

SOME ASPECTS OF GENDER IN THE SEMITIC LANGUAGES

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PREFACE

It may take wonder that a study on gender in the Semitic languages appears a few years only after Féghali and Cuny have published their researches in this field¹). The reason is this. The ideas forwarded in the present paper had already taken their form when the monograph by the two French scholars appeared. I did not take the booklet from the shelf, however, but entrusted my own study to the paper, that it might have its own way, or be destroyed or modified. Then I studied the book of my fellow-inquirers with interest and profit. Yet it appeared very soon that our method and results diverge so widely that there is hardly room for discussion. I must therefore leave it to future critics to find a *modus vivendi* for the two views, for the case that my study should be deemed worthy to obtain a place in the literature on the subject. In one respect Féghali and Cuny's book has influenced my paper; it has discharged me from giving *complete* lists of feminine words in several Semitic languages; my lists served only as examples.

1) M. Féghali et A. Cuny, *Du genre grammatical en sémitique* (Paris 1924)

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ANALYSIS

I

INTRODUCTION

The view that grammatical gender is based upon sex has been given up by Semitic philologists (1), Wundt, Paul, Dillmann—Bezold, Wright, Ewald Albrecht, Nöldeke (1—3). The old view based upon the opinion that the Semites possessed a peculiar phantasy. This opinion contradicted (4—5).

The Semitic grammarians on gender (5). Gender in historical times chiefly connected with sex and with endings. Tendency of the Semitic languages towards the masculine gender. Several words which were originally feminine have become masculine. Examples (6). Amariña. The Abyssinian group. Sketch of the supposed historical process. No original neuter (7). Groups of nouns feminine by meaning only. Gradual change of gender (8). Examples (8, 9). Aethiopic, Tigre, Tigrai, Amariña. Relation between Abyssinian languages and South-Semitic. Table of generic classes in Semitic languages (9).

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Magical energy neither active nor passive in itself. Several aspects of centres of magical energy. Attitude taken by Yahwism (39).

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I

INTRODUCTION

It is only about the beginning of the twentieth century that the prevalent opinion on the meaning of gender in the Semitic languages appears to have undergone a change. One of the theses at the end of E. Littmann's doctordissertation is to the effect that the termination *at(-t)* was not originally a generic one¹⁾. A. Fischer's study on feminine infinitives points into a direction deviating from the then common one²⁾. C. Brockelmann in his *Vergleichende Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen* appears to be open to the views forwarded by students of comparative philology³⁾. And in 1924 M. Féghali and A. Cuny have presented us with a monograph on the subject which follows the trodden paths to a very small extent only.

Still, as late as 1912, W. Wundt in his *Völkerpsychologie*, declared that in the Semitic and Hamitic groups of languages the differences of sex are at the root of differences of gender, the former having been extended to the latter⁴⁾. H. Paul's view is materially the same; generic differentiation in the case of nouns which have no connection with sex, according to him is due to „eine Wirkung der Phantasie”⁵⁾.

It is not amazing that scholars like Wundt and Paul view the problem of gender in the Semitic languages in this way, since the masters of Semitic philology had given similar solutions. In 1899 C. Bezold in his new edition of Dillmann's *Grammatik der äthiopischen Sprache* reprinted the following passage: Die semitischen Sprachen haben die Unterscheidung eines Persönlichen

1) Dissertation Halle, 1898, 2nd thesis

2) *Z D M G*, LX, 839 sqq.

3) I, 404

4) 3rd ed., II, 19

5) *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte*, 5th ed., p. 264

Verhand. Afd. Letterkunde (Nieuwe Reeks) Dl. XXVI

und Unpersönlichen (oder Neutrischen) an den Gegenständen der Wahrnehmung und Vorstellung längst aufgegeben (s. Ewald, *Hebr. Sprache*, § 172 a); die Semiten haben vielmehr vermöge einer lebendigen Einbildungskraft alles seiende als lebendig aufgefasst und unter den an allem lebendigen erscheinenden natürlichen Gegensatz des Männlichen und Weiblichen gestellt. Auch die unbelebten Gegenstände, Sachen und Begriffe werden je nach der Anschauung, die der Geist eines Volkes davon hat, entweder als männlich oder als weiblich oder als beides zugleich gedacht. Für das, was andere Sprachen neutrisch auffassen, kann nun zwar in den semitischen Sprachen das weibliche Geschlecht eintreten, sofern dies gegenüber dem männlichen das schwächer persönliche ist, und in der That werden reine Begriffe (Abstracta) gerne als zeugende und gebärende Kräfte aufgefasst, also weiblich gebildet. Aber viele Sachen und Begriffe erscheinen doch dem Geist auch wieder nicht so entschieden schwach und weiblich, dass er ihre Namen ausdrücklich als weibliche bezeichnen wollte; sie bleiben darum ohne besondere weibliche Bezeichnung, und da, wie sogleich gezeigt werden soll, auch des männliche Geschlecht keine besondere Bezeichnung hat, fallen sie der äussern Form nach mit den entschieden als männlich gedachten Wesen, Sachen und Begriffen zusammen. So kommt es, dass sowohl das Masculinum als das Femininum zum Ersatz des Neutrums anderer Sprachen dient¹⁾.

Wright's opinion is similar to that of Dillmann. "The vivid imagination of the Semite, he says²⁾, conceived all objets, even those that are apparently lifeless, as endowed with life and personality. Hence for him there are but two genders, as there exist in nature but two sexes. All that we are accustomed to look upon as indifferent and neuter, was of necessity classed by him as either masculine or feminine, though the latter predominated, as we may see from the formation of abstract nouns, from the employment of the fem. as the impersonal form of the verb, and from the other phenomena in Semitic speech. The Mandaite only pushes this use to the utmost limit, when he construes as fem. such words and expressions as מִינְרָאם "something", כּוֹל דּ "all that", and מֵא דּ or מֵאֵהוּ דּ "what", "whatever". Even the

1) p. 242 sq.

2) *Lectures on the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages* (Cambridge 1890), p. 131 sqq.

word מָ, מָּ, מָּ, the nearest approach in the Semitic languages to a neuter, is only, as I tried to show you in a former lecture, a corruption of *mant*, which is actually the fem. of מָּ, מָּ, מָּ.

Long before, Ewald had forwarded analogous views: Anfangs steht erst ein oder einige Wörter nach einer gewissen Analogie mit dem Physischen im ideellen Geschlecht; die Sprache trägt dieses dann auf ähnliche Wörter über und diese folgen entweder schon stets der Gesellschaft oder fangen kaum erst an nach dem Ähnlichen sich zu richten. Dadurch sind die ideellen Genusunterschiede im steten Fortbilden und bei weitem nicht so fest wie das animalische Genus ¹⁾.

According to K. Albrecht, who has presented us with a detailed account of the generic phenomena in the Old Testament ²⁾, several groups of animals and objects were given the feminine gender because of their weakness; all that was imposing, the sky, the clouds, the luminaries were masculine by their imposing character ³⁾.

Th. Nöldeke, as far as I know, never trusted to the press his general opinion on the question. In his *Mandäische Grammatik* ⁴⁾ he has formulated, in a single sentence, an opinion which deviates from the common one and, as I am happy to state, shows a remarkable resemblance to some of the results of the present inquiry. His words are the following: Ferner sind im Semitischen weiblich allerlei Namen für elementare oder geheimnisvolle Gewalten.

It appears from the above survey that all the scholars mentioned, except Nöldeke, are of the opinion that the Semites, starting from the distinctions of sex, divided the whole material world in a masculine and a feminine part, a division which they linguistically expressed in grammatical gender. Some of them ascribe this process to the highly developed phantasy of the Semites.

I must confess that Semitic literature does not appear to me the product of a peculiarly rich imagination. Neither the Old

1) *Historische Grammatik der Hebräischen Sprache*, 1827, p. 301

2) *Zeitschrift für die alttest. Wissenschaft* XV, XVI

3) *o. c.*, XV. 323

4) p. 159

Testament nor the Koran are remarkable in this respect; nor can this be said of any original literary product in Aramaic. The Babylonian myths and epics may possess a claim on this title. But it is very doubtful, if not improbable, that they are provenient from the Semitic population of Mesopotamia. Neither can we maintain that Arabic poetry is the product of a remarkable phantasy. To the contrary, there could hardly be adduced a *kaṣīda* which was not composed after the usual pattern; the merits of this class of literary products lie in their faithful pictures of nature and animal life¹⁾; phantasy is absent here and so it is in the Arabic works on history, geography, biography and theology²⁾. There is, however, — apart from the many historical romances, which may be compared with our mediaeval chivalric books — one work in Arabic, that contains proofs of the vivid imagination of its composers, the Thousand and One Nights. But here the situation corresponds to that of the myths and epics in cuneiform literature. The frame of the work is not of Semitic but of Persian origin and to Persia belongs a large stock of the stories. Another stock belongs to Egypt, a third to Mesopotamia. The latter may to a large extent be called Semitic. It contains chiefly the stories on Hārūn al-Rashīd and other caliphs; they can hardly be adduced as proofs of the peculiar phantasy of their authors³⁾.

The Thousand and One Nights were, however, regarded as a product of the Semitic spirit during the long period between their becoming known to European scholars and the beginning of literary criticism; this accounts for the false conclusions mentioned. Another explanation of the overestimation of the fantasy of the Semites seems to lie in the fact that their impressionability was taken for fantasy.

On these grounds it does not, therefore, seem advisable to ascribe the origin of gender in the Semitic languages, and its limitation to the masculine and feminine, to a peculiar fantasy.

There is another argument which corroborates our negative conclusion. If grammatical gender had really been a conception

1) Cf. Ch. J. Lyall in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1912, p. 133 sqq.

2) Cf. Signora Dr. V. Vacca-de Bosis in *Idea coloniale*. 25th June 1925.

3) E. Littmann in his *Tausend und eine Nacht in der arabischen Literatur* (Tübingen 1923) inquires into the genuine Arabic elements in the „Arabian Nights“.

analogous to the sexes, would not then the literature of the Semites show important traces of that once prevalent view of nature? Certainly. Yet, there are hardly any such traces. I remember a single one only, from Rabbinical literature, where heaven and earth are compared to husband and wife. Yet this conception cannot be a survival from a very old period, for the word for heaven must have been feminine in the primitive Semitic language.

We shall therefore have to start afresh and to look for facts. We must begin our inquiry with the period of the language best known to us and ask: How is it that the grammarians of Semitic languages — natives as well as Europeans — make use of the terms masculine and feminine in order to denote the two genders? It is one of the merits of A. Merx to have asked and answered this question in his treatise *Historia artis grammaticae apud Syros*¹⁾. Merx has shown that the use of those terms among Syriac and Arabic grammarians goes back to Greek influence, the Syrians being dependent upon Dionysius Thrax († 2nd cent. B. C.), the Arabians upon Aristotle and others²⁾. It must further be observed that Sībawaihi, and, probably in imitation of him, Barhebraeus, make a distinction between the gender of living beings which they call “really” masculine or feminine, and that of inanimate beings or ideas which they call “not-really” masculine or feminine. This proves that in their age the living language did not know anything of a connection between gender and sex, except in the case of animate beings.

