

retical grammar, in order that he might decide whether in Arabic it were allowable or necessary to express oneself in this or that manner. It is evident that these profound scholars knew of only one classical language, which was still spoken by the Bedouins. The tribes which produced the principal poets of the earlier period belonged for the most part to portions of the Hijáz, to Nejd and its neighbourhood, and to the region which stretches thence towards the Euphrates. A great part of the Hijáz, on the other hand, plays a very unimportant part in this poetry, and the Arabs of the north-west, who were under the Roman dominion, have no share whatever in it. The dialects of these latter tribes probably diverged further from the ordinary language. The fact that they were Christians does not explain this, since the Taghlibites and other tribes who produced eminent poets also professed Christianity. Moreover, poets from the interior were gladly welcomed at the court of the Ghassanian princes, who were Christian vassals of the emperor residing near Damascus; in this district, therefore, their language was at least understood. It may be added that most of the tribes which cultivated poetry appear to have been near neighbours at an epoch not very far removed from that in question, and afterwards to have been scattered in large bands over a much wider extent of country. And nearly all those who were not Christians paid respect to the sanctuary of Mecca. It is a total mistake, but one frequently made by Europeans, to designate the Arabic language as "the Korashite dialect." This expression never occurs in any Arabic author. True, in a few rare cases we do read of the dialect of the Korash, by which is meant the peculiar local tinge that distinguished the speech of Mecca; but to describe the Arabic language as "Korashite" is as absurd as it would be to speak of English as the dialect of London or of Oxford. This unfortunate designation has been made the basis of a theory very often repeated in modern times, — namely, that classical Arabic is nothing else but the dialect of Mecca, which the Koran first brought into fashion. So far from this being the case, it is certain that the speech of the towns in the Hijáz did not agree in every point with the language of the poets, and, as it happens, the Koran itself contains some remarkable deviations from the rules of the classical language. This would be still more evident if the punctuation, which was introduced at a later time, did not obscure many details. The traditions which represent the Korash as speaking the purest of all Arabic dialects are partly the work of the imagination and partly compliments paid to the rulers descended from the Korash, but are no doubt at variance with the ordinary opinion of the Arabs themselves in earlier days. In the Koran Mohammed has imitated the poets, though, generally speaking, with little success; the poets, on the other hand, never imitated him. Thus the Koran and its language exercised but very little influence upon the poetry of the following century and upon that of later times, whereas this poetry closely and slavishly copied the productions of the old heathen period. The fact that the poetical literature of the early Moslems has been preserved in a much more authentic form than the works of the heathen poets proves that our idea of the ancient poetry is on the whole just.

The Koran and Islam raised Arabic to the position of one of the principal languages of the world. Under the leadership of the Korash the Bedouins subjected half the world to both their dominion and their faith. Thus Arabic acquired the additional character of a sacred language. But soon it became evident that not nearly all the Arabs spoke a language precisely identical with the classical Arabic of the poets. The north-western Arabs played a particularly important part during the period of

the Omayyads. The ordinary speech of Mecca and Medina was, as we have seen, no longer quite so primitive as that of the desert. To this may be added that the military expeditions brought those Arabs who spoke the classical language into contact with tribes from out-of-the-way districts, such as 'Omán, Bahrain (Bahrein), and particularly the north of Yemen. The fact that numbers of foreigners, on passing over to Islam, became rapidly Arabized was also little calculated to preserve the unity of the language. Finally, the violent internal and external commotions which were produced by the great events of that time, and stirred the whole nation, probably accelerated linguistic change. In any case, we know from good tradition that even in the 1st century of the Flight the distinction between correct and incorrect speech was quite perceptible. About the end of the 2d century the system of Arabic grammar was constructed, and never underwent any essential modification in later times. The theory as to how one should express oneself was now definitely fixed. The majority of those Arabs who lived beyond the limits of Arabia already diverged far from this standard; and in particular the final vowels which serve to indicate cases and moods were no longer pronounced. This change, by which Arabic lost one of its principal advantages, was no doubt hastened by the fact that even in the classical style such terminations were omitted whenever the word stood at the end of a sentence (in pause); and in the living language of the Arabs this dividing of sentences is very frequent. Hence people were already quite accustomed to forms without grammatical terminations.

Through the industry of Arabic philologists we are able to make ourselves intimately acquainted with the system, and still more with the vocabulary of the language, although they have not always performed their task in a critical manner. We should be all the more disposed to admire the richness of the ancient Arabic vocabulary when we remember how simple are the conditions of life amongst the Arabs, how painfully monotonous their country, and consequently how limited the range of their ideas must be. Within this range, however, the slightest modification is expressed by a particular word. It must be confessed that the Arabic lexicon has been greatly augmented by the habit of citing as words by themselves such rhetorical phrases as an individual poet has used to describe an object: for example, if one poet calls the lion the "tearer" and another calls him the "mangler," each of these terms is explained by the lexicographers as equivalent to "lion." One branch of literature in particular, namely, lampoons and satirical poems, which for the most part have perished, no doubt introduced into the lexicon many expressions coined in an arbitrary and sometimes in a very strange manner. Moreover, Arabic philologists have greatly underrated the number of words which, though they occur now and then in poems, were never in general use except among particular tribes. But in spite of these qualifications it must be admitted that the vocabulary is surprisingly rich, and the Arabic dictionary will always remain the principal resource for the elucidation of obscure expressions in all the other Semitic tongues. This method, if pursued with the necessary caution, is a perfectly legitimate one.

