

مِنْ تَحْتِهَا. Secondly, there was some difference of opinion among the exegetes as to whether the one who called was Gabriel, standing at the foot of the hill, or the babe Jesus. Now it seems clear that when they felt some difficulty over this تَحْت, certain of the exegetes who knew from Christian sources that the one who called was the babe, and who had probably heard of the legends of Jesus speaking to his mother before his birth,<sup>1</sup> assumed that تَحْت could not be taken here in its usual Arabic meaning of *beneath*, but must be a foreign word meaning بطن or *womb*. The guess of Nabataean, of course, has nothing to support it, for the Aramaic ܬܬܬܬ like the Hebrew תתת, Syriac ܬܬܬܬ, and Ethiopic ታተተ, has exactly the same meaning as the Arabic تَحْت.

(ii) In xii, 23, we read that Joseph's mistress says to him هَيْتَ لَكَ. The word occurs only in this passage in the Qur'ān and is a rare expression even outside the Qur'ān, though, as has been pointed out by Barth,<sup>2</sup> there can be no question that it is genuine Arabic. It was so rare and unusual a word, however, that it was early taken by the exegetes as foreign<sup>3</sup> and explained as Coptic,<sup>4</sup> doubtless on the ground that the Egyptian lady would have spoken to her slave in the Egyptian tongue, and as the only Egyptian language known to the Muslim philologists was Coptic, this rare word was taken to be of Coptic origin.

Similarly سَيِّدَهَا in xii, 25, which is explained as Coptic for زَوْجَهَا,<sup>5</sup> was doubtless a case of the same sort, and likewise two other Coptic suggestions in the same Sūra, viz. مَرْجَاة and بَضَاعَةٌ of xii, 88, both of

<sup>1</sup> See Tha'labī, *Qışas al-Anbiyā'*, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Sprachwiss. Untersuch.*, i, 22, with reference to Ibn Ya'ish, i, 499, line 7. Cf. also Reckendorf, *Die syntaktischen Verhältnisse des Arabischen*, Leiden, 1898, p. 325; Wright, *Arabic Grammar*, i, 294 d.

<sup>3</sup> Siddiqi, *Studien*, 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Itq*, 325. Others thought it Aramaic (*Mutaw*, 54) or Ḥauranic (*Mushir*, i, 130), or Hebrew (*Itq*, 325).

<sup>5</sup> *Itq*, 322, from Al-Wāsiṭī.