We may go further. Even a rapid survey of the phenomena in the different Semitic languages shows that there are two groups of words only which have regularly the feminine gender, viz.

a) Words denoting females. This is true for all Semitic languages.

b) Words provided with an ending such as *a*, *ā*, *ā'*, *at* etc. This is true for all Semitic languages except the Abyssinian group. — The rule can be given in a simplified negative form: a variable gender possesses the group of words which do not denote individual animate beings and which are not provided with any of the endings mentioned.

Lists of words with a variable gender are to be found in

1) *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, IX (1889)

2) p. 10, 137 sqq.

Nöldeke's *Syrische Grammatik*¹⁾ and in Wright's *Arabic Grammar*²⁾). The list given by the latter contains 61 words; 15 of them denote parts of the body, 11 instruments, 11 parts of earth or of heaven, 2 kinds of dwelling-places, 5 animals, 5 products of a peculiar working.

Now some of these groups of words are generally feminine in the different Semitic languages. It would seem that these words communis generis are gradually passing from the feminine to the masculine group. The same phenomenon has been observed in Arabic by Wright, who says³⁾: "the masculine gender preponderates in later times over the feminine".

Wright's remark is not only true for Arabic; it applies also to other Semitic languages and to the group as a whole. A few examples may illustrate this statement.

شمس "sun" is always feminine in Arabic; in Aramaic and Hebrew it has a variable gender; in Assyrian it is exclusively masc.

كف "hand" is fem. in Syriac and Hebrew. In Arabic it is of a variable gender and in Jewish Aramaic it is masc.

نعل "sandal" is fem. in Arabic and Hebrew. In post-biblical Hebrew it is masc.

رحى "mill" is fem. in Arabic and Syriac. In Biblical Hebrew it is not possible to state its gender. In the post-biblical language and in Jewish Aramaic it is masc.

كأس "goblet" is fem. in Arabic and Hebrew. In post-biblical Hebrew and in Aramaic it is masc.

نوى "pasture-ground" is fem. in Arabic. In Hebrew it is masc.

These examples, which could easily be augmented, confront us with the fact that within the whole group of languages as well as within the single ones fem. words are gradually giving up their gender and passing on to the masculina. The words which take part in this process are exclusively such ones which do not denote living beings and are not provided with a fem. termination. The end of this process is reached in Amariña where the only feminina are words denoting female beings⁴⁾. Consequently we witness a general change in the demarcation of

1) p. 54 of the first edition

2) ed. de Goeje, I, 181—183

3) p. 183

4) I. Guidi, *Grammatica elementare della lingua amarina*, p. 15 sqq.

the two groups. The words *communis generis* are symptoms of this process; they must be considered as originally fem. words which are on their way to the field of the masculina.

In the Abyssinian group — with the exclusion of Amariña — the process took a different way. When the original principle of generic distinctions began to vanish from the mind of the peoples which spoke these languages, the consequence was a general promiscuity of genders, even in the case of words provided with a fem. termination. Here was not a tendency to make originally fem. words masculine; the masculina themselves became victims of the general confusion and all rules were effaced except in the case of words denoting living beings. This shows that also within this group of peoples a change in the signification of grammatical gender took place.

We shall now endeavour to give a preliminary sketch of the conception of gender as it must have existed in the times preceding the process mentioned above; it will be tested by the enquiry contained in the second and third chapters of the present study. In the first place it must be observed that there are hardly any traces of the neuter which occupies a place in the researches of scholars from Dillmann up to Féghaly and Cuny. I do not deny the possibility of its existence. But I deem it superfluous to take it into account as long as this existence is only a matter of conjecture. Neither is there any ground to suppose in the Semitic field a development to any extent analogous to that of other families of languages. And finally, the existence of some neuter pronouns is not a fact which could induce us to conjecture the existence of the neuter gender of nouns, for there are other languages which possess a neuter pronoun without having neuter nouns¹⁾ and moreover the existence of a neuter pronoun in the Semitic languages is not altogether certain. Aethiopic *ment* is a feminine form and so are according to Wright²⁾ also the different forms of *mā* "what". Wright's explanation is not above doubt. However this may be, the fact is that *mā*, in Syriac is a particle of time, in Hebrew an indefinite particle³⁾ so that its common Semitic origin as a neuter interrogative pronoun is very uncertain.

1) Professor Uhlenbeck kindly mentions to me Spanish and, to a certain extent, Lithuanian.

2) *Comparative Grammar*, p. 124

3) e. g. כמו, במו

Certain is, on the other hand, that the Semitic languages possessed several words without a termination, which effectuated certain changes in adjectives and verbs under their syntactic influence. The words which exercised this influence denoted individuals and objects which, according to our poor modern conception, have scarcely anything in common. The fact that they caused the same formal changes in adjectives and verbs which were under their syntactical influence, shows, however, that they once must have been considered as a group held together by a common bond. This group included females, some species of animals apart from the sex of the individuals, the earth and cognate ideas, such as wells, ways, fields etc., further the wind, the clouds, the sky, fire, the parts of the body, "soul" and "spirit", garments, vessels, instruments used for daily work, in war and hunting¹⁾.

We have seen above that in historical times a change was taking place regarding the peculiar influence of these words. شمس "sun" is feminine in Arabic, communis generis in Hebrew and Aramaic, while in Assyrian it is exclusively masculine. It is easy to explain why this word has altogether given up its original gender in Assyrian. Shamash is a God; we need not inquire here into the question why the sun was not a goddess. A similar change may be observed in Arabic where the word has acquired the masculine gender when it denotes a collar or pendent. It is clear that the change of gender depends upon a change of meaning. There are other instances. In Arabic دار in the sense of an encampment of Beduins is feminine; in sedentary life it denotes a court and the dwellings around it. In Aramaic ܕܪ has the meaning of a circular {row and is masculine; ܕܪܘܢ "precinct, monastery" is communis generis, whereas ܕܪ and Hebrew דור "generation" are exclusively masculine. This means that when the idea of a dwelling-place is given up, the word changes its original gender.

In other cases, however, the change of gender does not appear to have been caused by a change of meaning. Regarding the words نعل "sandal", رحى "mill", كأس "goblet" we cannot observe a change of meaning; yet they are passing from the feminine to the masculine. In these cases the change of gender must have

1) For a detailed account see chapter III

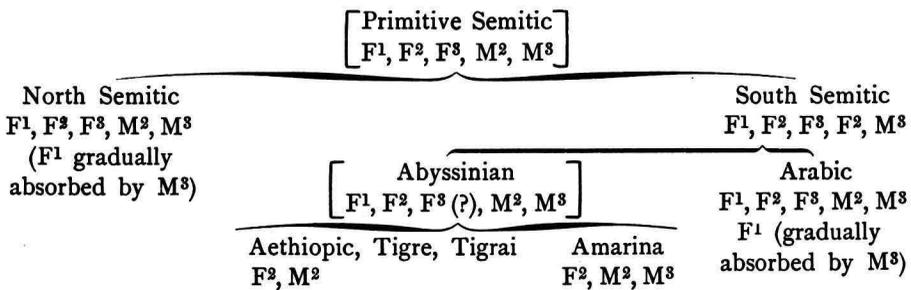
been caused by the weakening of the *vis feminina* which was once proper to these words. This applies to the nouns communis generis in general. Feminine remained as a rule only the nouns denoting females; the other ones passed into the masculine class.

As we have seen, the process took a partly different course in the Abyssinian languages, with the exception of Amariña. The weakening of the *vis feminina* caused a general promiscuity of gender. Amariña, which followed the general Semitic line of development cannot, therefore, be an offspring of Aethiopic as it is known to us. They must go back to a common ancestor. I am happy to see that this conclusion is in accord with the views of Praetorius which were not based on generic phenomena¹⁾. According to Littmann early Aethiopic must have known a regular distinction of genders.

We may sum up the generic classes in the Semitic languages as follows :

- a) Words feminine by idea, without termination (F¹)
- b) Words feminine because they denote feminine beings (F²)
- c) Words feminine by termination (F³)
- d) Words masculine because they denote masculine beings (M²)
- e) Words masculine by lack of termination (M³)

The following table may give a survey of the spread of these types in the Semitic languages :



It may be surprising that in the above table the type M¹ which should denote nouns masculine by idea is absent. Practically this type would have coincided with M³, a class characterized by a negative criterium only. It could hardly be characterized as "nouns masculine by idea". For, contrary to the common opinion

1) *Aethiopische Grammatik*, § 1

that the masculine gender, apart from the class M^2 , comprises nouns denoting bulky, strong, imposing objects, I find that there is no idea common to groups of masculine words; their characteristic is negative; I could only style them as not-feminine, neither by idea nor by termination. This negative characteristic makes them coincide with the class M^3 . I shall have to touch of this point again in the following pages.

It will be clear that the great fact shown by the table, viz. the absorption of F^1 by M^3 , as compared with the amalgamation of these classes in some Southern languages as well as with the fact that the class F^2 appears not to have been subject to the attractive power of M^3 —, that this bifold fact calls for an explanation, an explanation that must be based upon an inquiry into the meaning of the *vis feminina*. For the resistance shown by the class F^2 , to the general tendency to which F^1 gave way, can be explained on account of a change in the position of gender. The gradual absorption of F^1 , as compared with the firmness of F^2 must be based on the prominent place the class F^2 occupied in the early conception of gender.

This inquiry will be endeavoured in our fourth chapter. It must be preceded by an inquiry into grammatical facts regarding gender.

II

THE GRAMMATICAL PHENOMENA

As pronoun, noun and verb are subject to changes due to gender and number, we have to inquire into the nature of these phenomena.

The pronoun has a peculiar place, in so far as it does not go back to roots expressing ideas. It is a kind of short-hand speech referring to nouns already mentioned by the speaker or understood by the hearer. Within the limits of the three persons to which the pronouns refer, there is a small number of variations. Some of the pronouns are used in several functions; some were derived from nouns which gave up their common use.

Within the divisions of the pronouns there occur, according to the person to which they refer, changes which depend upon a) number; b) gender. These causes of change do not exercise

a uniform influence. The pronouns of the 1st person do not show any generic differentiation. The influence of gender on the pronoun of the second person consists in a change of the vowel in the singular; in the plural there is a change of consonants, whereas the vowels are not affected. A similar irregular influence can be observed in the personal pronouns of the third person. As regards the interrogative pronouns, in some languages they do not suffer changes dependent upon number; in other languages there is a neuter which is either a feminine form (*ment*) or an indefinite one (*mā*). A larger number of forms changing on account of number and gender exists for the demonstrative pronoun. Yet there cannot be spoken of regular influences either. Notwithstanding this rigidity the pronouns are important for the morphology of the language, as they occur in rudimentary forms as pre- and affixes to the verb.

The *verbum finitum* occurs in the different languages in a limited number of forms, the variety being effectuated by the pre- and affixes. There are only two forms which in their consonants show the bare root of the verb viz. the 3rd person masc. sing. of the Perfect and the second person masc. sing. of the Imperative. This means that the masc. sing. subject of a sentence does not affect the forms mentioned, so as to add any consonants to the root. It has no peculiar effect, it does not leave any peculiar trace in the verb under its influence, it does not cause any generic change. This means that the masc. sing., in connection with the Perfect of the verb, cannot be said to be a gender of its own.

The pre- and affixes of the verb are generally considered to represent two types, the pronominal and the numerical one; the two are combined in some forms of the Imperfect.