Poems seldom enable us to form a clear idea of the language of ordinary life, and Arabic poetry happens to have been distinguished from the very beginning by a certain tendency to artificiality and mannerism. Still less does the Koran exhibit the language in its spoken form. This office is performed by the prose of the ancient traditions (Hadith). The genuine accounts of the deeds of the Prophet and of his companions, and not less the stories concerning the battles and adventures of the Bedouins in the heathen period and in the earlier days of Islam, are

excellent models of a prose style, although in some cases their redaction dates from a later time.

Classical Arabic is rich not only in words but in grammatical forms. The wonderful development of the broken plurals, and sometimes of the verbal nouns must be regarded as an excess of wealth. The sparing use of the ancient terminations which mark the plural has somewhat obscured the distinction between plurals, collectives, abstract nouns, and feminines in general. In its manner of employing the verbal tenses genuine Arabic still exhibits traces of that poetical freedom which we see in Hebrew; this characteristic disappears in the later literary language. In connecting sentences Arabic can go much further than Hebrew, but the simple parataxis is by far the most usual construction. Arabic has, however, this great advantage, that it scarcely ever leaves us in doubt as to where the apodosis begins. The attempts to define the tenses more clearly by the addition of adverbs and auxiliary verbs lead to no very positive result (as is the case in other Semitic languages also), since they are not carried out in a systematic manner. The arrangement of words in a sentence is governed by very strict rules. As the subject and object, at least in ordinary cases, occupy fixed positions, and as the genitive is invariably placed after the noun that governs it, the use of case-endings loses much of its significance.

This language of the Bedouins had now, as we have seen, become that of religion, courts, and polished society. In the streets of the towns the language already diverged considerably from this, but the upper classes took pains to speak "Arabic." The poets and the *beaux esprits* never ventured to employ any but the classical language, and the "Atticists," with pedantic seriousness, convicted the most celebrated among the later poets (for instance Motanabbi) of occasional deviations from the standard of correct speech. At the same time, however, classical Arabic was the language of business and of science, and at the present day still holds this position. There are, of course, many gradations between the pedantry of purists and the use of what is simply a vulgar dialect. Sensible writers employ a kind of *koufí*, which does not aim at being strictly correct and calls modern things by modern names, but which, nevertheless, avoids coarse vulgarisms, aiming principally at making itself intelligible to all educated men. The reader may pronounce or omit the ancient terminations as he chooses. This language lived on, in a sense, through the whole of the Middle Ages, owing chiefly to the fact that it was intended for educated persons in general and not only for the learned, whereas the poetical schools strove to make use of the long extinct language of the Bedouins. As might be expected, this *koufí*, like the *koufí* of the Greeks, has a comparatively limited vocabulary, since its principle is to retain only those expressions from the ancient language which were generally understood, and it does not borrow much new material from the vulgar dialects.

It is entirely a mistake to suppose that Arabic is unsuited for the treatment of abstract subjects. On the contrary, scarcely any language is so well adapted to be the organ of scholasticism in all its branches. Even the tongue of the ancient Bedouins had a strong preference for the use of abstract verbal nouns (in striking contrast to the Latin, for example); thus they oftener said "Needful is thy sitting" than "It is needful that thou shouldst sit." This tendency was very advantageous to philosophical phraseology. The strict rules as to the order of words, though very unfavourable to the development of a truly eloquent style, render it all the easier to express ideas in a rigidly scientific form.

In the meantime Arabic, like every other widely spread language, necessarily began to undergo modification and to split up into

dialects. The Arabs are mistaken in attributing this development to the influence of those foreign languages with which Arabic came into contact. Such influences can have had but little to do with the matter; for were it otherwise the language of the interior of Arabia must have remained unchanged, yet even in this region the inhabitants are very far from speaking as they did a thousand years back. A person who in Arabia or elsewhere should trust to his knowledge of classical Arabic only would resemble those travellers from the north who endeavour to make themselves understood by Italian waiters through the medium of a kind of Latin. The written language has, it is true, greatly retarded the development of the dialects. Every good Moslem repeats at least a few short *súras* several times a day in his prayers, besides being minutely acquainted with the sacred *Book*; and this must have had a powerful influence upon the speech of the people at large. But nevertheless dialects have formed themselves and have diverged considerably from one another. Of these there are indeed but few with which we are tolerably well acquainted; that of Egypt alone is known with real accuracy.<sup>1</sup> Although the French have occupied Algeria for about fifty years, we still possess but imperfect information with respect to the language of that country. It is closely connected with that of Morocco on the one hand and with that of Tunis on the other. Arabic has long been banished from Spain; but we possess a few literary works written in Spanish Arabic, and just before it became too late Pedro de Alcalá composed a grammar and a lexicon of that dialect.<sup>2</sup> We have also a few ancient specimens of the Arabic which was once spoken in Sicily. To the western group of dialects belongs the language of Malta, which, cut off as it is from other Arabic dialects and exposed to the influence of Italian, has developed itself in a very strange manner; in it a considerable number of books have already been printed, but with Latin characters. The dialects of Arabia, Syria, and the other Eastern provinces, in spite of many valuable works, are not yet sufficiently well known to admit of being definitely classified.

