ancient “ holy ” language even after it had ceased to be spoken. Esther, Ecclesiastes, and a few Psalms, which be­long to the 3d and 2d centuries before our era, are indeed written in Hebrew, but are so strongly tinctured by the Aramaic influence as to prove that the writers usually spoke Aramaic. We are not likely to be far wrong in saying that in the Maccabæan age Hebrew had died out among the Jews, and there is nothing to show that it sur­vived longer amongst any of the neighbouring peoples.

But in the last period of the history of Jerusalem, and still more after the destruction of the city by Titus, the Jewish schools played so important a part that the life of the Hebrew language was in a manner prolonged. The lectures and discussions of the learned were carried on in that tongue. We have very extensive specimens of this more modern Hebrew in the Mishnah and other works, and scattered pieces throughout both Talmuds. But, just as the “classical” Sanskrit, which has been spoken and written by the Brahmans during the last twenty-five cen­turies, differs considerably from the language which was once in use among the people, so this “ language of the learned ” diverges in many respects from the “ holy lan­guage ” ; and this distinction is one of which the rabbis were perfectly conscious. The “ language of the learned ” borrows a great part of its vocabulary from Aramaic,@@1 and this exercises a strong influence upon the gram­matical forms. The grammar is perceptibly modified by the peculiar style of these writings, which for the most part treat of legal and ritual questions in a strangely laconic and pointed manner. But, large as is the propor­tion of foreign words and artificial as this language is, it contains a considerable number of purely Hebrew elements which do not appear in the Old Testament. Although we may generally assume, in the case of a word occurring in the Mishnah but not found in the Old Testament, that it is borrowed from Aramaic, there are several words of this class which, by their radical consonants, prove them­selves to be genuine Hebrew. And even some gram­matical phenomena of this language are to be regarded as a genuine development of Hebrew, though they are unknown to earlier Hebrew speech.

From the beginning of the Middle Ages down to our own times the Jews have produced an enormous mass of writings in Hebrew, sometimes closely following the lan­guage of the Bible, sometimes that of the Mishnah, some­times introducing in a perfectly inorganic manner a great quantity of Aramaic forms, and occasionally imitating the Arabic style. The study of these variations has but little interest for the linguist, since they are nothing but a purely artificial imitation, dependent upon the greater or less skill of the individual. The language of the Mishnah stands in much closer connexion with real life, and has a definite *raison d'être ;* all later Hebrew is to be classed with medi­aeval and modern Latin. Much Hebrew also was written in the Middle Ages by the hostile brethren of the Jews, the Samaritans ; but for the student of language these produc­tions have, at the most, the charm attaching to curiosities.

The ancient Hebrew language, especially in the matter of syntax, has an essentially primitive character. Para­taxis of sentences prevails over hypotaxis to a greater extent than in any other literary Semitic language with which we are well acquainted. The favourite method is to link sentences together by means of a simple “and.” There is a great lack of particles to express with clearness the more subtle connexion of ideas. The use of the verbal tenses is in a great measure determined by the imagination,

which regards things unaccomplished as accomplished and the past as still present. There are but few words or inflexions to indicate slight modifications of meaning, though in ancient times the language may perhaps have distinguished certain moods of the verb somewhat more plainly than the present punctuation does. But in any case this language was far less suited for the definite ex­pression of studied thought, and less suited still for the treatment of abstract subjects, than for poetry. We must remember, however, that as long as Hebrew was a living language it never had to be used for the expression of the abstract. Had it lived somewhat longer it might very possibly have learnt to adapt itself better to the formulat­ing of systematic conceptions. The only book in the Old Testament which attempts to grapple with an abstract subject in plain prose—namely, Ecclesiastes—dates from a time when Hebrew was dying out or was already dead. That the gifted author does not always succeed in giving clear expression to his ideas is partly due to the fact that the language had never been employed for any scientific purposes whatsoever. With regard to grammatical forms, Hebrew has lost much that is still preserved in Arabic ; but the greater richness of Arabic is in part the result of later development.

The vocabulary of the Hebrew language is, as we have said, known but imperfectly. The Old Testament is no very large work ; it contains, moreover, many repetitions, and a great number of pieces which are of little use to the lexicographer. On the other hand, much may be derived from certain poetical books, such as Job. The numerous *άπαξ* λ∈γ0p,evα are a sufficient proof that many more words existed than appear in the Old Testament, the writers of which never had occasion to use them. Were we in possession of the whole Hebrew vocabulary in the time of Jeremiah, for example, we should be far better able to determine the relation in which Hebrew stands to the other Semitic languages, the Old Testament would be far more intelligible to us, and it would be very much easier to detect the numerous corrupt passages in our text.

*Phoenician.—*This dialect closely resembles Hebrew, and is known to us from only one authentic source, namely, inscriptions, some of which date from about 600 b.c. or earlier ; but the great mass of them begin with the 4th century before our era. These inscriptions @@2 we owe to the Phoenicians of the mother-country and the neighbour­ing regions (Cyprus, Egypt, and Greece), as well as to the Phoenicians of Africa, especially Carthage. Inscriptions are, however, a very insufficient means for obtaining the knowledge of a language. The number of subjects treated in them is not large ; many of the most important gram­matical forms and many of the words most used in ordi­nary life do not occur. Moreover, the “ lapidary style ” is often very hard to understand. The repetition of obscure phrases, in the same connexion, in several inscriptions does not help to make them more intelligible. Of what use is it to us that, for instance, thousands of Carthaginian inscriptions begin with the very same incomprehensible dedication to two divinities ? The difficulty of interpreta­tion is greatly increased by the fact that single words are very seldom separated from one another, and that vowel- letters are used extremely sparingly. We therefore come but too often upon very ambiguous groups of letters. In spite of this, our knowledge of Phoenician has made con­siderable progress of late. Some assistance is also got from Greek and Latin writers, who cite not only many Phoenician proper names but single Phoenician words : Plautus in particular inserts in the *Poenulus* whole pass­ages in Punic, some of which are accompanied by a Latin

@@@1 It is a characteristic feature that “ my father ” and “ my mother ” are here expressed by purely Aramaic forms. Even the learned did not wish to call their “ papas ” and “ mammas ” by any other names than those to which they had been accustomed in infancy.

@@@2 The scattered materials are being collected in the *Corpus Inscrip­tionum Semiticarum* of the Paris Academy.