The affixes of the 2nd and 1st person sing. and plur. Perfecti, those of the 2nd person fem. sing. and plur. Imperf. and Imperativi, as well as the prefixes of the 2nd and 1st person Imperfecti and the affix of the 2nd person fem. plur. Imperativi are admitted to be pronominal rudiments. It may be conjectured that the prefix *ya* (*yi*) of the 3rd person masc. sing. and of the 3rd person masc. and fem. plur., are likewise pronominal elements.

The affix of the 3rd person masc. plur. Perfecti and Imperfecti (*ū*) and that of the 3rd person fem. plur. Perfecti (*ā*) as well as that of the dual masc. and fem. Perfecti and Imperfecti

(\bar{a}) are due to numerical influence. They are expressions of the intensity of the action due to the plurality or duality of the subject.

To which of the two kinds, the pronominal or the numerical, do the other pre- and affixes of the verb belong, viz. the prefix *ta* (*ti*) of the 2nd person sing. and plur. masc. and fem. Imperfecti, and the affix *at* of the 3rd person fem. sing. Perfecti? Are they pronominal elements or signs of intensity? The prefix *ta*, *ti* may be connected with the ending of the pronoun masc. sing. *anta*. Zimmern¹⁾ gives a comparative table of similar formations in some Hamitic languages. It is possible that this element belongs to the Semito-Hamitic family, but a conclusion can hardly be reached. The affix *at* of the 3rd person fem. sing. Perfecti, on the other hand, cannot be separated from the ending *at* of the fem. adjective and substantive; the two are identical. We must therefore consider the adjective and its endings.

As to the masc. sing. we find the same phenomenon as in the verb; a masc. sing. subject does not cause any changes in the adjective; it appears in this position in its simplest forms. This corroborates our foregoing conclusion which may now be given in a more comprehensive form, viz. the masc. sing. subject does not cause any generic change in verb or adjective. It is not a gender of its own.

As to the fem. sing. of the adjective it must be remarked that the ending *at* (North-Semitic *a*) is found in South-Semitic side by side with the forms \bar{a} , \bar{a}' . The ending \bar{a} cannot be separated from the same ending of the 3rd person fem. plur. Perfecti and of the dual (see above). It is doubtless an affix of intensity common to several forms of the noun and the verb. We must moreover remark that the same ending (ع) is found in Arabic as the regular ending of the plural of adjectives of the form *fa'il*: مَمِيَّت, صَرِيْع, قَتِيْل are plural forms of مَمِيَّة, صَرِيْع, قَتِيْل.

This means that the ending of the fem. sing. may also be used for the broken plural in some cases. This leads us to the conclusion that there is no essential difference between the grammatical forms of fem. and plural or collectivum.

If such a conclusion should seem too bold, there are a great many facts of the same nature which may remove all doubt.

1) *Vergl. Gramm.*, p. 104

In the first place I point to the well known, but hitherto unexplained fact, that *at* occurs as an intensivum in nouns denoting male individuals. رَوِيَّةٌ "a man who knows poems by heart and hands them down to his hearers", "a reciter", عَلَّامٌ "a very learned man", كَهْلِبَةٌ "a man who presides over a congregation"¹⁾, have not escaped attention. It has only been forgotten to observe that the idea of intensity, of which the ending *at* proves to be the expression in this case, must also be connected with it in its function of a fem. ending. *at* is not a generic sign, but an expression of intensity and as such it stands on the same level with the endings of the plural which are also expressions of intensity.

In the second place I point to the well known proper names of men ending in *a(t)*, e. g. Hāritha, (Aretas), Mu'āwiya, 'Ubaida, Nābigħa etc.

The following facts may serve as further illustrations of these and similar facts. *at* is also used to denote the collective idea. In Arabic فَعَالَةٌ is a well known collective form of the participle فَعَلَ. In Hebrew there is an analogous phenomenon in so far as from the same participle the collectivum is derived simply by adding the ending *a*: אֲרִיב "a traveller", אֲרִיבִים "a company of travellers, a caravan". This kind of formation occurs also in Arabic. عَاقِلَةٌ is the collective form of عَاقَلَ and denotes the persons who are bound to bring up the indemnity to be paid e. g. in case of murder (عَقْل). A different form is e. g. صَاحِبَةٌ the collective to صَاحِبٌ "a companion", denoting the companions as a body; in this sense it is a well known designation of Muhammad's companions as a body.

In Syriac the use of *at* as a sign of intensity is not rare. It is here regularly combined with *ān*, e. g. سَكْلٌ "very strong", مְبَسَكْلٌ "who possesses the knowledge of an initiate", مְبَسُكْلٌ "beatus", مְبَسَكْلٌ "clementissimus", مְبَسُكْلٌ "very careful".

This element *ān* deserves special attention²⁾. It is regularly used in Syriac to form intensiva from all participles except those

1) Other examples in Féghali and Cuny, p. 16

2) Cf. J. Barth, *Die Nominalbildung in den semitischen Sprachen*, 2nd ed., p. 316—343

of the Pe'al, e. g. *meḳaṭṭelānā*, *maḳṭelānā* etc. In Assyrian it is used in connection with the participle of the first form in order to denote functions¹⁾. Its intensive meaning is recognisable in a great many classes of nouns. In Arabic it forms infinitives denoting a repeated movement, such as قَطْرَان “to trickle”, عَدَوَان, رَمَلَان “to run”; adjectives such as سَكَرَان “drunk”, عَطْشَان, ظَمَان “thirsty”, جَوْعَان “hungry”, غَضَبَان “angry”. In Hebrew its intensive function appears in many adjectives with a superlative meaning: ראשון “first”, אחרון “last”, חיצון “outer”, תיכון “inner”, עליון “highest”. Further in nouns denoting the names of maladies: שרפון, ירקון “blasting, mildew”, שגעון “insanity”, תמרוון “bewilderment”, עיוון “blindness”. It is noteworthy that other denominations of maladies show a preference for the terminations *at*, *ā* e. g. קַרְחַת, חֲמִי, רִלְקַת, שְׁחַפֶּת, another proof of the connection between intensivum and fem.

ān is further used in Aramaic as the termination of fem. adjectives in the plural of the status absolutus. D. H. Müller has pointed to the fact that in the early Aramaic inscriptions of Zindjirli the fem. plur. has the termination *āt*. *Ān* must therefore, according to this scholar, in this case be a secondary formation due to the analogous masc. forms with the termination *īn*²⁾.

According to Brockelmann, however, the termination *ān* found its way to the function mentioned, coming from the 3rd pers. fem. plur. Imperfecti³⁾.

However this may be, the ending *ān* is in this case the expression of the fem. plural. According to Barth⁴⁾ there are traces of a broken plural ending in *on* in the Hebrew forms שִׁבְתוֹן and פְּרוֹן which are used in the expression שִׁבַּת שִׁבְתוֹן and in the line חֲדָלוּ פְּרוֹן בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, Judges V, 7. Barth's explanation, though attractive, is not above doubt. In Arabic, however, the use of the ending *ān* in broken plurals is no matter of conjecture: سَوْدَان

1) Barth, *o. c.*, p. 342 sq.

2) D. H. Müller, *Die altsemitischen Inschriften von Sendschirli*, p. 121 sq.

3) *Syrische Grammatik*, p. 41

4) *o. c.*, p. 318

and حُمْرَان are the usual plural forms to أَسْوَد "black" and أَحْمَر "red", words that by meaning and by form are intensiva. The same relation may be observed in Amariña adjectives such as *tekurān* "black", *kaihān* "red", *nekhan* "white" ¹⁾.

Instances of *ān* as the termination of the masc. plur. are very frequent in Aethiopic, where it is used in nouns denoting persons, in adjectives and participles. At the same time, however, *ān* is appended to some groups of consonants of the type *kut!* in order to denote "stärkere Begriffe" ²⁾, e. g. ሩሥኣን "greyhood", ብርሃን "lucidity, light", ሥልጣን "dominion" etc. In Amariña the termination has taken the form *ām* in this case. From Abyssinian languages the termination passed into several groups of Agaw languages ³⁾.

In Assyrian *ān* is frequently used to denote plurals; it is of importance that these plurals are construed as feminina ⁴⁾. Finally we find this termination in Syriac, combined with *ē*, as an ending of the plural in a limited number of cases such as ܩܘܬܝܢܐ, ܩܘܬܝܢܐ; plural of ܩܘܬܐ; ܩܘܬܝܢܐ, ܩܘܬܝܢܐ as plurals of ܩܘܬܐ, ܩܘܬܐ

These instances show the connection between intensivum, fem., collective and plural forms of both genders.

This connection is also obvious in the fact that the broken plurals in Arabic adjoin to themselves the adjective either in a broken form, or in the fem. singular. The usual explanation calls the broken plurals *collectiva* that as such are fem. We may now consider the phenomenon in a more general way and formulate this rule: The fem., singular and plural, as well as the broken plurals, exercise an influence upon the adjective which is of an intensive nature. We found even forms of the masc. plural showing the same sign of intensity as many forms of the broken plural, the intensive adjective in the singular, the fem. plural of nouns, and the intensive noun in the singular. Facing these facts we may state anew, that gender cannot be separated from number. Grammatically speaking the generic phenomena do not form a class of their own; they belong together with the numerical phenomena to the class of intensiva.

1) Barth, *o. c.*, p. 340

2) Dillmann, *Aeth. Grammatik*, p. 231

3) C. Conti Rossini, *La Langue des Kemant en Abyssinie*, p. 120 sq.

4) Delitzsch, *Assyrian Grammar*, § 67

This thesis can be further elucidated by examples which are usually looked upon as plurals. Side by side with Hebrew חִכְמָה “wisdom” we find חִכְמוֹת which is construed as a fem. singular and has the emphatic meaning of “divine” or “personified wisdom”. Its counterpart הוֹלָלוֹת “folly” has been modelled after it. Side by side with בְּהֵמָה “cattle” there occurs a fem. sing. בְּהֵמוֹת which denotes the counterpart of Leviathan, the personification of the earth, also in eschatological representations. These forms cannot be looked upon as plurals, which would be against the sense as well as against the construction. Barth has recognised them as singular forms¹⁾. Our conclusion is that the ending *ōt* in Hebrew which is usually the ending of the fem. plural, in some cases denotes the intensivum in the singular. This conclusion seems the more justified as Aethiopic appears to have used the corresponding *āt* in a similar function, viz. to denote abstracta: ልህቃት “greyhood”, ነሐሳት “youth”, ጸድቃት “charity”. Side by side with the ending *āt*, the ending *at* is used for the same purpose in Aethiopic: ሰብሐት “glory” occurs also in the form ሰብሐት; other instances are ሰብሐት “consanguinity”, ምስኪነት “poverty”.

These examples are reminiscences of a time when the sharp distinction between singular and plural endings did not yet exist. They compel us to inquire into the relation between fem., plural and abstractum.

It is well known that the Semitic languages, especially in their later development form abstracta by means of special endings such as *ya* in Arabic, *ūt* in Syriac, *it* in Hebrew.

In earlier strata of the languages we find other methods. In Hebrew and Aramaic there are some very old instances of the masc. plural used to form abstracta. The idea of plurality had to express the general, abstract idea. חַיִּים, חַיִּים means “living beings” and at the same time “life”. רַחֲמִים is a plural of “womb” and means “compassion, mercy”. דָּמִים, the plural of דָּם “blood” has often the meaning of “guiltiness caused by bloodshed”. מַעֲמַקִּים

¹⁾ *Nominalbildung*, p. 411. I cannot, however, with Barth look upon the *o* as original. I do not find any ground to make a distinction between this *ot* and the usual ending *ot* of the plural.

is a plural of **מַעְמָק** "depth" and means the lower stage of the Universe, viz. the earth and the nether world.

