

THE FOREIGN WORDS

أَب (abb).

lxxx, 31.

Herbage.

It occurs only in an early Meccan passage describing the good things God has caused to grow on the earth by sending down rain. The early authorities in Islam were puzzled by the word as is evident from the discussion by Ṭab. on the verse, and the uncertainty evidenced by Zam. and Baiḍ. in their comments, an uncertainty which is shared by the Lexicons (cf. *LA*, i, 199; Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*, i, 10), and particularly by the instructive story given in Bagh, vii, 175. as-Suyūṭī, *Itq*, 318, quotes Shaidhala as authority for its being a foreign word meaning *grass* in the language of اهل العرب, by which, as we gather from the *Mutaw*, 65, he means the Berber tongue.

There can be little doubt that it is the Aram. אִבָּא (= אִנְבָּה of Dan. iv, 9, where the Dagesh forte is resolved into Nūn). The אִבָּא of the Targums is the equivalent of Heb. אֵב from אֵב to be green (cf. Cant. vi, 11; Job viii, 12). Fraenkel, *Vocab*, 24, thought that the Arabic word was a direct borrowing from the Targumic אִבָּא, but the probabilities seem in favour of its coming rather from Syr. ܐܒܐ, meaning *quicquid terra producit* (Mingana, *Syriac Influence*, 88). It was probably an early borrowing from the Mesopotamian area.¹

أَبَابِيلَ (abābīl).

cv, 3.

In the description of the rout of the Army of the Elephant we read وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ—where ابابيل is said to mean *flocks*—حزائق Zam., or جماعات Bagh. and to be the plu. of ابالة, which Khafājī, *Shifā*, 31, lists as a foreign word whether spelled ابالة or ابالة or ابالة. The long account in *LA*, xiii, 5, makes it clear that the philologists knew not what to make of the word.

¹ Cf. Zimmern, *Akkudische Fremdwörter*, p. 55.