ṣibyān*, who is described as “the mother of the devils.”

In *Testamentum Salomonis arabicum*, as occurs in other Christian apocryphal texts like in *ApBar(sir)*, the descriptions are similar to those of the Babylonian texts: the desert storm winds or the southern wind associated to the demons, like for example the Babylonian Pazuzu, king of the wind demons, or the existence of a place of rest in the desert for the demon, as it occurs with Lilith to agree with the episode narrated in the Sumerian Gilgamesh fragment.

Another possible referent of the Arabic expression *malikat al-ǧinn* is Mt 9:34 ḍāʾeram wān daimoni, “the head of the demons”, which was literally rendered in the Pešīṭā as ṣayyāḥ al-ḏānī, “the head of the demons”. The NT formula is also attested in Mt 12:24, and in Lk 11:15, where daimoni is the favourite term for Luke’s author to express the agent of possession. In Mt 12:24 and Lk 11:15 (cf. Mk 3:22) the expression represents a construction in apposition to the name *Beelzeboul* (Pesīṭā < OT בֶּלזבּוּל), which is used like the accusation against Jesus as it was noted by Campbell, who discussed the expression with reference to Luke’s Gospel.

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33 *Bêt ʿzbwl* should be rendered like “Baal the Prince” (William F. Albright, “Zabûl Yam and Thâpit Nahar in the Combat between Baal and the Sea”, *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 16 [1936], pp. 17-20) and not like “the Lord of the flies” as commonly interpreted (cf. *A list of the Proper Names Occurring in the Old Testament with Their Interpretation*, principally compiled by Simonis and Gesenius [London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1850], p. 25b).
The translation of the noun masc. ἀρχων ("ruler; lord; prince") as the fem. malikah ("queen") does not represent any difficulty, since the author of TestSal(ar) seems to have simply adapted the New Testament figure to his own interest. In Eph 2:2 the devil is described like a “prince” or “ruler” (ἀρχων) in the syntagm τὸν ἀρχοντα τῆς Ἑξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος ("the ruler of the power of the air") . At the same time, the term ginn, which is obviously a reminiscence of the primitive Semitic demonology which was adapted in the Arabic milieu, is used for rendering the Greek δαιμόνια and represents obviously the Aramaic gennayē of the North-Arabian areas.

On the other hand, as it occurs with the expression ὁ ἀρχων τῶν δαιμονίων of Mt 9:34 and par., malikat al-ginn assumes in TestSal(ar) the idea that the evil kingdom is seen like an army in which the ἀρχων is the chief of a host of demons (cf. Lk 11:18,26; Eph 6:12), like in the apocryphal psalm of 11Q11 (11 QapocrPs), col. II.4, used to defeat the powers of evil and for exorcism, where the chief of the demons is called מְלֵאך הַשֶּׁמֶש, i.e. "the prince of animosity". The leader of the fallen angels is 'Azāzēl, which together with Šemîhażah was identified as the devil, although the latter received a variety of names in the apocrypha and in rabbinical literature like the chief of the demons or the evil spirits: thus for

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example, among others Šāṭān, Mašṭēmāh (Jub 10:7-8), but also Sam-māʾēl and Bēliyyaʿāl (being Bēliyyāʿāl a by-form), both names cited in MartIs(gr) 1:8. These four names are used for referring “the chief of the demons”. Moreover, in Dn 12:1 the term שֶׁר (šēr) “officer; prince” is used with the meaning of “angel” for referring Michael as “the great prince [of the angels]” (ハウス ישנ) in parallelism to the word רַב (“great”).

By way of conclusion

Looked this way round, and as a conclusion of the present note, our perception rules out any possibility that the Mesopotamian background had a direct influence on the expression that we currently know through the TestSal(ar). Of course, the Mesopotamian background does always exist in form of common lore, but it does not represent the immediate source of the story narrated in TestSal(ar).

At this point, although considering probable echoes of this common Semitic background, all the indications are that the origin of the Arabic expression Malikat al-ġīn can be explained through the NT formula ὁ ἅγιος τῶν δαιμονίων. However, as it occurred with the Mesopotamian goddess Lamaštu, it should be taken into consideration for the present case a possible combination of the NT referent with a cultural interference from (the) Greek mythology through the figure of the goddess Hēra (Ἡρα), who played an important role in Greek mythology as the “queen of the gods”.

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