In the case of **רַחֲמִים** the punctuation shows a slight deviation from the usual plural. The same phenomenon may be observed in such forms as **נְעוּרִים** "youth", **זְקֵנִים** "greyhood". The word **בַּחֹר** "young man" has in this sense the plural **בַּחֹרִים**; in the abstract sense of "youth" it has the form **בַּחֹרִים**. The form *ketulim* appears to have become the usual one; cf. the numerous instances given by Barth¹⁾. It is interesting to observe that this form with its "masculine" ending occurs side by side with forms possessing the "feminine" termination, such as **מְלוּכָה** "royal power", **קְבוּרָה** "burial", **רְפוּאָה** "healing" etc.

The close connection between abstractum, fem. and plural appears also from the use of the termination *ān* we met with above in different functions, intensive, masc. plur. and fem. plur. We may add here its abstract function, e. g. in Aethiopic **አለል** "hatred", **ክ.ገ.ገ** "covenant"; in [Hebrew **רְצוֹן** "goodwill", **גְּאוּן** "majesty, haughtiness".

Among the abstract endings there is further *āt* (*ōt*), of which we gave some examples such as **חֲכָמוֹת** "wisdom", **הוֹדוֹת** "glory", which also showed the identity of the numerical and the abstract functions.

A still more usual abstract ending is *at* which cannot be separated from the fem. sing. ending of the same form. Its use as an ending to denote abstracta appeared already in forms such as **הוֹדוֹת** "glory" side by side with **הוֹדוֹת**. It appears further in the fact that the counterpart of North-Semitic **רחמים**, **חיים** in Arabic is **رَحْمَةٌ**, **حياة**. This use of the ending *at* is, however, not limited to the South-Semitic languages, it is common in the Northern languages too: **שְׂמֵחָה** "gladness", **צְדָקָה** "justice", **פְּחָד** "fear", **חֲבוּרָה** "society"; in Assyrian *tukultu* "assistance", *nukurtu* "enmity".

Likewise the endings *ā*, *ā'* are used to denote feminina as well as abstracta. In Arabic *ā* is regularly used to form the fem. of adjectives of the form *af'al*; if the latter denote colours or corporeal defects they have the fem. *fa'la'*; if they denote comparativa the fem. is *fu'la'*; in both cases the meaning may be

1) p. 129

called intensive. The same termination serves to form abstracta: *بَغْضَاء* "hatred", *بِئْسَاء* "miserableness", *دَالْوَاء* "coquetry". The same termination is used for the same purpose in Aethiopic. *መከራ* "temptation", *ቀበላ* "encounter", *ሐሰዣ* "examination" etc. ¹⁾

Apparently this termination coincided in Hebrew and Aramaic with the more common *a* (= *at*). Ewald, Dillmann and Barth have however pointed to Hebrew forms such as *בְּקָרָה*, *בְּקִשָּׁה* as compared with Aethiopic *መከራ* etc. In Aramaic the traces of this termination are more frequent. Here is a transition from the forms ending in *a* to those ending in *ū*, *ūt*. As *ū*, *ūt* are abstract endings, this transition shows that *a* is a termination of the same nature. It occurs in all infinitives, except that of the Pe'al, in early Aramaic; Syriac has in these cases *ū*, *ūt*; the latter forms will be discussed beneath.

Regarding the terminations *ā*, *ā'* there may further be remarked that they not only indicate the fem. sing., but also the plur. masc. in some forms of the plur. fractus: *fa'ālā* is a well known plural to *fa'āl* (*kaṭlā*, plur. to *kaṭāl* etc., see above); it is also a fem. sing. form: *عَقْرَى* "barren"; *fu'lā* is a specifically fem. form, e. g. *حَبْلَى* "pregnant". *Fu'alā'* is one of the commonest forms of the plur. fractus, corresponding to the sing. *fa'āl* (*شُعْرَاء*, *عِلْمَاء*, *شَهَدَاء*). At the same time however it is a fem. sing., e. g. *نَقَسَاء* "woman in childbed".

All these examples are of a nature to support our thesis, that, grammatically speaking, we cannot make a distinction between the forms of fem., abstractum, plural and intensivum, apart from the power of the language to create other forms for special meanings with an exclusively fem., abstract or intensive character. The feminine, once more, is not a gender, but an intensive form which serves to denote the other categories mentioned as well. This means that the feminine idea was not *sui generis*, but akin to the idea common to the other categories. In our third chapter we shall inquire into the explanation of this fact; here we must continue our inquiry into the grammatical phenomena.

¹⁾ Dillmann, *o. c.*, p. 208 *sq.* The termination is also used in nouns denoting animals and plants.

As to the "sound" declension of nouns we are accustomed to the following scheme of endings:

	masc.	fem.
sing.		<i>at</i> (<i>a</i>), <i>ā</i> , <i>ā'</i>
plur.	<i>ū</i> , <i>ūn</i> , <i>īm</i> , <i>īn</i> , <i>ān</i>	<i>āt</i> (<i>ōt</i>), <i>ān</i>

The termination *at* of the fem. sing., was also used to denote *nomina unitatis, vicis, speciei*¹⁾. At the first glance this phenomenon seems to be in sharp opposition to the fact that it served at the same time to denote abstracta²⁾. An explanation seems, however, not difficult.

First we must observe that the *nomina vicis* are derived from infinitives. Side by side with نَصَرَ "to help", صَرَبَ "to strike", شَرَبَ "to drink", فَرِحَ "to rejoice", تَقَلَّبَ "turning over", إِكْرَامَ "honouring", we find نَصْرَةَ "the act of helping", شَرْبَةَ "the act of drinking", فَرَحَةَ "the act of rejoicing", تَقَلُّبِيَّةَ "the act of turning over", إِكْرَامَةَ "the act of honouring". This fact gives a simple explanation of the apparent contradiction; it is clear that "the act of helping", is cognate with the abstractum "help", that "the act of rejoicing" practically coincides with "joy", that إِحْرَانَةَ "the act of vexing" is closely akin to "vexation" etc.

On the other hand it is equally obvious that precisely such forms as صَرْبَةَ "the act of striking", شَرْبَةَ "the act of drinking", إِكْرَامَةَ "the act of honouring", practically coincide with "a stroke", "a draught", "a sign of honour". The bond between abstractum and *nomen vicis*, these seemingly so heterogeneous ideas, lies in the infinitive which is at the root of both of them.

The infinitive of the type *katl* has made room in Syriac for the type *mektal*, in Hebrew for *ketol*, *kutl*. Nouns of the types *katl*, *kutl* and *kitl* provided with the fem. ending, have however survived, in the sense of abstracta: **פֶּחַח** "fear", **חֶסֶד** "shame", **אַהֲבָה** "love", **עֲרֹוּה** "nakedness", **בְּשִׁיט** "shame", **חֲמֶרֶה**, **חֲצֻרֶה**, **סִמְרֶה** "being brown, green, red"; etc.

On the other hand, there are a great many examples of fem. nouns which have at the same time the function of infinitives: **אַהֲבָה** "love" and "to love"; **דַּעַת** "knowledge" and "to know"; **יִרְאָה** "fear" and "to fear"; **הַמְדָה** "desire" and "to desire". In

1) Wright-de Goeje, *Arabic Grammar*, I, 122—124, 147 sq.

2) above, p. 17 sq.

The form *fi'la* has acquired in Arabic a special connection with the *nomina speciei* (كُنْبَةٌ "manner of writing", قَعْدَةٌ "manner of sitting"), whereas in other languages it denotes abstracta: שְׂמֵחָה "joy", אֵסֶדֶם "fear".

It is exactly abstracta of the forms *fa'la* and *fi'la* which are prone to passing into concreta and nomina unitatis: ضَرْبَةٌ "the act of striking" in the indefinite form ضَرْبَةٌ becomes practically identical with "a stroke"; חָמְדָה passes from "desiring" to "desire" and from there to "object of desire". If נִגְבָה was not only "stealing", but also a "thing stolen", if נִקְבָה was not only "to pierce" but also the "thing pierced", if חֲמֻלָה was not only "to swaddle", but also a "swaddling-cloth", the way was open to a general use of the termination *a(t)* to denote *nomina unitatis* and concreta.

It may be observed that Arabic has a predilection for the terminations *at, ā* as suffixes of diminutiva. It seems to me that also in this case the termination is meant as an intensivum. This opinion is supported by the fact that in Syriac the diminutiva have the termination *ōn* which is closely akin to the intensivum *ān*, as well as by the fact that in Arabic intensive formations have often the diminutive form *fu'ail* with the termination *ā*: عَجِيْلِي "quick pace", حُدَيَّا "emulation", حَمِيَّا "vigour of wine". Side by side with this formation there occur intensiva of the diminutive form without the feminine ending: ضَرِيْطٌ "thick", رَمِيْلٌ "cowardly" ¹⁾.

We have now to consider the terminations of the plural, the scheme of which has been given above.

The plural of masculina. We have met with several instances showing the multifarious use of the ending *ān*. It may be added that the ending occurs in Assyrian as a termination of the plural, in the form *āni*, and that in Arabic it is used in connection with forms of the broken plural such as حَيْطَانٌ plur. of حَائِطٌ "enclosure, wall", رُكَبَانٌ plur. of رَاكِبٌ "riding, horseman",

1) Cf. E. Littmann, *Zwei seltener arabische Nominalbildungen*, p. 29

إِخْوَانٍ, plur. of أَخٌ "brother", غِلْمَانٍ, plur. of غُلَامٌ "slave, youth".

The ending $\bar{u}(n)$ of the early Babylonian plural and of the plur. sanus in Arabic is not an exclusive characteristic of the plur. either. It is also the ending of the 3rd person plur. masc. Perfecti et Imperfecti of the verb. In Syriac it is the ending of all the infinitives except that of the Pe'al, as well as that of the status absolutus of abstract nouns. Further it must be observed that even in Arabic its use is not limited to the pluralis sanus of masculina. Old feminina such as أَرْضٌ "earth", عَصَّةٌ "thorny tree", رئةٌ "lung" have the plurals أَرْضُونَ, عَصُونَ, رِئُونَ.

Neither are $\bar{i}(n, m)$, \bar{e} exclusively used in connection with the masc. plur. \bar{I} is used in the casus obliqui of the masc. plur. in Arabic, in the status absolutus of the masc. plur. in Hebrew and Aramaic. At the same time, however, it is a well known termination of the fem. sing. in several Semitic languages, often reinforced by the *t*.

Especially in Hebrew it is often used, in the form $\bar{i}m$, as the plur. termination of feminina: חִטִּים "wheat", sing. חִטָּה; שְׂעִירִים "barley", sing. שְׂעִירָה; שָׁנִים "years", plur. of שָׁנָה; אֲמִים "nations", plur. of אֲמָה; רְחִלִּים "ewes", sing. רְחִל; דְּבִלִּים "fig-cakes", sing. דְּבִלָּה; and even נָשִׁים "women", plur. of אִשָּׁה. The last example is instructive; it corresponds to Arabic نساء. The use of endings, especially in such old words, proves to be in no wise fixed.