There can be no doubt that the development of these dialects is in part the result of older dialectical variations which were already in existence in the time of the Prophet. The histories of dialects which differ completely from one another often pursue an analogous course. In general, the Arabic dialects still resemble one another more than we might expect when we take into consideration the great extent of country over which they are spoken and the very considerable geographical obstacles that stand in the way of communication. But we must not suppose that people, for instance, from Mosul, Morocco, San'á, and the interior of Arabia would be able to understand one another without difficulty. It is a total error to regard the difference between the Arabic dialects and the ancient language as a trifling one, or to represent the development of these dialects as something wholly unlike the development of the Romance languages. No living Arabic dialect diverges from classical Arabic so much as French or Rouman from Latin; but, on the other hand, no Arabic dialect resembles the classical language so closely as the Lugudoric dialect, which is still spoken in Sardinia, resembles its parent speech, and yet the lapse of time is very much greater in the case of the latter.

*Sabæan*.—Long before Mohammed, a peculiar and highly developed form of civilization had flourished in the table-land to the south-west of Arabia. The more we become acquainted with the country of the ancient Sabæans and with its colossal edifices, and the better we are able to decipher its inscriptions, which are being discovered in ever-increasing numbers, the easier it is for us to account for the haze of mythical glory wherewith the Sabæans were once invested. The Sabæan inscriptions (which till lately were more often called by the less correct name of "Himyaritic") begin long before our era and continue till about the 4th century. The somewhat stiff character is always very distinct; and the habit of regularly dividing the words from one another renders decipherment easier, which, however, has not yet been performed in a very satisfactory manner, owing in part to the fact that the vast majority of the documents in question consist of religious votive tablets with peculiar sacerdotal expressions, or of architectural notices abounding in technical terms. These inscriptions fall into two classes, distinguished partly by grammatical peculiarities and partly by peculiarities of phraseology. One dialect, which forms the causative with *ha*, like Hebrew and others, and employs, like nearly

<sup>1</sup> W. Spitta-Bey, *Grammatik des arabischen Vulgärdialects von Aegypten* (Leipzig, 1880).

<sup>2</sup> They were published in 1505, reprinted by Lagarde (*Petri Hispani de Lingua Arabica Libri duo*, Göttingen, 1883).

all the Semitic languages, the termination *h* (*hā*) as the suffix of the third person singular, is the Sabæan properly speaking. The other, which expresses the causative by *sa* (corresponding to the Shaphel of the Aramæans and others), and for the suffix uses *s* (like the Assyrian *sh*), is the Minaic. To this latter branch belong the numerous South Arabic inscriptions recently found in the north of the Hijāz, near Hejr, where the Minæans must have had a commercial settlement. The difference between the two classes of inscriptions is no doubt ultimately based upon a real divergence of dialect. But the singular manner in which districts containing Sabæan inscriptions and those containing Minaic alternate with one another seems to point in part to a mere hieratic practice of clinging to ancient modes of expression. Indeed it is very probably due to conscious literary conservatism that the language of the inscriptions remains almost entirely unchanged through many centuries. A few inscriptions from districts rather more to the east exhibit certain linguistic peculiarities, which, however, may perhaps be explained by the supposition that the writers did not, as a rule, speak this dialect, and therefore were but imperfectly acquainted with it.

As the Sabæan writing seldom indicates the vowels, our knowledge of the language is necessarily very incomplete; and the unvarying style of the inscriptions excludes a great number of the commonest grammatical forms. Not a single occurrence of the first or second person has yet been detected, with the possible exception of one proper name, in which "our god" apparently occurs. But the knowledge which we already possess amply suffices to prove that Sabæan is closely related to Arabic as we are acquainted with it. The former language possesses the same phonetic elements as the latter, except that it has at least one additional sibilant, which appears to have been lost in Arabic. It possesses the broken plural, a dual form resembling that used in Arabic, &c. It is especially important to notice that Sabæan expresses the idea of indefiniteness by means of an appended *m*, just as Arabic expresses it by means of an *n*, which in all probability is a modification of the former sound. Both in this point and in some others Sabæan appears more primitive than Arabic, as might be expected from the earlier date of its monuments. The article is formed by appending an *n*. In its vocabulary also Sabæan bears a great resemblance to Arabic, although, on the other hand, it often approaches more nearly to the northern Semitic languages in this respect; and it possesses much that is peculiar to itself.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after the Christian era Sabæan civilization began to decline, and completely perished in the wars with the Abyssinians, who several times occupied the country, and in the 6th century remained in possession of it for a considerable period. In that age the language of central Arabia was already penetrating into the Sabæan domain. It is further possible that many tribes which dwelt not far to the north of the civilized districts had always spoken dialects resembling central Arabic rather than Sabæan. About the year 600 "Arabic" was the language of all Yemen, with the exception perhaps of a few isolated districts, and this process of assimilation continued in later times. Several centuries after Mohammed learned Yemenites were acquainted with the characters of the inscriptions which abounded in their country; they were also able to decipher the proper names and a small number of Sabæan words the meaning of which was still known to them, but they could no longer understand the inscriptions as a

<sup>1</sup> The literature relating to these inscriptions is widely scattered. Before the Parisian *Corpus* supplies us with the collected materials, we may hope to see the Sabæan grammar of D. H. Müller, who, with Halévy, has lately rendered the greatest services in this department.

whole. Being zealous local patriots, they discovered in those inscriptions which they imagined themselves to be capable of deciphering many fabulous stories respecting the glory of the ancient Yemenites.

