

word in the early poetry (e.g. in al-A'shā),¹ but the story told by Balādhuri (ed. de Goeje, 264), that the Arab soldiers who conquered Madā'in found stores of camphor there and took it for salt, would seem to show that the article was not widely known in Arabia.

كَاهِنٌ (*Kāhin*).

lii, 29 ; lxix, 42.

A soothsayer.

It occurs only in the early Meccan period and in a depreciatory sense, for Muḥammad rejects with some asperity the idea that in giving forth his revelations he was on a level with the كَهَنَةَ. This shows that the word was pre-Islamic, and it seems that the Arabic كاهن was the equivalent of the Gk. μάντις or the Lat. *vates*, i.e. he was a *Seer* rather than a *Prophet*.²

The Muslim authorities naturally take it from كهن, but this verb seems denominative. The Heb. word is כֹּהֵן and means *priest*, as in Phon. and in the Ras Shamra tablets, and from the Heb. came the Aram. כהנא ; Syr. כܫܢ.³ That the Arabic word also was borrowed directly from the Hebrew is not likely. Pautz, *Offenbarung*, 175, n. 2, has a theory that it came by way of the Eth. ከኃ, but like this word itself, and the Arm. քահանայ,⁴ it is more likely to have come from the Aram.⁵ As a matter of fact it occurs not infrequently in the Sinaitic inscriptions from N. Arabia,⁶ where we find כהנא and the fem. כהנתא,⁷ and actually in No. 550 כהן עזיזא, i.e. the priest of al-'Uzzā, so that as Nöldeke, *Neue Beiträge*, 36, n., insists, we have clear evidence that it came into use in N. Arabia from some Aram. source long before Islam.

The analogy of the inscriptions would lead us to conclude that

¹ Geyer, *Zwei Gedichte*, i, 61.

² *LA*, xvii, 244 ; Wellhausen, *Reste*, 134 ; Goldziher, *Abhandlungen*, i, 18 ff., 107 ff. ; Sprenger, *Leben*, i, 255.

³ G. B. Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, p. 183.

⁴ Hübschmann, *Arm. Gramm.*, i, 318 ; *ZDMG*, xlv, 252.

⁵ Cheikho, *Nasrāniya*, 200 ; Mingana, *Syriac Influence*, 85.

⁶ Euting, *Sinaitische Inschriften*, Nos. 550, 249, 348, and 223.

⁷ Cf. also the Sabaite כהנת (Ryckmans, *Noms propres*, i, 113)