\bar{e} is the termination of the masc. plur. in Babylonian and Assyrian, of the status constructus of the masc. plur. in Hebrew as well as of the status absolutus masc. plur. in Syriac. In the last case it is usually looked upon as a contraction of *ai-a*. It may, however, be doubted whether this view is right. The Semitic languages have, it is true, a tendency to contract diphthongs into simple vowels. But the fact that early Aramaic has the plur. determinatus ending in *aiā*, whereas Syriac has \bar{e} in this case, does not prove that the latter is a contraction of the former, *ai* and \bar{e} occurring side by side as endings in several cases.

ai is used as the ending of the status constructus plur. masc. in Syriac; it occurs also in the dual in Hebrew and Arabic and

at the same time it is the sing. ending of some fem. nouns in Syriac, such as ܩܘܠܡܐ "error", ܩܘܠܡܐ "quail" and others.

The plural of feminina. We have already pointed to several instances showing that the use of the endings *ān*, *āt*, *ōt* is by no means limited to fem. plurals. Here we may further observe that the ending *āt* (*ōt*) in many cases is not used as that of the plural fem.; it is very often attached to masculina, especially in Aethiopic, Hebrew and Aramaic. Dillmann¹⁾ describes the state of things in Aethiopic in this way: „Die weibliche Endung *āt* nehmen ausser den . . . aufgezählten Personen- und Beschreibewörtern alle andern Substantiva an, welche überhaupt eine äussere Bildung des Plurals zulassen, mögen sie im Singular Feminin-Bildung haben oder nicht”.

For Hebrew and Aramaic I remind of the plurals ܐܘܒܐ, ܐܘܒܐ, sing. ܐܒ, ܐܒ "father"; ܪܚܘܒܐ, plur. of ܪܚܘܒ "place"; ܡܫܦܪܐ, plur. of ܡܫܦܪ "class"; ܫܘܦܪܐ, plur. of ܫܘܦܪ "horn"; of the pluralia tantum ܠܩܘܚܐ "purchasers", ܡܫܘܚܐ "measurers", ܩܚܘܪܐ "farmers"²⁾; of ܫܦܪܐ, plur. of ܫܦܐ "breast, ܥܘܫܒܐ, plur. of ܥܘܫܒܐ "throne" as well as of the fact that the participles Pe^{al} of verbs with a weak third radical in Syriac, have regularly the plural ending in *ātā*: ܕܠܐ, plur. of ܕܠܐ "shepherd" etc.

All these facts are of a nature to make it clear, that the terminations expressing gender, number, abstractum and collectivum are by no means used in a regular way. There is promiscuity on a large scale. Regularity was not reached by all languages in the same way and to the same degree. Still it may be observed that the declension of adjectives in connection with the influences mentioned, is much more regular than that of substantives.

In Arabic there have been preserved remarkable traces of a treatment of some adjectives which has a strong likeness with the nouns feminine by form only (F¹). Such adjectives as by their meaning are applicable to females only, do not form a fem. ending in *at*, when they designate an action or a state as natural and permanent, or, at any rate, as lasting for a certain period of time³⁾: ܥܘܫܒܐ "pregnant", ܥܘܫܒܐ "barren", ܥܘܫܒܐ "menstruating". If, however, they designate the said action

1) *o. c.*, p. 262

2) Barth, *o. c.*, p. 176

3) Wright-de Goeje, *o. c.*, I, 187

or state as beginning, actually in progress, or about to begin, they form a feminine in *at*. Probably we are face to face with phenomena belonging to a very old phase of the language, in which cases of a fem. noun without ending (F^1) combined with an adjective without ending were not so rare as they are in the literature known to us. It may even be asked whether this state of things does not justify the view that the fem. terminations as a whole are of a secondary nature. I have endeavoured to show in the course of the present paper that the generic terminations cannot be looked upon as a class of its own, but, together with the numerical ones, belong to one class the characteristic of which consists in its expression of intensity. This would justify the question: Is number necessarily expressed by special terminations? It is well known that this is not the case. More than one half of the forms of the broken plural is bare of any outward sign of plurality.

It is obvious that the broken plural belongs to the archaic linguistic phenomena. It survives in rare forms in the Northern languages, and its use in Aethiopic is limited to a few types. In Arabic, on the other hand, it is in full vigour, to such an extent that even the most common nouns may practically be without a pluralis sanus.

With a view to this state of things it seems allowed to conjecture, that in an early phase the language did not know of a regular use of pluralis sanus or of feminina with a termination.

Side by side with this state we find the beginnings of the use of terminations of verb and noun, to denote the fem., the dual and the plural. The dual is characterized by the endings $\bar{a}(ni)$, $ai(im, ni)$. In the historical period of the Northern languages it is already fading away, just as the pluralis fractus. Its ending \bar{a} is identical with the ending of the 3rd pers. plur. fem. Perfecti et Imperfecti in some Northern and Southern languages. Its ending ai may have been borrowed for some forms from the plur. masc.; it is also used as a termination of some classes of fem. nouns in Syriac (ܫܠܡܐ, etc.)

The use of plur. endings of nouns reaches its summit in the Northern group, at a time when the dual is already an archaic phenomenon. The plural may be called a younger phenomenon; we may suppose that it has borrowed some of its endings from the dual. This conjecture finds support in the fact that in Hebrew

some nouns retain the form of the dual, even when they are used in the sense of the plural; such nouns are e.g: יָרֵיִם "hands", עֵינָיִם "eyes", אָזְנָיִם "ears", רַגְלָיִם "feet".

We may consequently suppose that in an early phase language expressed plurality by means of the dual and of the pluralis fractus. How did the pluralis sanus originate? In Arabic the pluralis sanus never reached the popularity of the pluralis fractus or of the dual. Arabic grammarians tell us that the pluralis sanus expresses a limited plurality varying between three and ten. It is really a pluralis paucitatis. In Arabic it retained this limited function; in the Northern languages, however, the real plural, the pluralis fractus, faded away and its place was taken by the former pluralis paucitatis. It may be observed that the pluralis sanus of feminina with the ending *āt*, (*ōt*), which is nothing but the emphasized form of the sing. *at*, is used in all Semitic languages, whereas the ending of the masc. is found in various forms (*ūn, īn, im, ān, ai, ē*).

There is more to prove the limited use and the secondary character of the pluralis sanus. In Arabic the adjective assumes, apart from a few exceptions, the form of this plural only if it depends upon a noun in this form. This means that in all other cases the plural of adjectives is either a pluralis fractus, or, and this is very characteristic, the ending of the fem. singular *at*. This fact supports our opinion on the affinity between generic and numerical phenomena and on the promiscuity in the use of terminations.

III

THE NOUNS FEMININE BY MEANING ONLY

Our linguistic analysis of the feminine forms led us to the conclusion that they are of the same nature as numerical phenomena, the bond between the two groups being the idea of intensity. We left aside the question whether there are other classes of words expressing the same or cognate ideas. Such classes might e. g. be found among the nouns provided with prefixes.

This result is in opposition to the common view which looks upon the feminina as a conception which owes its origin to their analogy with female beings and consequently is inclined to con-

sider the idea of weakness as their chief characteristic¹). The aim of our present chapter must therefore be to find an answer to the question why nouns feminine by idea only cause the adjective and certain forms of the verb under their influence to assume signs of intensity. In other words: what is the idea of intensity residing in fem. nouns?

Before endeavouring to answer this question, we must once more remember the fact that nouns feminine by meaning only — apart from those which designate feminine beings — are gradually passing on to the masculina. This fact led us to the conclusion that nouns communis generis, originally feminine, were becoming masculine in historical times; cf. the instances discussed above.

It will be seen presently that the nouns feminine by meaning only as well as those communis generis belong to semantic groups which are nearly the same in those Semitic languages which have not followed the amalgamating process of the Abyssinian group. On account of this fact we conjecture that all words belonging to these semantic groups were once feminine; if e. g. the words denoting the sword are feminine, our conjecture is that the words denoting weapons to which the same power was ascribed, were once feminine, even if the literature known to us should not have preserved a trace of this state of things.

Attention must further be paid to the fact that words feminine by meaning only, sometimes have assumed a feminine ending; the word for soul e. g., *n-f-s*, is feminine in Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic; in Assyrian it has taken the feminine form *napishtu*.

The groups of words which in several Semitic languages are feminine by meaning only, apart from those denoting living beings, are the following.

The earth and its parts.

The word for "earth", *أَرْض*, *ארעא*, *אָרְצָא* is feminine in Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic; in Assyrian it has taken the fem. ending, *iršitu*; *mātu* is fem. *מַטֵּה*, *מַטֵּה* (loanword) are likewise fem. Communis generis are the words for "way, path" in Arabic: *سبيل*, *طريق*. Feminine is also Hebrew *אֶרֶץ*, Syriac *ܐܪܥܐ* "way". Communis generis are Hebrew *דֶּרֶךְ* and Assyrian *urkhu*.

1) Cf. Albrecht in *Zeits. f. d. alttest. Wissenschaft*, XVI, 323

Feminine are **ܡܡܠܐ** (Assyrian *eklu* is communis generis), **ܐܡܘܢܐ** "field", **ܓܝܝܐ** "valley", **ܕܩܦܪ** "district" (litt. circular field), **ܓܝܢ** "garden" (Gen. II, 15).

It may be observed that a great many words denoting characteristic landscapes have assumed the feminine ending: **ܘܫܬܪܐ** "desert", **ܕܪܝܓܐ** "way", **ܡܐܫܕܐ** "place where lions dwell", **ܡܕܐܒܐ** "place where wolves dwell". In Hebrew: **ܫׁפֵלָה** "hilly country", **בְּקִיעָה** "valley", **נְתִיבָה** "path", **מַעְנָלָה** "track", **יִבְשָׁה** "the solid earth", **נִבְעָה**, **רָמָה**, **נֶפֶחַ** "hill", **מַעְבְּרָה** "ferrey", in Syriac **ܡܢܚܘܡܗܘܢܐ** "lair"; cf. Assyrian *manākhtu*, "resting-place", "shelter".

Feminine are the words for "well": **ܥܝܢ**, **ܥܝܢܐ**, **ܕܝܐܪ**, **ܒܝܐܪ**: **ܡܡܠܐ** (comm. gen.), **ܩܠܝܒ** (comm. gen.). In Assyrian proper names of rivers are said to be feminine (Delitzsch, *Ass. Grammar*, p. 193 mentions one common expression).

Feminine are parts of the universe, such as the names of the four quarters: **ܘܫܬܪܐ**, **ܘܫܬܪܐ** "the North", **ܘܫܬܪܐ**, **ܘܫܬܪܐ** "the South", **ܡܘܪܪܐ**, **ܡܘܪܪܐ** "the East", **ܡܘܪܪܐ**, **ܡܘܪܪܐ** "the West". Feminine are the words denoting the sky: **ܫܡܝܐ**, **ܫܡܝܐ** (comm. gen.), and the nether world: **ܫܘܐܠ**, **ܫܘܐܠ** (loan-word), **ܩܘܡܐ** (cf. *tiāmtu*, *tiāmtu*, **ܩܘܡܐ** which have assumed the fem. ending).