Farther to the east, in the sea-coast districts of Shihr and Mahra, up to the borders of the barren desert of the interior, and also, we are told, in the island of Socotra, dialects very unlike Arabic are still spoken. Allusions to this fact are found in Arabic writers of the 10th century. These dialects depart widely from the ancient Semitic type, but bear some resemblance to the Sabæan, although they cannot be regarded as actually descended from the latter. One feature which they have in common with Sabæan is the habit of appending an *n* to the imperfect. Like the Ethiopic, and probably also the Sabæan, they use *k* (instead of *t*) in the terminations of the first person singular and the second person singular and plural of the perfect tense. In the suffixes of the third person there appears, at least in the feminine, an *s*, as in the Minaic. Unfortunately the information which we have hitherto possessed respecting these dialects is meagre and inexact, in part very inexact.<sup>2</sup> It is much to be wished that soon they may all be investigated as carefully as possible, the more so as there is danger in delay, for Arabic is gradually supplanting them.

*Ethiopic.*—In Abyssinia, too, and in the neighbouring countries we find languages which bear a certain resemblance to Arabic. The Geez or Ethiopic<sup>3</sup> proper, the language of the ancient kingdom of Aksúm, was reduced to writing at an early date. To judge by the few passages communicated by Salt, the back of the inscription of Aezanas, king of Aksúm about 350, exhibits writing in the Sabæan language, which appears to prove that the development of the Geez character out of the Sabæan, and the elevation of Geez to the rank of a literary language, must have taken place after the year 350. The oldest monuments of this language which are known with certainty are the two great inscriptions of Tázéná, a heathen king of Aksúm, dating from about 500. Hitherto our acquaintance with these inscriptions has been derived from very imperfect drawings<sup>4</sup>; but they amply suffice to show that we have here the same language as that in which the Ethiopic Bible is written, with the very same exact indication of the vowels,—a point in which Ethiopic has an advantage over all other Semitic characters. Who introduced this vocalization is unknown. When the above-mentioned inscriptions were made the Bible had probably been already translated into Geez from the Greek, perhaps in part by Jews; for Jews and Christians were at that time actively competing with one another, both in Arabia and in Abyssinia; nor were the former unsuccessful in making proselytes. The missionaries who gave the Bible to the Abyssinians must, at least in some cases, have spoken Aramaic as their mother-tongue, for this alone can explain the fact that in the Ethiopic Bible certain religious conceptions are expressed by Aramaic words. During the following centuries various works were produced by the Abyssinians in this language; they were all, so far as we are able to judge, of a more or less theological character, almost invariably translations from the Greek. We cannot say with certainty when Geez ceased to be the language of the people, but it was probably about a thousand years ago. From the time when the Abyssinian kingdom was reconstituted, towards the end of the 13th century, by the so-called Solomonian dynasty (which was of southern origin), the language of the court and of the Government was Amharic; but Geez remained the ecclesiastical and literary language, and Geez literature even showed a certain

<sup>2</sup> See especially Maltzan, in *Z.D.M.G.*, vols. xxv. and xxvii.

<sup>3</sup> This name is due to the fact that the Abyssinians, under the influence of false erudition, applied the name *Athiopia* to their own kingdom.

<sup>4</sup> The authorities of the library of Frankfort have kindly enabled the present writer to consult Ruppell's copies, which are more accurate than the lithographs in his book. The English in 1868 did not seize the opportunity to examine thoroughly the antiquities of Aksúm, and since then no traveller has taken the trouble to procure accurate copies of these extremely important monuments.

activity in numerous translations from those Arabic and Coptic works which were in use amongst the Christians of Egypt; besides these a few original writings were composed, namely, lives of saints, hymns, &c. This literary condition lasted till modern times. The language, which had long become extinct, was by no means invariably written in a pure form; indeed even in manuscripts of more ancient works we find many linguistic corruptions, which have crept in partly through mere carelessness and ignorance, partly through the influence of the later dialects. On points of detail we are still sometimes left in doubt, as we possess no manuscripts belonging to the older period. This renders it all the more important that the ancient and authentic inscriptions upon the monuments of Aksúm should be accurately published.

