

Plu. of صحيفة—a page of writing.

It is one of the technical terms connected with Muḥammad's conception of heavenly Books. All the passages save xcvi, 2, are early, and some of them very early.

Horovitz, *KU*, 69, is doubtless right in thinking that Muḥammad used it as a general term for such sacred writings as were known at least by hearsay to the Arabs, and as such it could be applied later to his own revelations. The word occurs not infrequently in the old poetry in the sense of pages of writing, e.g. in 'Antara, xxvii, 2 (Ahlwardt, *Divans*, p. 52)—

كوحى صحائف من عهد كسرى فاهداها لا عجم طمطمى

"Like a message on pages from the time of Chosroes, which I sent to a tongue-tied foreigner,"

or the verses in *Aghānī*, xx, 24—

كتاب فى الصحيفة من لقيط الى من بالجزيرة من إياد

"A page of writing from Laqīṭ to whatever Iyādites are in al-Jazīrah."¹

The philologists have no adequate explanation of the word from Arabic material, for **صَحَفَ** is obviously denominative.² It is in S. Arabia that we find the origin of the word. Grimme, *ZA*, xxvi, 161, quotes **𐩦𐩣𐩪𐩬** with its plu. **𐩦𐩣𐩪** from the S. Arabian inscriptions,³ and in Eth. **ṣḥḥ**, to write is in very common use,⁴ while **መጽሐፍ** meaning both *scriptura* and *liber* is clearly the source of the Ar. **مصحف** so commonly used in later times for the Qur'ān.⁵ The use of the word in the early literature shows that it was a word already borrowed

¹ Also Mutalammis (ed. Vollers, *Beitr. Ass.*, v, 171), and further references by Goldziher in *ZDMG*, xlv, 19. Noldeke-Schwally, i, 11, notes that in the poetry it never means a collection of writings in a book, as Muhammad uses it.

² Fraenkel, *Fremdw*, 248.

³ Glaser, 424, 8, 11; Halévy, 199, 8; and cf. Rossini, *Glossarium*, 223.

⁴ Dillmann, *Lex*, 1266 ff. Pautz, *Offenbarung*, 123, n., is inclined to derive the Qur'ānic word from Ethiopic.

⁵ Grohmann, *WZKM*, xxxii, 244. This was also in use in pre-Islamic Arabia as Andrae, *Ursprung*, 36, notes, and was borrowed by the Jews, cf. **מצחף תורה** (Noldeke, *Neue Beiträge*, 50, n.). *Itqān*, 120, makes it clear that **مصحف** was recognized as Abyssinian in origin.