

نُسْخَة (Nuskha).

vii, 153.

A copy, or exemplar.

The word occurs only in a late Sūra in reference to the Tables of Stone given to Moses, but the verb formed from it—استنسخ, is used in an earlier passage, xlv, 28, though again the reference is to a heavenly book.

The Muslim authorities take the word as a form فَعْلَة with the meaning of مَفْعُولَة from نسخ in the sense *to copy*, and some (cf. *LA*, iv, 28) would make *copy* the primitive meaning of the root. A comparison with the cognate languages, however, shows that *copy* is a secondary meaning of the root, cf. Akk. *nushu* = *extract*, and Syr. **ܢܚܣܐ** *to copy*, beside Akk. *nasāhu*, Heb. **נָסַח**; O.Aram. **ܢܫܚ** and the Targumic **ܢܫܚ**, where the original sense is clearly to *remove, tear away (evellere)*, which original meaning is found in the Qur'ān in ii, 100; xxii, 51, where the word is used, as Hirschfeld, *Beiträge*, 36, points out, precisely as **נָסַח** is in Deut. xxviii, 63; Ezr. vi, 11.

Hoffmann, *ZDMG*, xxxii, 760, suggested that the Arabic word was from Aram. **ܢܫܚܐ**, but this is used only in late Rabbinic writings and gained the technical sense of "variant reading", e.g. **ܢܫܚܐ ܐܚܪܝܢܐ**. Again in Syr. the only form is **ܢܫܚܐ**, which is also late (*Psm*, 2400), and as Lagarde, *GA*, 196, points out,¹ comes from the Iranian, where Phlv. **𐭥𐭭**, *nask*²; Av. **𐬨𐬀𐬭𐬀** *naska* means a book of the Avesta. The Iranian word, however, as Spiegel showed in his *Studien über das Zendavesta*,³ cannot be explained from Indo-European material, and like the Arm. **նիշ**⁴ is in all probability an ancient borrowing from some Semitic source in Mesopotamia.

It is, of course, possible that it came to Arabic also from Mesopotamia, but we find **ܢܫܚܐ** in a Nabataean inscription from

¹ Also Vollers, *ZDMG*, l, 649.

² *PPGL*, 165, 166; Šāyast, *Glossary*, 163; West, *Glossary*, 243; Haug, *Parsis*, 181.

³ *ZDMG*, ix, 191, and *JA* for 1846.

⁴ Hübschmann, *Arm. Gramm.*, i, 204, however, compares **նիշ** with the Syr. **ܢܫܐ**, though deriving both from an Iranian original. See Lagarde, *GA*, 66, and Zimmern, *Akkad. Fremdw.*, 13, who relates it to the Akk. *nīšu*. Arm. **նուսիսայ**, however, is a late borrowing from Arabic; see *ZDMG*, xlv, 264.