grammar. Each of the older Semitic languages occasion­ally agrees in grammatical points with some other to which in most respects it bears no very close resemblance, while dialects much more nearly related to it are found to exhibit different formations. Each Semitic tongue also possesses features peculiar to itself. For instance, the Hebrew- Phoenician group and the Arabic have a prefixed definite article (the etymological identity of which is, however, not quite certain) ; the dialect nearest to Arabic, the Sabæan, expresses the article by means of a suffixed *n∙,* the Aramaic, which in general more closely resembles Hebrew than does the Arabic group, expresses it by means of a suffixed *ά ;* whereas the Assyrian in the north and the Ethiopic in the south have no article at all. Of this termination *n* for the definite article there is no trace in either Arabic or Hebrew; the Sabæan, the Ethiopic, and the Aramaic employ it to give emphasis to demonstrative pronouns ; and the very same usage has been detected in a single Phoenician inscription. @@1 In this case, therefore, Hebrew and Arabic have, independently of one another, lost some­thing which the languages most nearly related to them have preserved. In like manner, the strengthening of the pronoun of the third person by means of *t* (or *tu)* is only found in Ethiopic, Sabæan, and Phoenician. Aramaic alone has no certain trace of the reflexive conjugation formed with prefixed *n*; Hebrew alone has no certain trace of the causative with *sha. @@2∙* In several of the Semitic languages we can see how the formation of the passive by means of internal vocal change (as *kullima,* “ he was ad­dressed,” as distinguished from *kallama, "* he addressed ”) gradually dropped out of use ; in Ethiopic this process was already complete when the language first became literary ; but in Aramaic it was not wholly so. In a few cases phonetic resemblances have been the result of later growth. For example, the termination of the plural masculine of nouns is in Hebrew *ím,* in Aramaic *ín,* as in Arabic. But we know that Aramaic also originally had

*m,* whereas the ancient Arabic forms have after the *n* an

*a*, which appears to have been originally a long *á (úna, ina)* ; in this latter position (that is, between two vowels) the change of *m* into *n* is very improbable. These two similar terminations were therefore originally distinct. We must indeed be very cautious in drawing conclusions from points of agreement between the vocabularies of the various Semitic tongues. The Ethiopians and the Hebrews have the same word for many objects which the other Semites call by other names,—for instance, “stone,” “tree,” “enemy,” “enter,” “go out”; and the same may be said of Hebrew as compared with Sabæan. But to build theories upon such facts would be unsafe, since the words cited are either found, though with some change of meaning, in at least one of the cognate languages, or actu­ally occur, perhaps quite exceptionally and in archaic writings, with the same signification. The sedentary habits of the Ethiopians and the Sabæans may possibly have rendered it easier for them to retain in their vocabu­lary certain words which were used by the civilized Semites of the north, but which became obsolete amongst the Arabian nomads. To the same cause we may attribute the fact that in religion the Sabæans resemble the northern Semites more closely than do the tribes of central Arabia ; but these considerations prove nothing in favour of a nearer linguistic affinity.

One thing at least is certain, that Arabic (with Sabæan) and Ethiopic stand in a comparatively close relationship to one another, and compose a group by themselves, as contrasted with the other Semitic languages, Hebræo- Phœnician, Aramaic, and Assyrian, which constitute the

northern group. Only in these southern dialects do we find, and that under forms substantially identical, the im­portant innovation known as the “ broken plurals.” They agree, moreover, in employing a peculiar development of the verbal root, formed by inserting an *ά* between the first and second radicals *(kátala, takátala),* in using the vowel *a* before the third radical in all active perfects—for example, *(h)aktala, kattala,* instead of the *haḳtil, ḳattil* of the northern dialects—and in many other grammatical phenomena. This is not at all contradicted by the fact that certain aspirated dentals of Arabic *(th, dh, th)* are replaced in Ethiopic, as in Hebrew and Assyrian, by pure sibilants—that is, *s* (Hebrew and Assyrian *sh*), 2, *ç—* whereas in Aramaic they are replaced by simple dentals *(t, d, t),* which seem to come closer to the Arabic sounds. After the separation of the northern and the southern groups, the Semitic languages possessed all these sounds, as the Arabic does, but afterwards simplified them, for the most part, in one direction or the other. Hence there resulted, as it were by chance, occasional similarities. Even in modern Arabic dialects *th, dh* have become some­times *t, d,* and sometimes *s, z.* Ethiopic, moreover, has kept *d,* the most peculiar of Arabic sounds, distinct from *ç,* whereas Aramaic has confounded it with the guttural '*ain,* and Hebrew and Assyrian with *ç.* It is therefore evident that all these languages once possessed the con­sonant in question as a distinct one. One sound, *sin,* appears only in Hebrew, in Phoenician, and in the older Aramaic. It must originally have been pronounced very like *sh,* since it is represented in writing by the same character ; in later times it was changed into an ordinary s. Assyrian does not distinguish it from *sh*. @@3 The division of the Semitic languages into the northern group and the southern is therefore justified by facts. Even if we were to discover really important grammatical phenomena in which one of the southern dialects agreed with the northern, or *vice versa,* and that in cases where such phenomena could not be regarded either as remnants of primitive Semitic usage or as instances of parallel but independent development, we ought to remember that the division of the two groups was not necessarily a sudden and instan­taneous occurrence, that even after the separation inter­course may have been carried on between the various tribes who spoke kindred dialects and were therefore still able to understand one another, and that intermediate dialects may once have existed, perhaps such as were in use amongst tribes who came into contact sometimes with the agricultural population of the north and sometimes with the nomads of the south (see below). All this is purely hypothetical, whereas the division between the northern and the southern Semitic languages is a recognized fact.

Although we cannot deny that there may formerly have existed Semitic languages quite distinct from those with which we are acquainted, yet that such was actually the case cannot be proved. Nor is there any reason to think that the domain of the Semitic languages ever extended very far beyond its present limits. Some time ago many scholars believed that they were once spoken in Asia Minor and even in Europe, but, except in the Phoenician colonies, this notion rested upon no solid proof. It cannot be argued with any great degree of plausibility that even the Cilicians, who from a very early period held constant intercourse with the Syrians and the Phoenicians, spoke a Semitic language.

@@@3 It is not quite certain whether all the Semitic languages originally had the hardest of the gutturals *gh* and *kh* in exactly the same places that they occupy in Arabic. In the case of *kh—*where Ethiopic agrees with Arabic—this is at least probable, since there seem to be traces of it in Assyrian. But it would appear that in Hebrew and Aramaic the distinction between *gh* and *'ayin,* between *kh* and *h,* was often different from what it is in Arabic.

@@@1 Viz., the great inscription of Byblus, *C.I.S,* fasc. i. No. 1. @@@*2 Shalhebeth,* “flame,” is borrowed from Aramaic.