

يَحْيَى (Yahyā).

iii, 34; vi, 85; xix, 7, 13; xxi, 90.

John the Baptist.

Usually the Muslim authorities derive the name from the Arabic verb of similar form, and say that John was so called because of his quickening virtue, either in quickening the barrenness of his mother, or in quickening the faith of his people.¹ Some felt that they were com-

mitted to an Arabic origin of the name by Sūra xix, 8—لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ² مِمن قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا, which, however, as Marracci pointed out,² is merely a misunderstanding of Lk. i, 61, and there were some (e.g. Baiḍ. on iii, 34, and xix, 8)³ who knew and admitted that it was a foreign name.

We may be sure that the name came into Arabic from some Christian or Christianized source.

Sprenger, *Leben*, ii, 335, thought that perhaps it might have come from the Ṣābians, for in the Mandaean books we find the name in the form 𐬶𐬵𐬶𐬵 (Lidzbarski, *Johannesbuch*, ii, 73), but the probability is that this form is due to Islamic influence.⁴

A more subtle theory is that it is a misreading for يَحْنَى which would be derived from the Syr. ܝܚܢܝ. ⁵ The primitive script had no vowel points, and ܝܚܢܝ might have been read يَحْنَى as easily as يَحْيَى. ⁶

This solution has much in its favour, and might be accepted were it not for the fact that we have epigraphical evidence from N. Arabia that in pre-Islamic times Christians in that area were using a form ܝܚܝܐ, probably derived from the Syriac.⁷ Jaussen and Savignac found this

¹ Tab. on iii, 34, and ath-Tha'labī, *Qisas*, 262.

² *Refutationes*, 435. So Sayous, 27, n.; Palmer, *Qoran*, ii, 27, n.; Pautz, *Offenbarung*, 254.

³ So al-Khafājī, 215; al-'Ukbarī, *Imlā'*, i, 88. Zam. halts between two opinions.

⁴ Nöldeke, *ZA*, xxx, 159.

⁵ Nöldeke noted that ܝܚܢܝ, from which ܝܚܢܝ was formed, can occur in a hypochoresitic form ܝܚܢܐ, and as a matter of fact ܝܚܢܐ or ܝܚܢܐ does occur in late Jewish names, and Fraenkel, *WZKM*, iv, 337, and Grimme, *Mohammed*, ii, 96, n. 8, have thought that ܝܚܢܐ could be derived from this. Barth, *Der Islam*, vi, 126, n., and Mingana, *Syriac Influence*, 84, have rightly insisted, however, that the name is of Christian not Jewish origin.

⁶ Barth, op. cit.; Casanova, *JA*, 1924, p. 357; Margoliouth, *ERE*, x, 547; Cheikhō, *Naṣrāniya*, 189; Torrey, *Foundation*, pp. 50, 51.

⁷ But see Lidzbarski, *Johannesbuch*, ii, 73, and Rhodokanakis, *WZKM*, xvii, 283.