

is due to a misreading of סררה as סורה is not without its subtlety, we cannot admit that it is very likely that Muḥammad learned such a technical term in the way he suggests.<sup>1</sup>

The most probable solution is that it is from the Syr. ܣܘܪܗ *a writing*,<sup>2</sup> a word which occurs in a sense very like our English *lines* (*PSm*, 2738), and thus is closely parallel to Muḥammad's use of قرآن and كتاب, both of which are likewise of Syriac origin.

سَوَاطٍ (*Sawṭ*).

lxxxix, 12.

A scourge.

The Commentators in general interpret the word as *scourge*, though some (cf. *Zam. in loco*)<sup>3</sup> would take it to mean *calamities*, and others, in an endeavour to preserve it as an Arabic word from سَاطٍ = خَلَطٌ *to mix*, want to make it mean "mixing bowl", i.e. a vial of wrath like the φιάλη of Rev. xvi.

There can be no doubt that *scourge* is the right interpretation, and سَوَاطٍ in this sense would seem to be a borrowing from Aramaic. In Heb. שוֹט is a scourge for horses and for men, and Aram. ܫܘܬܐ; Syr. ܣܘܬܐ have the same meaning, but are used also in connection with calamities sent by God as a scourge to the people.<sup>4</sup> From Aram. the word passed also into Eth. as ሰውጥ, plu. አስዋጥ = μάστιξ, *flagellum*, and though Mingana, *Syriac Influence*, 90, thinks the origin was Christian rather than Jewish, it is really impossible to decide. Horovitz, *JPN*, 211, favours an Ethiopic origin, while Torrey, *Foundation*, 51, thinks it is mixed Jewish Arabic.

<sup>1</sup> So Buhl in *EI*, sub voc., but his own suggestion of a derivation from سار *to mount up*, is no happier. See Kunstlinger in *BSOS*, vii, 599, 600.

<sup>2</sup> Bell, *Origin*, 52; the suggestion of derivation from ܣܘܪܗ *preaching* made by Margoliouth, *ERE*, x, 539, is not so near. Cf. Horovitz, *JPN*, 212.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Baid. and Bagh. and *LA*, ix, 199.

<sup>4</sup> Barth, *Etymol. Stud.*, 14, and *ZATW*, xxxiii, 306, wants to make it mean *flood*, but see Horovitz, *KU*, 13.