

الله (Allāh).

Of very frequent occurrence.

God.

One gathers from ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīh*, i, 84 (so Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr*, i, 15), that certain early Muslim authorities held that the word was of Syriac or Hebrew origin. The majority, however, claimed that it was pure Arabic, though they set forth various theories as to its derivation.¹

Some held that it has no derivation, being مرتجل : the Kūfans in general derived it from أَلَلَّه, while the Baṣrans derived it from أَلَّه, taking لَّه as a verbal noun from لَّيه to be high or to be veiled.

The suggested origins for أَلَّه were even more varied, some taking it from أَلَّه to worship, some from أَلَّه to be perplexed, some from أَلَّه to turn to for protection, and others from وَلَّه to be perplexed.

Western scholars are fairly unanimous that the source of the word must be found in one of the older religions. In the Semitic area אלה was a widely used word for deity, cf. Heb. אֱלֹהִים; Aram. ܐܠܗܐ; Syr. ܐܠܗܐ; Sab. 𐩣𐩣𐩪; and so Ar. أَلَّه is doubtless a genuine old Semitic form. The form الله, however, is different, and there can be

little doubt that this, like the Mandaean ܐܠܗܐ and the Pahlavi ideogram,² goes back to the Syr. ܐܠܗܐ (cf. Grünbaum, *ZDMG*, xxxix, 571; Sprenger, *Leben*, i, 287-9; Ahrens, *Muhammad*, 15; Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, 26; Bell, *Origin*, 54; Cheikho, *Naṣrāniya*, 159; Mingana, *Syriac Influence*, 86). The word, however, came into use in Arabian heathenism long before Muḥammad's time (Wellhausen, *Reste*, 217; Nielsen in *HAA*, i, 218 ff.). It occurs frequently in the N. Arabian inscriptions,³ and also in those from S. Arabia, as, e.g.,

¹ They are discussed in detail by ar-Rāzī on pp. 81-4, of the first volume of his *Tafsīr*.

² Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, Glossary, 135.

³ Cf. Littmann, *Entzifferung der thamudenischen Inschriften*, p. 63 ff.; *Sem. Inscr*, p. 113 ff.; and Ryckmans, *Noms propres*, i, 2; *RES*, iii, 441.