



The Geryne of Satan

Introduction

This brief essay will outline a few interesting facts about the terms Satan and Satanism (and thus Satanist), including their historical usage in the English language, and thus may guide the sagacious to an understanding of the geryne [1] of Satan: that the mysterious secret of Satan is the simple heretical, japing, and confrontational reality of *being or becoming a satan*.

Satan

The scribes of the Septuagint mostly rendered the Hebrew שָׂטָן as ὁ διάβολος/τω διάβωλω - and which Greek term implies someone who is an adversary and who thus is pejoratively regarded (by those so opposed) as scheming, as plotting against them; that is, the sense is of ἐπίβουλος - scheming against/opposed to (the so-called 'chosen ones'). Someone, that is, who stirs up trouble and dissent.

Only in a few later parts - such as Job and Chronicles - does the Hebrew seem to imply something else, and on these occasions the word usually occurs with the definitive article: *hasatan* - *the satan*: the chief adversary (of the so-called 'chosen ones') and the chief schemer, who in some passages is given a fanciful hagiography as a 'fallen angel'.

Now, given that the earliest known parts of the Septuagint date from around the second century BCE [2] - and thus may well be contemporaneous with (or not much older than) the composition of most of the Hebrew Pentateuch (the earliest being from around 230 BCE [3]) - this rendering by the scribes of the

word *satan* as ὁ διάβολος/τω διάβωλω is very interesting and indicative given the meaning of the Greek, and supports the contention that, as originally used and meant, *satan* is some human being or beings who 'diabolically' plot or who scheme against or who are 'diabolically' opposed to those who consider themselves as 'chosen' by their monotheistic God, and that it was only much later that 'the satan' became, in the minds of the writers of the later parts of the Old Testament, some diabolical 'fallen angel'.

Thus, it is generally accepted by scholars that the Hebrew word *satan* (usually, a *satan*) in the early parts of Old Testament means a human opponent or adversary (of God's chosen people, the Hebrews) [4] or someone or some many who plot against them.

Now, as has been mentioned in several previous ONA texts, in heretical contradistinction to others and especially to contradict the majority of modern self-described Satanists, the ONA asserts that the word *satan* has its origin in Ancient Greek.

That is, that it is our contention that the Hebrew word derives from the old (in origin Phoenician) word that became the Ancient Greek αἰτία/αἴτιος - as for example in the Homeric *μείων γὰρ αἰτία* (to accuse/to blame) or as in "an accusation" (qv. Aeschylus: *αἰτίαν ἔχειν*) - and that it was this older Greek form which became corrupted to the Hebrew 'satan' and whence also the 'Shaitan' of Islam. Furthermore, in the Greek of the classical period αἰτία and διαβολή - accusation, slander, quarrel - were often used for the same thing, when a negative sense was meant or implied (as in a false accusation) with the person so accused becoming an opponent of those so accusing, or when there was enmity (and thus opposition, scheming, and intrigue) as for example mentioned by Thucydides - *κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας διαβολὰς* (2.65).

Given that, for centuries, שָׂטָן as described in the Old Testament of the Hebrews was commonly written in English as *sathans* [5] and thus pronounced as *sath-ans* (and not as *say-tan*) it is perhaps easy to understand how the Greek αἰτία - or the earlier Homeric αἴτιος - could become transformed, by non-Greeks, to שָׂטָן

In respect of this God and this 'fallen angel', as mentioned in another ONA text:

" There is good evidence to suggest that, historically, the writers of the Old Testament drew inspiration from, or adapted, older stories,

myths and legends about a Persian deity that came to be named Ahriman, who could thus be regarded as the archetype of the Biblical Satan, and also of the Quranic Iblis. Similarly, there is evidence that the God – Jehovah – of the Old Testament may have been based upon myths and legends about the Persian deity who came to be named Ahura Mazda." *A Short History and Ontology of Satan*

Furthermore, despite claims by some Hebrew and Nazarene scholars, it is now becoming accepted that the oldest parts of the Old Testament were probably written between 230 BCE and 70 BCE, and thus long after the time of Greeks such as Aeschylus and long after Greek word *aitia* was used for an accusation.

It is also interesting that there is an early use, in English, of the plural term *satans* as adversaries, which occurs in the book *A paraphrase on the New Testament with notes, doctrinal and practical* published in London in 1685 CE and written by the Shropshire-born Richard Baxter:

" To hinder us in God's work and mens Salvation, is to be Satans to us. O how many Satans then are called reverend Fathers, who silence and persecute men for God's work." Matthew, xvi. 23

In an earlier work, published in 1550 CE, the *chylidren of Sathan* are corralled with heretics:

"Dyuers Bysshoppes of Rome beyng Annabaptystes, heretyques, scismatiques, & chylidren of Sathan." John Coke. *The debate betwene the heraldes of Englande and Fraunce*. 1550, g. Giv^v [*Débat des hérauts d'armes de France et d'Angleterre*. Paris, Firmin Didot et cie, 1877]

Thus, satan/sathan/sathanas as a term - historically understood - describes: (1) some human being or beings who diabolically plot or who scheme or who are opposed to those who [6] consider themselves chosen by their monotheistic God; and/or (2) some human being or beings who are heretical and adversarial, against the status quo, and especially, it seems, against the religion of the Nazarenes.