Feminine are the words for wind (**ܪܝܝܚ**, **ܪܝܝܚܐ**, **ܪܝܝܚܐ**, the latter comm. gen.), **ܫܘܠܠܐ** "storm" and the mirage (**ܐܳܠ**). Words conveying cognate ideas, such as **ܫܘܐܠܐ**, **ܫܘܐܠܐ**, **ܫܘܐܠܐ** have assumed the fem. ending. Rain is not mentioned among the words fem. or comm. generis, but it may be observed that in modern Arabic **مطر** still occurs as a feminine noun, viz. in one of the Meccan cradle-songs as communicated by Snouck Hurgronje¹): **يَا مَطَرُ حُطِّي حُطِّي**: "Oh rain, come down, come down". Feminine are some words for clouds: **ܫܘܠܠܐ** (Hebrew **עָנָן** is masculine), **ܫܘܠܠܐ** (Hebrew **עָרַפֶּל** is not certain), **ܫܘܠܠܐ**, **ܫܘܠܠܐ**. Assyrian *birku* "lightning" is feminine. Applying to these instances the remarks given above,

¹) *Mekka*, II, 199

it seems not doubtful that there was a time when the words denoting natural phenomena were generally feminine in the Semitic languages.

In this connection we have also to speak of the gender of the words for the luminaries. As we have seen "the sun" (شمس) is fem. in Arabic, sometimes in Hebrew (שֶׁמֶשׁ; cf. also חֶמָה "the hot one", which has assumed the fem. ending) and in Aramaic. In Assyrian *shamash* is always masculine, for here the sun has become a God. In early Aramaic שמש occurs as the name of a deity in the inscriptions of Nerab; it is also supposed that בעלשמיין "the Lord of heaven", in the inscription of Zakkur, denotes the sun-god. Perhaps the element *shamsh* in some Syriac proper names¹), is also connected with this God. With a view to these facts it is surprising that traces of the original gender of ܫܡܫܐ have survived in Syriac at all.

In Arabic, on the other hand, the word has always kept its gender. It seems to me, that this fact must lead us to the conclusion that those Arabic tribes which had the greatest influence on literary Arabic, did not venerate a sun-god. This conclusion is corroborated by two facts. The one is, that there is no tradition concerning a sun-god in Central Arabia. The other, that certain archaic expressions point to the same direction. In Madīna people said of the sun in the afternoon (*ʿaṣr*): the sun is still living. This expression is often used in *ḥadīth* and it could scarcely have survived till the second century of the Hidjra if the people of the Ḥidjāz in pre-islāmic times had venerated a sun-god, who necessarily would have been immortal.

There is no common Semitic word for "moon", but all the words in the single languages are masculine. This may be due, in some languages, to the veneration of the moon-god; in others to the common tendency of words feminine by idea only, to pass into the masculine class. There are indications of the originally feminine gender of the moon. Syriac ܫܡܫܐ is communis generis; the veneration of the moon-god שרר (inscriptions of Nerab) has consequently not been general among the Aramaeans. Hebrew יָרֵךְ is exclusively masculine. Still, the fem. ending of the epithet

¹) See Payne Smith, *Thesaurus*

הַלְבָנָה “the white one”, proves that the ancestors of the Israelites used to look upon the moon as a “feminine” being.

Feminine are the words denoting fire: אֵשׁ, נֶמֶן, נָר; Assyrian *ishatu* has assumed the fem. ending. So have the more or less synonymous לְהָבָה, שְׁלֵהָבֵת, מַחְסַמָּא, מְאֻחָא “flame”, שְׂרִפָּה, בְּעֵרָה, שְׂרִפָּה “conflagration”.

The feminine gender of the names of countries and towns is ascribed by Wright-de Goeje, in accord with the native grammarians, to the fact that in Arabic *ارض* and *مدينة* have this gender. Certainly analogy has played an important part in the rules for gender. It cannot, however, be referred to as the only explanation of facts. We have to discuss these words from the common Semitic point of view. In Hebrew e. g. the names of towns are also feminine; some of them have an explicit feminine form (e. g. תְּרַצָּה, תְּמַנָּה, תְּמַנּוֹת, תְּרַצּוֹת); the word עִיר is feminine by idea only.

In a middle position between nouns denoting parts of the earth and those denoting towns are terms such as *دار* (see above, p. 8) and *نَوَى* “a traveller’s destination”.

The meaning of this word varies according to the social structure of the people which uses it. In Beduin life, it is the pasture-ground, which the herdsman seeks for his beasts and where he pitches his tent. In this sense it is used in Arabic and Hebrew (נֹוֹה). In sedentary life the word acquires the meaning of “dwelling-place”; in the Bible it also denotes Jahwe’s dwelling-place, the temple (Ex. XV, 13). In Hebrew נֹוֹה is masculine. But two facts, which may contain reminiscences of its former gender, must be noted: its plural נְאוֹת or נֹוֹת in Biblical Hebrew; and the form נֹוֹה in post-Biblical Hebrew. The history of this word appears to be parallel to that of *دار* in many respects. — *الْفِرْدَوْس* “Paradise” a loanword, has of course received its fem. gender by analogy; perhaps it was influenced in this respect by *الجنة*, or by words like *نَوَى*.

It may be noted that Hebrew *מַחֲנֵה* “encampment”, though usually masculine, still occurs as a femininum, Psalms XXVII, 3: *אם תחנה עלי מחנה*, and that it has the plural *מַחֲנוֹת*. *צָבָא* is still fem. when it is preceded by *כָּל*. Two Assyrian words for

encampment, *kharrānu* and *ushmannu* are likewise feminine. *girru* "campaign", *ummānu* "army" are comm. gen.; Aramaic ܦܫܪܝܬܐ has taken the feminine ending.

Concerning the words denoting dwelling-places the following facts are prominent: Hebrew עיר "town" and רֶחֶב "place" are feminine. חֲצֵר "enclosure, court" is feminine; ܫܡܝܢܐ (cf. الخيرة) has taken the fem. ending. Assyrian *bābu* "gate", *abullu* "city gate", *khalsu* "fortification", Arabic سُوق "market", دُكَّان "shop" are communis generis. The fem. ending have assumed قَرْيَة, ܫܡܝܢܐ, קְרִיָּה "village", ܫܫܡܡܐ, ܫܫܡܡܐ "desert place".

Assyrian *bītu* "house", *ekallu* "palace" are communis generis; Hebrew עֲלִיָּה has assumed the fem. ending.

The words denoting parts of the body, especially those which occur in pairs, are feminine; this applies also to the words for "spirit" and "soul" (روح, רֹוַח, ܢܦܫܐ, ܢܦܫܐ; *nāpīshu* has taken the fem. ending; ܩܒܘܪ, parallel to ܩܒܘܪ, is fem. Gen. XLIX, 6). ܩܕܝ "breast" and ܨܢܚ "wing" are communis generis. It is remarkable that the word for "blood" (ܕܡ, ܕܡ, ܕܡܐ, *damū*) is masculine. It must be observed, however, in connection with what has been said on the relation between femininum and plural, that in Arabic and in Hebrew the plural forms ܕܡܐ and ܕܡܐ very frequently occur in the sense of the singular. Syriac ܦܩܘܕ "liver" is fem.; ܩܒܕ is comm. gen., Hebrew ܩܒܕ has become masculine, in Assyrian the word has assumed the fem. ending, *kabittu*. Syriac ܩܒܕ "tail" is fem.; side by side with it occur ܩܒܕ and ܩܒܕ, with the fem. ending, cf. Assyrian *zibbatu*; in Arabic and Hebrew the word (ܩܒܕ, ܩܒܕ) seems to be exclusively masculine; yet it may be observed that ܩܒܕ has the plural ܩܒܕܐ. — ܩܒܕ "kidney" is fem. in Aramaic; in Syriac it has also the masculine gender; here it occurs also with the fem. ending ܩܒܕܐ, which it has always in Arabic (كَلْبَة) and Assyrian (*kalītu*); in Hebrew it is found exclusively in the plural

this group two other ones, both comm. gen. in Arabic, must be compared: collective nouns, chiefly denoting animals and plants, which form a *nomen unitatis*. And collective nouns denoting rational beings and not forming a *nomen unitatis*.

Concerning the three groups the following may be remarked. We have seen that collectiva are generally feminine in the Semitic languages, collectivum or plural and femininum both belonging to the intensiva. With a view to this fact the rules for the gender of collective in Arabic bear a secondary stamp. They show that the collective idea is no longer sufficient to determine gender, but that it is placed in opposition *a*) to the *nomen unitatis*, which, as it is provided with an external generic ending, is acquiring a greater power, and *b*) to natural gender. As regards *a*) if there is no *nomen unitatis* (أَبِل, دَوْد, غَنَم, خَلْف "creatures") the original feminine gender is regularly preserved. If there is a *nomen unitatis*, the noun may become masculine (بَقَر, شَاء). *b*) If, however, the noun denotes rational beings, masculine *a potiori*, the word may become masculine (رَهْط, قَوْم, "people" etc.), even if no *nomen unitatis* is formed.

Other Semitic languages show, generally speaking, the same image: real collectiva (in contradistinction to such words as עָם, לֵוִי "people" etc. which accentuate the unity of the idea) were originally feminine, but in historical times they are also used as masculina: صَفَا "flock", حَمَلٌ "troop", حَمَلٌ "sheep", دَمَامٌ "flock" are feminine; حَمَلٌ "cattle", حَمَلٌ "flock" comm. gen.; Hebrew צֹאן "sheep" is nearly always fem.; צֶבֶק is still fem. in Job. I, 14. Feminine are names of tribes in Arabic (تَغْلِب, تَنْوُخ); cf. in Hebrew קָרָר (Is. XLII, 11).

Of nouns communis generis in Arabic three groups may be mentioned: the names of the letters of the alphabet (which are fem. in Syriac¹), the *nomina verbi*²) and words regarded merely as such³).

In connection with this phenomenon, it must be observed that many nouns denoting the idea of "word" in various respects, have

1) Nöldeke, *Syr. Gramm.*, § 84

2) A. Fischer in *ZDMG*, LX

3) Wright-de Goeje, I, 181

assumed the fem. ending: אִמְרָה “word”; מְחֵמָה “story”; קִלְלָה, מְאַרְרָה, מְאַרְרָה, נִעְנָה, כְּהֵמָה “curse”; בְּרָכָה “blessing-formula”; הִרְפָּה, מְרִיבָה, מְרִיבָה, אֶחְמָה, יִלְלָה “song”; זִמְרָה, אֶחְמָה, מְרִיבָה, מְרִיבָה “plaint, mourning-song”; שִׁמְעָה “hymn”; זִמְרָה, זִמְרָה “abuse”.

IV

GENDER AND THE ASPECT OF THE WORLD

A glance at the different groups of words feminine in several Semitic languages, shows us that the early Semites attached the gender which in later times was called feminine to a great many groups of nouns which belong to different departments of nature; they comprised the universe and its parts, the luminaries, the winds, fire, female individuals, the parts of the body, instruments, vessels, dwelling-places, animal and mineral products, stones etc.

Our inquiry has shown that the linguistic phenomena connected with the nouns conveying all those ideas, are expressions of intensity. Starting from this fact, we ask: How is it that the marks of intensity are used in connection with nouns denoting nearly all parts of nature, females, weapons, instruments etc.?

In other words: Did the early Semites attach a peculiar intensity to the departments just mentioned?

