

تَابُوت (Tābūt).

ii, 249 ; xx, 39.

An ark, or chest.

In ii, 249, تابوت means the Ark of the Covenant of the time of Samuel and Saul, the Heb. אֲרוֹן, and in xx, 39, the Ark of papyrus, the תִּבְהַ גִּמְאָה, in which the infant Moses was committed to the water.

The Muslim authorities invariably treat it as an Arabic word, though they were hopelessly at sea as to its derivation, some deriving it from تاب (LA, i, 227 ; TA, i, 161) ; some from تَبْت (LA, ii, 322 ; *Sihāḥ*, sub voc.) ; others from تَبْ (Ibn Sida in TA, ix, 381), while

‘Ukbarī, *Imlā’*, 69, frankly says—لا يعرف له اشتقاق.

The ultimate origin, of course, is Egyptian *ḏbꜣ.t*, whence came the Heb. תִּבְהַ, which is used for Noah’s ark in Gen. vi, 14 ; ix, 18 (Gk. κιβωτός), and the ark of papyrus in which Moses was hidden (Gk. θίβη).¹ In the Mishna תִּבְהַ is used for the Ark of the Covenant, especially in the phrase “coming before the Ark” for prayer, cf. Mishna Berak, v, 4, עָבַר לִפְנֵי הַתִּבְהַ, and on this ground Geiger,

44, would derive تابوت from the Aram. תִּבְוּחָא, which is consistently used in the Targums and Rabbinic literature for תִּבְהַ. Geiger has been followed by most later writers,² but Fraenkel, *Vocab*, 24, pointed out that the correspondence is even closer with the Eth. ተባት, and Nöldeke, *Neue Beiträge*, 49, agrees, although he admits the possibility of a derivation from the Aramaic.³ A strong point in favour of the Abyssinian origin is the fact that not only is ተባት used to translate κιβωτός in Gen. vi, 14, etc. (cf. Jub. v, 21), but is also the usual word

¹ Zimmern, *Akkad. Fremdw.*, 45, disputes this Egyptian origin and suggests a connection with the Akkadian word *tēbītu*, but see Yahuda, *Language of the Pentateuch*, p. 114, n. 2.

² Von Kremer, *Ideen*, 226 n. ; Sprenger, *Leben*, ii, 257 n. ; Fleischer, *Kleinere Schriften*, i, 176 n. ; Hubschmann, *ZDMG*, xlv, 260. The Arm. Թափուտ (Hubschmann, *Arm. Gram.*, i, 153) is from the Pers. تابوت, but this is itself a direct borrowing from Arabic. Geiger had been preceded in this suggestion by de Sacy in *JA*, 1829, p. 178.

³ So Fischer, *Glossar*, 17.