Satanism

The earliest use of the term Satanism in the English language, that is, of the suffix *-ism* applied to the word *Satan* - so far discovered - is in *A Confutation of a Booke Intituled 'An Apologie of the Church of England'* published in Antwerp in 1565 CE and written by the Catholic recusant Thomas Harding:

"Meaning the time when Luther first brinced to Germanie the poisoned cuppe of his heresies, blasphemies, and sathanismes." *A Confutation*, Antwerp, 1565, ii. ii. f. 42^v

Three things are of interest, here.

(1) First, the spelling, sathanismes - deriving from *sathan*, a spelling in common usage for many centuries, as for instance in Langland's *Piers Plowman* of 1337 CE:

"For þei seruen sathan her soule shal he haue." *Piers Plowman* B. ix. 61

and also, centuries later, in the 1669 CE play *Man's the Master* by William Davenant:

"A thousand Sathans take all good luck." (v. 87)

(2) The second point of interest is that, as the above and other quotations show, the term sathan was also commonly used to refer to someone or some many who was a schemer, a plotter, a trickster, or an adversary.

(3) The third point of interest is that the first usage of the suffix - by Thomas Harding - as well as the common subsequent usage of the term Satanism has the meaning of an adversarial, a diabolical, character or nature or doctrine. That is, the earliest meanings and usage of the term sathanism are not 'the worship of Satan' nor of some religious or philosophical belief(s) associated with the figure of Sathan.

Furthermore, as mentioned previously, an early (1685 CE) usage of term *Satans* also imputes the foregoing meaning of adversarial or diabolical character:

"To hinder us in God's work and mens Salvation, is to be Satans to us. O how many Satans then are called reverend Fathers, who silence and persecute men for God's work." Richard Baxter. *A paraphrase on the New Testament with notes, doctrinal and practical*. London, 1685 CE, Matthew, xvi. 23

Indeed, in 1893 CE the writer Goldwin Smith used the term Satanism in this older general sense to refer to a type of destructive social revolution:

" That sort of social revolution which may be called Satanism, as it seeks, not to reconstruct, but to destroy." Goldwin Smith. *Essays on questions of the day*. (Macmillan, 1893 CE)

Similarly, an earlier 1833 CE article in *Fraser's magazine for Town and Country* used the term in connection with Byron:

" This scene of Byron's is really sublime, in spite of its Satanism." Vol 8 no. 524

Thus, the English term satanism/sathanism - historically understood - describes: (1) a blasphemy, a heresy or heresies; (2) a destructive (that is, practical) type of opposition.

Satanist

The earliest usages of the term Satanist, that is, of the suffix *-ist* applied to the term *Satan* - so far discovered - also imputes a similar meaning to foregoing; that is, of an adversarial, a diabolical, character or nature, of heretics, and of heretical/adversarial doctrine:

" The Anabaptistes, with infinite other swarmes of Satanistes." John Aylmer. *An harborowe for faithfull and trewe subjects agaynst the late blowne blaste concerning the gouernment of wemen*. London, 1559, sig. H1^v

"Be ye Zuinglians, Arians, Anabaptistes, Caluinistes, or Sathanistes?"
Thomas Harding. *A Confutation of a Booke Intituled 'An Apologie of the Church of England'*. Antwerp, 1565.

"By nature an Athiest, By arte a Machiuelist, In summe a Sathanist,
loe here his hire." Marphoreus. *Martins Months Minde*. 1589, [7]

Only much later, from around 1896 CE onwards, was the term Satanist used to describe those who were alleged to worship Satan:

" There are five temples of Satanism in Paris itself." Arthur Lillie. *The worship of Satan in modern France*. London 1896.

" It is believed on the Continent that apostate priests frequently consecrate for the Satanists and Freemasons." Joseph McCabe. *Twelve years in a monastery*. London, 1897.

Thus, the English term satanist/sathanist - historically understood - describes: (1) an adversarial, a diabolical, character; (2) those who adhere to or champion heretical/adversarial doctrines.

Conclusion

As someone wrote over two thousand years ago - *εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔοντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα*. [8]

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Notes

[1] The Old English word *gerȳne* - from Old Saxon *girūni* - means "secret, mystery".

[2] The earliest MS fragment - Greek Papyrus 458 in the Rylands Papyri collection [qv. *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 20 (1936), pp. 219-45] - was found in Egypt and dates from the second century BCE.

[3] It is, of course, in the interests of both Nazarenes and Magians to maintain or believe that the Hebrew Old Testament of the Hebrews was written centuries before this date, just as such early dating is a common mundane assumption perpetuated by both those who consider the Internet is a reliable source of information and by those who have not studied the subject, for some years, in a scholarly manner. Had such a scholarly study been undertaken, they would be aware of the scholarly disputes about the dating of Hebrew Old Testament - and of the Septuagint - that have existed for well over a hundred years, as they would also be able to make their own informed judgement about the matter.

My own judgement is that there is good evidence to suggest that 230 (\pm 50) BCE is the most likely earliest date for the Hebrew Old Testament. I should, however, add, that this is still a 'minority opinion', with many academics still favouring the more 'safe' opinion of 350 (\pm 30) BCE.

[4] For example - *καὶ ἦσαν σαταν τῷ Ἰσραηλ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας Σαλωμων* (3 Kings 11:14)

[5] See the section on *Satanism*, below.

[6] *καὶ ἔσθη διάβολος ἐν τῷ Ἰσραηλ*

[7] See *The Martin Marprelate Tracts* (1588–89) and the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, volume III - Renascence and Reformation, Cambridge UP, 1920, p. 394f

[8] *One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.* [Trans DWM.]