The answer on this question cannot be doubtful since students of Semitic religions and ethnology have endeavoured to expound what was the aspect of life and the world among the early Semites. Robertson Smith, Wellhausen, Schwally, Doutté, Eerdmans, Pedersen and others have pointed to the fact, that the literary products of the Semites contain a great many reminiscences of a society which is known to the student of the history of religions. This society moved in a pre-religious sphere (that might also be called pan-religious) anterior to the adoration of personal deities, but open to the mysteries of the whole surrounding nature — the human body included — which inspired a general religious awe. For this state of mind, which was viewed from different sides by different scholars, an appropriate denomination has not been found. The terms animism, animatism, pre-animism, dynamism etc. express the chief sides of it; sufficient would only be a term comprising them all. It is precisely this state of mind in which

a particular energy or intensity, a magical power, was ascribed to the groups of nouns which we found to bear the characteristics of that linguistic intensity which, in a terminology, one-sided as the ethnological one just mentioned, is called gender.

It will, therefore, be necessary to return to the groups of "feminine" words enumerated above and to review them one by one in the light of the history of the Semitic religions. We must, however, be aware of the fact that this field is only partially known to us, just as the linguistic one. Important changes have taken place in both fields. In historical times Semitic peoples have given up the dynamistic view of life for a religious one in the usual sense of the word. This change, as will be expounded in the following pages, shows a striking likeness with the linguistic one which was mentioned several times in the course of the present monograph, viz. the transition of language from the feminine to the masculine state.

It goes without saying that neither of the two processes took a radical turn; even Yahwism and Islam did not wholly eradicate the old beliefs; some survived, others survived in a negative form. In the non-monotheistic Semitic religions the change was much less accentuated and much more like the linguistic one which, of course, was wholly unconscious. The old beliefs were not declared devoid of reality; but states and acts related to them were declared impure. It is exactly the field of the impure to which an uncommon magical power was ascribed and as such it is essentially "feminine". The domain of official religion consequently is masculine¹⁾. We have already met with an example of the twofold change. The word for "sun" proved to be feminine in the early language. In Assyrian, however, it is always masculine; it has lost its magical, "feminine" power and has passed into the "masculine" domain of religion where it has even become a God. But let us examine the different classes of femina and see what power and value were ascribed to them in the pre-religious as well as in the religious period.

As to women and female beings in general, it is hardly necessary to point to the high degree of magical energy ascribed to them, especially in connection with menstruation and childbirth²⁾.

1) Cf. Albrecht in *Z A W*, XVI, 65

2) Cf. e. g. Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique du Nord*, p. 85

All that a menstrua touches, becomes "impure" and she herself is impure for seven days¹⁾.

Unusual effusions of blood even necessitated the offering of a sacrifice²⁾. As to the period following childbirth, it is characteristic that the birth of a male child rendered the mother impure during forty days, whereas in the case of the birth of a female child the period of impurity was twice as long according to the Levitic commandment. The injunctions of the Muhammadan law concerning women during the periods of menstruation, of offusion of blood and childbirth are based upon similar views.

Owing to the unusually high magical energy ascribed to her during these periods, woman was intrinsically connected with gender, to such an extent that she alone continued to be a living power in the field of gender, when nearly all other "feminine" categories gradually ceased to be considered as such.

The extraordinary magical energy ascribed to women explains also the fact that magic rites were chiefly performed by women. In the oldest Yahwistic code it is prohibited to keep witches (Ex. XXII, 17) and Saul in his anguish has recourse to a witch (1 Sam. XXVIII). Women appear to have preserved the service of the *teraphim* (Gen. XXXV; 1 Sam. XIX), which was prohibited in later Yahwism. It is not surprising therefore, that Yahwism, which was hostile to the practices of the pre-Yahwistic time, was really a religion of men. It excluded women from priesthood, and a large part of its commandments, especially those which are concerned with the ceremonies, were obligatory for men only. This attitude has its root in the view that women by their sex are connected with magic, that they are bearers of magical energy or how it may be called.

The parts of the body. The early Semites considered the different parts of the body as seats of magical energy. This applies in the first place to the soul and the spirit. The root *n-f-s* and its derivations convey two kinds of notions: that of the blood and that of the breath. We may pass the blood in silence here. As to the breath, it was equally considered as a magical power. Snake-charmers blew upon serpents in order to keep them under their control³⁾. Blowing was practised as a

1) Leviticus XV, 9 sqq.

2) Lev. XV, 29 sq.

3) W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, I, 222

counteract against socery¹⁾. The Beduins used to blow upon their arrows if they wished to do away with their letiferous power²⁾. Muhammad says in a tradition: "If any one has a disagreeable dream, he must blow three times and say an *isti'ādha* in order to avert its evil power"³⁾. It is told by Salima that he had received a violent blow at the siege of Khaibar. "Then people brought me to Muhammad who blew upon the wound three times: I have perceived no pain evermore till the present hour"⁴⁾. It is precisely on account of the magical nature of blowing that it is prohibited during the ritual prayer⁵⁾.

In historical times, however, the soul, *nafs*, is no longer in the breath but in the blood, as it is expressly said in the Old Testament⁶⁾. The breath is in the נֶפֶשׁ, נַפְסָא, נَفْس, נَفْس, נَفْس. In Hebrew and Aramaic נֶפֶשׁ has acquired the peculiar meaning of "corpse", resp. "coffin", "stele"; this association with the dead was not of a nature to deprive the word of its magic power; for death and the dead are intrinsically connected with magical energy.

What has been said of the powers ascribed to the breath, applies also to the hand (*yad*), which, in different attitudes — closed, outspread, elevated — is a powerful magical instrument. This power has even been transferred to the divine hand which in the Old Testament and in the Koran has remained the symbol of divine power. The priests gave the community their blessing with outspread hands. In the Muhammadan books of law and tradition it is a matter of discussion how far hands may be lifted up during the ritual prayer. Goldziher has shown⁷⁾ that this gesture was considered as a means to induce the godhead to fulfil man's desire. This applies also to the fingers and their different attitudes⁸⁾.

It is only natural, in connection with what has been said above on woman as a focus of magical energy, that the word for womb (רֶחֶם, رَحِمٌ, رَحِمٌ) is feminine. It is, however, not only the sexual functions of woman to which magical energy was

1) Jastrow, *Die Religion Babylonien und Assyriens*, I, 315

2) *Ḥamāsa*, ed. Bülāq, I, 220 ult. and the commentary

3) Kaṣṭallānī, X, 143

4) Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, IV, 48; cf. 88

5) *Minḥādī al-Ṭalībīn*, ed. v. d. Berg, I, 103 59.; *Berakot* 24a, b.

6) Genesis IX, 4

7) *Zauberelemente im islamischen Gebet* in *Nöldeke-Festschrift* I, 320 sqq.

8) Goldziher, *l. c.*

ascribed, but sexual functions in general, a fact well known to ethnologists. It is reflected in the negative attitude taken by Yahwism and Islām to sexual functions; they are "impure", they necessitate ablutions to every one who comes into touch with them, in an active or in a passive way, consciously or unconsciously, wilfully or without his will; else he is not readmitted to the divine worship. In this sense sexuality is intrinsically "feminine". Even nouns denoting the masculine genitals, such as *الأنثبان* and *أحضا* are feminine.

The localisation of psychic affections in several parts of the body is another fact intimately connected with their being considered as seats of magical energy; the nose was the seat of anger, the womb that of love and compassion, the heart that of intellectual power and psychic affections in general, the kidneys that of secret thoughts. The nouns denoting the parts of the body are, however, no longer exclusively feminine; some of them have followed the general currency of language towards the masculine field. Feminine remained especially those which occur in dual¹⁾.

I have never met with an endeavour to explain this remarkable fact. It seems to me that the idea of gender as expounded in the foregoing pages affords a sufficient explanation. The duality of some parts of the body meant a reinforcement of their magical power, a heightened intensity; exactly this power enabled these nouns to resist the general tendency of the language to which many of the other nouns denoting the single parts of the body gave way.

I have called several parts of the body seats of magical energy. It has, however, to be remembered that this energy is not necessarily to be taken in an active way. It would be wrong to make here a distinction between active and passive²⁾; we cannot understand primitive ways of thought by our logical categories. Take for instance the functions of ornaments. On the one hand they serve to prevent the energy residing in several

1) *יד* „hand" is fem. in Hebrew and Aramaic; in Arabic it has also the masculine gender; cf. e. g. *مِنْ كَفِّ وَاحِدَةٍ* (Muslim, *Ṭahāra*, trad. 18) with *مِنْ كَفِّ وَاحِدٍ* (Abū Dā'ūd, *Ṭahāra*, b. 51; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, 141)

2) Cf. the interesting paper by A. C. Kruyt on the cooking-pot among the Toradja's in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederl.-Indië*, deel 74, 75, 76

parts of the body from departing and becoming lost to their possessor. On the other hand they serve to protect the part of the body to which they are applied, from evil powers seeking entrance. Finally they become bearers of magical energy themselves, through their serving as guardians to powers residing in the parts of the body or to those who seek entrance, as well as through the powerful metal from which they were made. An instance from the Bible clearly shows that in the religion of Israel they became magical objects themselves and as such were considered alien to it.

When Jacob was ordered to build an altar at Bet-el for the “*el* which had appeared to him when he fled before his brother Esau”, he had to remove all foreign gods. These gods (probably *teraphim* and the like) were brought to him, and also the “rings which were in their ears”; all these objects he buried under the tree near Sichem (Gen. XXXV, 1—4).

Still, the attitude taken by Yahwism regarding objects and products conveying magical powers, was not altogether negative. Wine and incense (לְבָנָה with the fem. ending) — to mention these only — were admitted, though with restrictions. We shall have to speak of this later.

What has been said concerning ornaments, may to a certain extent be applied to garments, which had partly the same function. They may have served in the first place to protect the genitals and the loins, seats of magical powers. Here lies one of the roots of the feeling of shame. It is worth while to observe that the antithesis between religion and magical powers, in this case in connection with sex, can be traced also in the rules which prescribe the covering of nudity to those who partake of religious worship. The Israelite priests had to wear breeches lest their nakedness should be discovered before the altar and Muslims must cover their *‘awa*, i. e. the middle part of the body, when they perform the *ṣalāt*.

Garments in general were deemed to partake of the special powers residing in those who wore them. This is shown by the commandment, that those who became defiled in a ritual sense, should not only wash their body but also their garments. The defiled state of the person is transferred upon his garments which thereby became centres of peculiar powers.

The close relation between garments and those who wear them has left remarkable traces in popular religion. It is not only the bodies and the bones of prophets and martyrs to which supernatural powers were ascribed and which were venerated, but also their garments or pieces of them, which became esteemed relics. Was not Muhammad's *burda* one of the venerated relics preserved in the imperial serail at Constantinople?

On this conception is also based the practice of hanging pieces of clothing in the branches of sacred trees, the *dhawāt anwāt*, a custom known from literature and from modern practice. The powers residing in the tree are believed to permeate the pieces of clothing hung upon it and between the latter and their owners is such an intimate connection that even these may expect a *baraka*. Elisha, requesting two parts of Eliyah's spirit, received his mantle, and people were desirous to touch the skirts of the garments of the Apostles.

The earth and its parts, the parts of the universe, winds, wells and cognate words. The earth was called "mother", a notion connected with the belief that man was a product of the earth just as cereals, plants and trees. I need not give evidence, as it has been collected and discussed by Nöldeke in his paper "Mutter Erde und Verwandtes bei den Semiten" ¹⁾.