Geez is more nearly related to Sabæan than to Arabic, though scarcely to such a degree as we might expect. The historical intercourse between the Sabæans and the people of Aksúm does not, however, prove that those who spoke Geez were simply a colony from Sabæa; the language may be descended from an extinct cognate dialect of south Arabia, or may have arisen from a mingling of several such dialects. And this colonization in Africa probably began much sooner than is usually supposed. In certain respects Geez represents a more modern stage of development than Arabic; we may cite as instances the loss of some inflexional terminations and of the ancient passive, the change of the aspirated dentals into sibilants, &c. In the manuscripts, especially those of later date, many letters are confounded, namely, *k*, *h*, and *kh*, *s* and *sh*, *ç* and *ç*; this, however, is no doubt due only to the influence of the modern dialects. To this same influence, and indirectly perhaps to that of the Hamitic languages, we may ascribe the very hard sound now given to certain letters, *k*, *ç*, *ç*, and *ç*, in the reading of Geez. The last two are at present pronounced something like *ts* and *ts* (the German *z*). A peculiar advantage possessed by Geez and by all Ethiopic languages is the sharp distinction between the imperfect and the subjunctive: in the former a vowel is inserted after the first radical,—a formation of which there seem to be traces in the dialect of Mahra, and which is also believed to have existed in Assyrian. Geez has no definite article, but is very rich in particles. In the ease with which it joins sentences together and in its freedom as to the order of words it resembles Aramaic. The vocabulary is but imperfectly known, as the theological literature, which is for the most part very arid, supplies us with comparatively few expressions that do not occur in the Bible, whereas the more modern works borrow their phraseology in part from the spoken dialects, particularly Amharic. With regard to the vocabulary, Geez has much in common with the other Semitic tongues, but at the same time possesses many words peculiar to itself; of these a considerable proportion may be of Hamitic origin. Even some grammatical phenomena seem to indicate Hamitic influence; for instance, the very frequent use of the gerundive, a feature which has become still more prominent in the modern dialects, placed as they are in yet closer contact with the Hamitic. We must not suppose that the ancient inhabitants of Aksúm were of pure Semitic blood. The immigration of the Semites from Arabia was in all probability a slow process, and under such circumstances there is every reason to assume that they largely intermingled with the aborigines. This opinion seems to be confirmed by anthropological facts.

Not only in what is properly the territory of Aksúm (namely, Tigré, north-eastern Abyssinia), but also in the countries bordering upon it to the north, including the islands of Dahlak, dialects are still spoken which are but more modern forms of the linguistic type clearly exhibited in Geez. The two principal of these are that spoken in Tigré proper and that of the neighbouring countries.

In reality, the name of Tigré belongs to both, and it would be desirable to distinguish them from one another as Northern and Southern Tigré. But it is the custom to call the northern dialect Tigré simply, whilst that spoken in Tigré itself bears the name of Tigrina, with an Amharic termination. It is generally assumed that Tigré bears a closer resemblance to Geez than does Tigrina, although the latter is spoken in the country where Geez was formed; and this may very possibly be the case, for Tigrina has during several centuries been very strongly influenced by Amharic, which has not been the case with Tigré, which is spoken partly by nomads. Of Tigré, which appears to be divided into numerous dialects, we have several glossaries; but of its grammar we as yet know but little. Written specimens of this language are almost entirely wanting. With Tigrina we are somewhat better acquainted,<sup>1</sup> but only as it is spoken in the centre of the country, near the site of the ancient Aksúm, where Amharic happens to be particularly strong,—above all, amongst the more educated classes. In Tigrina the older grammatical forms are often subjected to violent alterations; foreign elements creep in; but the kernel remains Semitic.

Very different is the case with Amharic, a language of which the domain extends from the left bank of the Takkazé into regions far to the south. Although by no means the only language spoken in these countries, it always tends to displace those foreign tongues which surround it and with which it is interspersed. We here refer especially to the Agaw dialects. Although Amharic has been driven back by the invasions of the Galla tribes, it has already compensated itself to some extent for this loss, as the Yedju and Wollo Gallas, who penetrated into eastern Abyssinia, have adopted it as their language. With the exception, of course, of Arabic, no Semitic tongue is spoken by so large a number of human beings as Amharic. The very fact that the Agaw languages are being gradually, and, as it were, before our own eyes, absorbed by Amharic<sup>2</sup> makes it appear probable that this language must be spoken chiefly by people who are not of Semitic race. This supposition is confirmed by a study of the language itself. Amharic has diverged from the ancient Semitic type to a far greater extent than any of the dialects which we have hitherto enumerated. Many of the old formations preserved in Geez are completely modified in Amharic. Of the feminine forms there remain but a few traces; and that is the case also with the ancient plural of the noun. The strangest innovations occur in the personal pronouns. And certainly not more than half the vocabulary can without improbability be made to correspond with that of the other Semitic languages. In this, as also in the grammar, we must leave out of account all that is borrowed from Geez, which, as being the ecclesiastical tongue, exercises a great influence everywhere in Abyssinia. On the other hand, we must make allowance for the fact that in this language the very considerable phonetic modifications often produce a total change of form, so that many words which at first have a thoroughly foreign appearance prove on further examination to be but the regular development of words with which we are already acquainted.<sup>3</sup> But the most striking deviations occur in the syntax. Things which we are accustomed to regard as usual or even universal in the Semitic languages, such as the placing of the verb before the subject, of the governing noun before the genitive, and of the attributive relative clause after its substantive, are here totally reversed. Words which are marked as genitives by the prefixing of the relative particle, and even whole relative clauses, are treated as one word, and are capable of having the objective suffix added to them. It is scarcely going too far to say that a person

<sup>1</sup> Franz Praetorius, *Grammatik der Tigrinasprache*, Halle, 1872. The present writer was also permitted to use the manuscript grammar of a Belgian missionary, who spent a long time in the country.

