rowing of words. Uncivilized races, as has been proved with certainty, sometimes borrow from others elements of speech in cases where we should deem such a thing im­possible,—for example, numerals and even personal suffixes. But the great resemblances in grammatical formation can­not be reasonably explained as due to borrowing on the part of the Hamites, more especially as these points of agreement are also found in the language of the Berbers, who are scattered over an enormous territory, and whose speech must have acquired its character long before they came into contact with the Semites. We are even now but imperfectly acquainted with the Hamitic languages; it is not yet certain into what groups they fall; and the relation in which Egyptian stands to Berber on the one hand and to the south Hamitic languages on the other re­quires further elucidation. The attempt to write a com­parative grammar of the Semitic and Hamitic languages would be, to say the least, very premature. @@1

The connexion between the Semitic languages and the Hamitic appears to indicate that the primitive seat of the Semites is to be sought in Africa ; for it can scarcely be supposed that the Hamites, amongst whom there are gradual transitions from an almost purely European type to that of the Negroes, are the children of any other land than “ the dark continent.” There seems, moreover, to be a considerable physical resemblance between the Hamites and the Semites, especially in the case of the southern Arabs *; we* need mention only the slight development of the calf of the leg, and the sporadic appearance amongst Semites of woolly hair and prominent jaws. @@2 But both Semites and Hamites have been mingled to a large extent with foreign races, which process must have diminished their mutual similarity. All this, however, is offered not as a definite theory but as a modest hypothesis.

It was once the custom to maintain that the Semites came originally from certain districts in Armenia. This supposition was founded on the book of Genesis, accord­ing to which several of the Semitic nations are descended from Arphachsad, *i.e.,* the eponym of the district of Arrapachitis, now called Albak, on the borders of Armenia and Kurdistan. It was also thought that this region was inhabited by the primitive race from which both the Semites and the Indo-Europeans derived their origin. But, as we saw above, this ancient relationship is a matter of some doubt ; in any case, the separation does not date from a period so recent that the Semites can be supposed to have possessed any historical tradition concerning it. There cannot be a greater mistake than to imagine that nations have been able to preserve during long ages their recollection of the country whence their supposed ancestors are said to have emigrated. The fantastic notion once in vogue as to the permanence of historical memories among uncivilized races must be wholly abandoned. The period in which the Hebrews, the Arabs, and the other Semitic nations together formed a single people is so distant that none of them can possibly have retained any tradition of it. The opinion that the Hebrews and the tribes most closely related to them were descendants of Arphachsad is apparently due to the legend that Noah’s ark landed near this district. The notion has therefore a purely mythical origin. Moreover, in Genesis itself we find a totally different account of the matter, derived from another source, which represents all nations, and therefore the Semites among them, as having come from Babylon.

Scarcely any man of science now believes in the northern origin of the Semites.

Others, as Sprenger and Schrader, @@3 consider the birth­place of the Semitic race to have been in Arabia. There is much that appears to support this theory. History proves that from a very early period tribes from the deserts of Arabia settled on the cultivable lands which border them and adopted a purely agricultural mode of life. Various traces in the language seem to indicate that the Hebrews and the Aramæans were originally nomads, and Arabia with its northern prolongation (the Syrian desert) is the true home of nomadic peoples. The Arabs are also supposed to display the Semitic character in its purest form, and their language is, on the whole, nearer the original Semitic than are the languages of the cognate races. To this last circumstance we should, how­ever, attach little importance. It is by no means always the case that a language is most faithfully preserved in the country where it originated. The Lithuanians speak the most ancient of all living Indo-European languages, and they are certainly not autochthones of Lithuania; the Romance dialect spoken in the south of Sardinia is far more primitive than that spoken at Rome; and of all living Teutonic languages the most ancient is the Icelandic. It is even doubtful whether the ordinary assumption be cor­rect, that the most primitive of modern Arabic dialects are those spoken in Arabia. Besides, we cannot unre­servedly admit that the Arabs display the Semitic char­acter in its purest form; it would be more correct to say that, under the influence of a country indescribably mono­tonous and of a life ever changing yet ever the same, the inhabitants of the Arabian deserts have developed most exclusively certain of the principal traits of the Semitic race. All these considerations are indecisive; but we will­ingly admit that the theory which regards Arabia as the primitive seat of all Semites is by no means untenable.

Finally, one of the most eminent of contemporary Orien­talists, Ignazio Guidi, @@4 has attempted to prove that the home of the Semites is on the lower Euphrates. He contends that the geographical, botanical, and zoological conceptions which are expressed in the various Semitic languages by the same words, preserved from the time of the dispersion, correspond to the natural characteristics of no country but the above-mentioned. Great as are the ingenuity and the caution which he displays, it is difficult to accept his conclusions. Several terms might be men­tioned which are part of the common heritage of the northern and the southern Semites, but which can scarcely have been formed in the region of the Euphrates. More­over, the vocabulary of most Semitic languages is but very imperfectly known, and each dialect has lost many primitive words in the course of time. It is therefore very unsafe to draw conclusions from the fact that the various Semitic tongues have no one common designation for many important local conceptions, such as “mountain.” The ordinary words for “man,” “old man,” “boy,” “tent,” are quite different in the various Semitic languages, and yet all these are ideas for which the primitive Semites must have had names.

We must therefore for the present confess our inability to make any positive statement with regard to the primitive seat of the original Semitic race.

It is not very easy to settle what is the precise con­nexion between the various Semitic languages, considered individually. In this matter one may easily be led to hasty conclusions by isolated peculiarities in vocabulary or

@@@1 This of course applies yet more strongly to Benfey’s work, *Ueber das Verhäliniss der ägyptischen Sprache zum semitischen Sprachstamm* (Leipsic, 1844) ; but his book has the permanent merit of having for the first time examined this relationship in a scientific manner.

@@@2 Comp. G. Gerland, *Atlas der Ethnographie* (Leipsic, 1876), p. 40 of the text.

@@@3 The former has maintained this view in several of his works, the latter in *Z.D.M.G.,* xxvii. 417 *sq.*

@@@4 “ Della Sede Primitiva dei Popoli Semitici,” in the *Proceedings* of the Accademia dei Lincei, 1878-79.