<sup>2</sup> Only an advanced guard of the Agaw languages, the Bilin or dialect of the Bogos, is being similarly absorbed by the Tigré.

<sup>3</sup> Praetorius, however, in his very valuable grammar, *Die amharische Sprache* (Halle, 1879), has gone much too far in his attempts to connect Amharic words and grammatical phenomena with those that occur in Geez.

who has learnt no Semitic language would have less difficulty in mastering the Amharic construction than one to whom the Semitic syntax is familiar. What here appears contrary to Semitic analogy is sometimes the rule in Agaw. Hence it is probable that in this case tribes originally Hamitic retained their former modes of thought and expression after they had adopted a Semitic speech, and that they modified their new language accordingly. And it is not certain that the partial Semitization of the southern districts of Abyssinia (which had scarcely any connexion with the civilization of Aksum during its best period) was entirely or even principally due to influences from the north.

In spite of its dominant position, Amharic did not for several centuries show any signs of becoming a literary language. The oldest documents which we possess are a few songs of the 15th and 16th centuries, which were not, however, written down till a later time, and are very difficult to interpret. There are also a few Geez-Amharic glossaries, which may be tolerably old. Since the 17th century various attempts have been made, sometimes by European missionaries, to write in Amharic, and in modern times this language has to a considerable extent been employed for literary purposes; nor is this to be ascribed exclusively to foreign influence. A literary language, fixed in a sufficient measure, has thus been formed. Books belonging to a somewhat earlier period contain tolerably clear proofs of dialectical differences. Scattered notices by travellers seem

SEMLER, JOHANN SALOMO (1725-1791), ecclesiastical historian and critic, sometimes called "the father of German rationalism" (see RATIONALISM), was born at Saalfeld in Thuringia on 18th December 1725. He was the son of a clergyman in poor circumstances, and had to fight his way in the world solely by his own talents. He grew up amidst Pietistic surroundings, which powerfully influenced him his life through, though he was never spiritually or intellectually a Pietist. As a boy he showed the omnivorous appetite for books which was characteristic of his later life. In his seventeenth year he entered the university of Halle, where he became the disciple, afterwards the assistant, and at last the literary executor of the orthodox rationalistic Professor Baumgarten. In 1749 he accepted the position of editor, with the title of professor, of the Coburg official *Gazette*, with leisure to pursue historical and scientific studies. But the next year he was invited to Altdorf as professor of philology and history, and six months later became a professor of theology in Halle. After the death of Baumgarten (1757) Semler became the head of the theological faculty of his university, and the fierce opposition which his writings and lectures provoked only helped to increase his fame as a professor. His popularity continued undiminished for more than twenty years, until 1779. In that year he came forward with a reply to the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* (see REIMARUS) and to Bahrdt's confession of faith, a step which was interpreted by the extreme rationalists as a revocation of his own rationalistic position. Even the Prussian Government, which favoured Bahrdt, made Semler painfully feel its displeasure at this new but really not inconsistent aspect of his position. But, though Semler was really not inconsistent with himself in attacking the views of Reimarus and Bahrdt, as a comparison of his works prior and subsequent to 1779 with those in question shows, his popularity began from that year to decline, and towards the end of his life he felt painfully the necessity of emphasizing the apologetic and conservative value of true historical inquiry. With more justification, perhaps, might his defence of the notorious edict of Wöllner (1788), the cultus minister, be cited as a sign of the decline of his powers and of an unfaithfulness to his principles. He died at Halle on 14th

to indicate that in some districts the language diverges in a very much greater degree from the recognized type.

The Abyssinian chronicles have for centuries been written in Geez, largely intermingled with Amharic elements. This "language of the chronicles," in itself a dreary chaos, often enables us to discover what were the older forms of Amharic words. A similar mixture of Geez and Amharic is exemplified in various other books, especially such as refer to the affairs of the Government and of the court.

The languages spoken still farther to the south, that of Gurágué (south of Shoa) and that of Harar, are perhaps more fitly described as languages akin to Amharic than as Amharic dialects. Until we possess more precise information respecting them, and in general respecting the linguistic and ethnographical condition of these countries, it would not be safe to hazard even a conjecture as to the origin of these languages, which, corrupt as they may be, and surrounded by tongues of a wholly different class, must still be regarded as Semitic. It is enough to repeat that the immigration of the Semites into these parts of Africa was probably no one single act, that it may have taken place at different times, that the immigrants perhaps belonged to different tribes and to different districts of Arabia, and that very heterogeneous peoples and languages appear to have been variously mingled together in these regions.

The clever and brilliant work of Renan, *Histoire générale des langues Sémitiques* (1st ed., Paris, 1855), could not fail to produce much effect at the time, in spite of its one-sided character and the actual mistakes that it contains. Even at the present day a scholar may read it with great interest and profit; but as a whole it has been superseded by the discoveries of the last twenty or thirty years. The remarks of Ewald, in the introduction to his Hebrew grammar, upon the mutual relationship of the Semitic languages are still worthy of perusal, much as they provoke contradiction. A work upon the subject which realizes for the present state of science what Renan endeavoured to realize for his own time unfortunately does not exist. (TH. N.)

March 1791, worn out by his prodigious labours, embittered by his desertion, and disappointed at the issue of his work.

Semler's importance in the history of theology and the human mind is that of a critic of Biblical and ecclesiastical documents and of the history of dogmas. He was not a philosophical thinker or theologian, though he insisted, more or less confusedly, and yet with an energy and persistency before unknown, on certain distinctions of great importance when properly worked out and applied, e.g., the distinction between religion and theology, that between private personal beliefs and public historical creeds, and that between the local and temporal and the permanent elements of historical religion. His great work was that of the critic. He was the first to reject with sufficient proof the equal value of the Old and the New Testaments, the uniform authority of all parts of the Bible, the divine authority of the traditional canon of Scripture, the inspiration and supposed correctness of the text of the Old and New Testaments, and, generally, the identification of revelation with Scripture. Though to some extent anticipated by the English deist Thomas Morgan, Semler was the first to take due note of and use for critical purposes the opposition between the Judaic and anti-Judaic parties of the early church. He led the way in the task of discovering the origin of the Gospels, the Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse. He revived previous doubts as to the direct Pauline origin of the Epistle to the Hebrews, called in question Peter's authorship of the first epistle, and referred the second epistle to the end of the 2d century. He wished to remove the Apocalypse altogether from the canon. In textual criticism Semler pursued further the principle of classifying MSS. in families, adopted by R. Simon and Bengel. Though he lacked almost every qualification of the true church historian, Semler did the work of a pioneer in many periods and in several departments of ecclesiastical history. Tholuck pronounces him "the father of the history of doctrines" and Baur "the first to deal with that history from the true critical standpoint." At the same time, it is admitted by all that he was nowhere more than a pioneer. Baur's description of his work in one department of ecclesiastical history is true of his work generally. "His writings on the history of dogma resemble a fallow-field waiting to be cultivated or a building-site on which, underneath refuse and ruins, lie the materials in chaotic confusion for a new edifice. The consequence was that as he was always occupied in preliminary labours, he brought nothing to even partial completion; and, though his general critical standpoint was correct, in its application to details his criticism could only be regarded as extremely bold and arbitrary."

Tholuck gives 171 as the number of Semler's works, of which only two reached a second edition, and none is now read for its own sake. Amongst the chief are—*De demoniacis* (Halle, 1760, 4th ed. 1779), *Selecta capita historiae ecclesiasticae* (3 vols., Halle, 1767-69), *Von freier Untersuchung des Kanon* (Halle, 1771-72), *Apparatus ad liberalem N. T. interpretationem* (1767; ad V. T., 1773), *Institutio ad doctrinam Christi liberaliter descendam* (Halle,

1774), *Ueber historische, gesellschaftliche, und moralische Religion der Christen* (1786), and his autobiography, *Semler's Lebensbeschreibung, von ihm selbst abgefasst* (Halle, 1781-82).

For estimates of Semler's labours, see Gass, *Gesch. der prot. Dogmatik* (Berlin, 1854-67); Dorner, *Gesch. der prot. Theol.* (Munich, 1867); Tholuck, art. in Herzog's *Real-Encyclopädie*; Hilgenfeld, *Einführung in das Neue Test.* (Leipzig, 1875); Baur, *Epochen der kirchlichen Geschichtsschreibung* (1852); and Ritschl, *Gesch. des Pietismus* (Bonn, 1880-84).

SEMLIN (Hung. *Zimony*; Servian, *Semun*), a town of Austria-Hungary, the easternmost in the Military Frontier district, stands on the south bank of the Danube, on a tongue of land between that river and the Save. It is the see of a Greek archbishop, has a real school of lower grade, five Roman Catholic and two Greek churches, a synagogue, a theatre, and a custom-house. The population (10,046) consists mostly of Servians, with a few Germans, Greeks, Illyrians, Croats, Gipsies, and Jews. Semlin has recently undergone improvement in its streets and buildings; but its suburb Franzenthal near the Danube consists mostly of mud huts thatched with reeds. The town is surrounded by a stockade. On the top of Zigeunerberg are the remains of the castle of John Hunyadi, who died here in 1456. Semlin has a considerable trade, sending woollen cloth, porcelain, and glass to Turkey, and obtaining in return yarn, leather, skins, honey, and meerschaum pipes. It is a principal quarantine station for travellers from Turkey. Steam ferry boats cross to Belgrade several times a day, and larger vessels run up the Save as far as to Sissek.

SEMPER, GOTTFRIED (1803-1879), German architect and writer on art, was born at Altona on 29th November 1803. His father intended him for the law, but irresistible impulse carried him over to art. His early mastery of classical literature led him to the study of classic monuments in classic lands, while his equally conspicuous talent for mathematics gave him the laws of form and proportion in architectural design. While a student of law at the university of Göttingen he fell under the influence of K. O. Müller, and in after years followed closely in his footsteps. Semper's architectural education was carried out successively in Hamburg, Berlin, Dresden, in Paris under Gau, and in Munich under Gärtner; afterwards he visited Italy and Greece. In 1834 he was appointed professor of architecture in Dresden, and during fifteen years received many important commissions from the Saxon court. He built the opera-house, which made his fame, the new museum and picture gallery, likewise a synagogue. In 1848 his turbulent spirit led him to side with the revolution against his royal patron; he furnished the rebels with military plans, and was eventually driven into exile. Semper came to London at the time of the Great Exhibition of 1851, and the prince consort found him an able ally in carrying out his plans. He was appointed teacher of the principles of decoration; and his lectures in manuscript, preserved in the art library, South Kensington, deserve to be better known. He was also employed by the prince consort to prepare a design for the Kensington Museum; he likewise made the drawings for the Wellington funeral car. In 1853 Semper left London for Zurich on his appointment as professor of architecture, and with a commission to build in that town the polytechnic school, the hospital, &c. In 1870 he was called to Vienna to assist in the great architectural projects since carried out round the Ring. A year later, after an exile of over twenty years, he received a summons to Dresden, on the rebuilding of the first opera-house, which had been destroyed by fire in 1869; his second design was a modification of the first. The closing years of his life were passed in comparative tranquillity between Venice and Rome, and in the latter city he died on 15th May 1879.

Semper's style was a growth from the classic orders through the Italian Cinque Cento. He forsook the base and rococo forms he found rooted in Germany, and, reverting to the best historic ex-

amples, fashioned a purer Renaissance. He stands as a leader in the practice of polychrome, since widely diffused, and by his writings and example did much to reinstate the ancient union between architecture, sculpture, and painting. Among his numerous literary works are *Ueber Polychromie u. ihren Ursprung* (1851), *Die Anwendung der Farben in der Architektur u. Plastik bei den Alten*, *Der Stil in den technischen u. tectonischen Künsten* (1860-63). His *Notes of Lectures on Practical Art in Metals and Hard Materials: its Technology, History, and Style*, remains in MS. His teachings are sometimes encumbered by speculations reaching far beyond the domain of his art.

SENAAR (SENNAAR, properly SENNÁR), a country of east Central Africa, commonly identified with the "Island of Meroe" of the ancients, and included in the central division of Egyptian (Eastern) Súdán, as reorganized in the year 1882. By European writers the term is often applied to the whole region lying between the Atbara (Takazze) and the White Nile, but by native usage is restricted to the district confined between the latter river and the Bahrel-Azrak (Blue Nile), and its eastern tributaries, the Rahad and the Dender. It is bordered north and north-east by Upper Nubia, east by Abyssinia, west by the White Nile (Bahr-el-Abiad), separating it from Kordofán, and stretches from the confluence of the two Niles at Khartúm southwards, in the direction of the Berta highlands in the east and the Búrún and Dinka plains in the west. As thus defined, Sennár extends across five degrees of latitude (16° to 11° N.), with a total length of about 350 miles, a mean breadth of 120 miles, an area of 40,000 square miles, and an approximate population of 300,000. It comprises two physically distinct tracts, the densely wooded and well-watered Jezirat el-Jesirát ("Isle of Isles") between the Rahad and the Blue Nile, and the "island" of Sennár proper, a nearly level steppe land confined between the two main streams. This western and much larger division, which has a mean elevation of under 2000 feet above sea-level, consists mainly of alluvial and sandy matter, resting on a bed of granite and porphyritic granite, which first crops out some ten days' journey south of Khartúm, in the Jebel es-Segati and the Jebel el-Moye, near the town of Sennár on the Bahr-el-Azrak. Between these two groups the plain is dotted over with isolated slate hills containing iron and silver ores. But beyond Sennár the boundless steppe, either under a tall coarse grass, or overgrown with mimosa scrub, or else absolutely waste, again stretches uninterruptedly for another ten or eleven days' journey to the Roséres (Rosaires) district, where the isolated Okelmi and Keduss Hills, containing quartz with copper ore, rise 1000 feet above the right bank of the Blue Nile and 3000 above the sea. Here the plain is furrowed by deep gullies flushed during the rainy season; and farther south the land, hitherto gently sloping towards the north-west, begins to rise rapidly, breaking into hills and ridges 4000 feet high in the Fazogl district, and farther on merging in the Berta highlands with an extreme altitude of 9000 to 10,000 feet. In these metalliferous uplands, recently explored by Marno and Schuver, rises the Tumat, which is washed for gold, and which after a northerly course of nearly 100 miles joins the left bank of the Blue Nile near Fazogl and Famaka. South of and parallel with the Tumat flows the still unexplored Jabus (Yabus), on which stands Fadasi, southernmost of the now abandoned Egyptian stations in the Bahr-el-Azrak basin. This point also marks the present limit of geographical exploration in the direction of the conterminous Galla country, Schuver being the only European traveller who has hitherto succeeded in penetrating to any distance south of the Jabus.

Sennár lies within the northern limits of the tropical rains, which reach to Khartúm, and fall between June and September. In this part of its course the Blue Nile rises from May to August, when the northern and western winds prevail, nearly coinciding with the cool and healthy season. But they are followed by the hot khamúsín from the south or the samúm (simoom) from the north-west charged