But, apart from this conception, the earth was considered as a being full of magical power. This belief is living to the present day in customs and sayings of several populations in the Dutch Indies. In Atcheh, e. g., the first step of a child on the earth is considered ominous; it is a ceremony with a name of its own (*peutron*). In Hebrew we have the current expression "the face of the earth" which, it is true, has become obsolete, but still contains a reminiscence of the old belief that the earth was a living being; in the story of Kain and Abel the earth is said to have opened its mouth to receive the blood of the murdered. The earth is cursed, just as the serpent. The earth partakes of the sins of the people dwelling upon it (Isaiah XXIV, 5) and becomes defiled by the blood of the murdered which it drinks: "So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood, it defileth the earth: and the earth cannot be atoned for

¹⁾ *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, VIII, 1905, p. 161 sqq.

the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it" (Numbers XXXV, 33). Here is the reminiscence of the earth as a living power, which had to be reconciled when offended. This idea is also at the base of the sacrifices slain when the foundations of a building were laid.

This character of the earth explains also the gender of the words for "way", "path", "field" etc.

It is not amazing that the words for wells are feminine. These were the places where living water rose from the earth. In this connection the "Song of the Well" may be mentioned (Numbers XXI, 17, 9.) in which the fountain is addressed as if it were an animate being :

Rise up, O well, sing ye unto it.
The princes digged the well,
The nobles of the people digged it,
By the direction of the lawgiver,
With their staves ¹⁾).

With this may be compared the story of how 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib dug the well of Zamzam, according to Ibn Hishām ²⁾. It is told that a divine command, in rhymed prose, came to 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib while he slept. It was said to him :

Dig up Zamzam.
If thou diggest it, thou wilt not repent it.
It is an inheritance from thy greatest ancestor
It will never be exhausted nor rebuked
[on account of lack of water]
It will give to drink the greatest Pilgrim,
Like a light-footed ostrich, undivided
Vows will be uttered there to a benefactor
It will be an inheritance and a solid bond,
Unlike anything thou knowest.
It is between the excrements and the blood.

This oracle, although of Muhammadan origin, reflects something of the atmosphere that was around the well in the eyes of the primitive Semites.

The nether world shared the magical character of the earth in a high degree. It was a department of the earth itself and moreover the receptacle of the dead and their שׁוֹפָר, with all the

¹⁾ Authorized version.

²⁾ *Sira*, ed. Wüstenfeld, p. 91 *sqq.*

magic powers residing in them. It is also represented by the subterranean flood, *tehōm*, *ti'amtū*, *tihāma*, which is equally feminine¹⁾, not because it was personified as a female being, but just the other way round: it was personified as a female being, because it was primarily a mighty magical power which was as such feminine. It would be against all historical and geographical evidence, to believe that the population of the coast of Palestine and Syrie should have borrowed their ideas concerning Tehom from the Babylonians in the far East; neither is the word תְּהוֹם, which has an equivalent in Arabic تِهَامَة, a loanword from Babylonia. — How mighty magical powers were ascribed to the ocean appears from Job III, 8 (to be read אֲרִי יָם); where the "cursers of the ocean" are mentioned.

Just as the earth and the nether world, the third part of the Universe, heaven, was to the primitive Semites the focus of magic powers manifesting themselves in the winds, the clouds, rain and other phenomena. The word for heaven سَمَاء is, therefore, feminine in Arabic. In Hebrew and Aramaic this form has been provided with terminations which brought about a likeness with the dual, resp. the plural. We need not discuss these forms here; שָׁמַיִם is masculine; Syriac ܫܡܝܐ has partly retained its original gender. The linguistic process again goes hand in hand with a religious one. Heaven has become, in several Semitic religions, the special dwelling-place of a God, and as such it did no longer belong to the feminine department.

That, however, also the North-Semitic peoples have been acquainted with the feminine character of heaven, does not only appear from its being *communis generis* in Syriac, but also from the fact that the nouns denoting parts of the sky are still feminine in the North-Semitic languages (see above, p. 27), some of them only having become *communis generis*. It is not difficult for us to understand the importance and the influence ascribed to the different parts of heaven by the primitive Semites, also because their literatures have preserved many features which give us the clue to more archaic conceptions. Life as such appears to have been directed towards the East. East is what is before man (קֶדֶם), West what is behind his back (دُبُور), South what is to his

1) תְּהוֹם is also masculine in the younger parts of the Old Testament.

right (צָמַח, צְמִיחַ), North what is to his left (שְׂמאל). The importance attached to the East appears further from the fact that Paradise was localised in this direction and that the East has remained the sacred part of heaven, the *kibla*, for the Essenes and Eastern Christians. The importance attached to the parts of heaven appears further from the fact that sometimes sanctuaries were constructed with their front towards the East, as well as from the commandment, that several sacred actions at the altar had to be performed on spots lying North, South, East or West of the altar. These commandments are only reminiscences of the importance which had once been attached to the parts of heaven as centres of magic powers which exercised influence on man, and towards which man could not take an indifferent attitude.

Magical energy was likewise ascribed to the wind which is therefore feminine. It may be observed that the Hebrew word for wind, רֵיחַ, denotes the wind as well as that part of man which is commonly translated by spirit. The form رُح has been taken over by the Muslim technical religious language in this sense as well as in that of a divine epithet or hypostasis, whereas the cognate form رِيح has retained the sense of wind. Wind, rain and clouds are still considered with the greatest awe in Muslim theology. In *hadith* it is repeatedly said that Muhammad uttered an *اعوذ بالله* when he saw the clouds gathering, and that he prohibited people from disdaining the wind ¹⁾.

It goes without saying that the same energy was ascribed to the moon and, in a heightened degree, to the sun and to fire. As we have seen ²⁾ the words for fire are feminine in the Semitic languages. We have also ³⁾ observed, that the words for sun and moon are gradually passing from the feminine field to the masculine. They are an illustration of the religious process which takes its course from the common magical sphere towards the religious one, a mental process, to which the linguistic, from the feminine to the masculine gender, runs parallel.

We must return to the earth again. As has been seen, the words denoting its parts ("way", "path" etc.) share its feminine character. Though the tendency towards the masculine has

1) "Do not disdain the wind, for it is from Allāh's *rūḥ*", Ibn Mādja, *Adab*, b. 29

2) above, p. 29

3) above p. 28 *sq.*

overpowered cognate words such as Hebrew מְדִינָה , old characteristic terms such as نَوَى , have retained their original gender. We have seen that this word has acquired the meaning of "fixed abode". It is not certain whether analogy with the earth determined the gender of this word. Certain is, however, that the words for places of abode¹⁾ are usually feminine; it is doubtless the peculiar, mysterious character of human dwelling-places which accounts for their gender. Every student of Arabic remembers the feelings the vestiges of encampments aroused in the poets of the desert; we can easily imagine that they were considered as seats of magical energy, they as well as tents, houses, towns and markets. In the historical stage of the Semitic languages those archaic conceptions are no longer in an integral way reflected in the gender of the nouns denoting those things. The words for tent (بَيْت , أَهْل) have already adopted the masculine gender²⁾; a trace of the original gender of the word for "house" may, however, have been preserved in Assyrian, where *bitu* is communis generis. Dwelling upon the magical character of the house would take us too far; I may remind the reader only of the rites of atonement of the house, of the peculiar apotropaic signs made on it, especially in the critical periods of the year such as spring, autumn etc.³⁾

In this connection one of the sayings ascribed to Muhammad is of importance: "Bad luck is in three only, in horses, women and houses"⁴⁾. The translation of شوم by "bad luck" is, however, not adequate; it is well nigh impossible to render the Arabic word by a modern term. It implies all that is ominous and akin to the mysterious powers which dominate human life; as such it is intimately connected with the pre-religious conception of life. The saying probably belongs to the old popular *dictons* which had currency in early Arabia, for it does not point in any respect to a Muhammadan origin. It is noteworthy that just those

1) See above, p. 29 sq.

2) قُبَّة , خَيْمَة have assumed the fem. ending.

3) More has been said on this subject in *Arabic New-Year and the Feast of Tabernacles* in *Verh. Kon. Ak. v. Wetensch.*, XVI, 2, p. 33 sqq.

4) Bukhāri, *Djihād*, b. 47 and other loci: $\text{إِنَّمَا الشُّومُ فِي ثَلَاثَةٍ فِي الْفَرَسِ وَالْمَرْأَةِ وَالْدَّارِ}$

three which according to the saying are connected with *shu'm*, are feminine.

The magical character of the house is further attested by the magical bowls with inscriptions¹⁾ which were placed in the corners of the house in order to expel or to avert demoniac influences. It must, however, be remembered that demons are no impersonal magical powers; demonology has partly been incorporated in theology and, consequently, does not usually bear a feminine gender. It must be looked upon as a remnant of an earlier phase of thought and as such it contains important indications. In many sayings and traditions the word "Satan" seems to point to conceptions such as *shu'm* and cognate ideas.

It is only natural that towns and their parts were viewed in the same light as houses. Muslim tradition has again preserved traces of old conceptions. Salmān said: "Be not the first, if possible, to enter the market, nor the last to leave it, for it is the battlefield of Satan where his standard is erected"²⁾. This tradition has wholly been transferred from the pre-religious into the theological world of thought; Satan has taken the place of *شوم* and the explanation of the commentator al-Nawawī is to the point that the market where all kinds of dishonest practices try their chance, is the place where people become the victims of Satan. In other traditions it is said that markets are hated by Allah to the same degree as mosques are beloved by him³⁾ and it is, therefore, advisable to say a *du'ā'* when entering them⁴⁾.

All this betrays the archaic canvas behind the Muslim picture. Feelings regarding the market as those just mentioned apparently prevailed not only in Arabia; they have left traces in the gender of cognate words in other Semitic languages (*ḥḥb* *abullu*).

What has been said on dwelling-places may, to a certain extent, also be applied to vessels and cognate instruments. It is natural that the ship was viewed in the same light as the house

1) J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (Philadelphia, 1913)

2) Muslim, *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥāba*, t. 100: لا تكونن أن استنطعت أول من يدخل السوق ولا آخر من يخرج منها فإنها معركة الشيطان وبها ينصب رأيتنه

3) Muslim, *Masājid*, t. 288; Ibn Mādja, *Tidjārāt*, b. 40; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* I, 457; IV, 81

4) Tirmidhī, *Da'awāt*, b. 36

and that words for "ship" are feminine. As to vessels, there are several sayings in *ḥadīth* which accentuate their relation with Satan. "Cover your vessels, provide your skins with a rope, close your doors and extinguish lamps, for Satan cannot disclose a skin nor open a door nor uncover a vessel; and if ye are only able to lay a piece of wood on your vessel and to pronounce the name of Allāh, ye must do this" ¹⁾. In an other tradition ²⁾ the commandment is based upon the conception that there is one night in the year, in which the *wabā'* (epidemics) enters into every uncovered vessel. It is clear that Satan and *wabā'* are interchangeable terms, specialisations of the primitive impersonal magical power. At the end of the former of the two traditions just mentioned, the commandment to extinguish lamps is based thereon that the *fuwaisika* (something like "little evil one", feminine) enters the open door and sets the house afire. In other traditions the term *fuwaisika* (or *fāsik*) is applied to certain animals which may be killed even in the *ḥaram*. This is again an instance of the various special meanings which have developed from the primitive impersonal conception. It would be significative that in the traditions mentioned Satan and epidemics are interchangeable ideas, if it were not so well known that illnesses were considered as demoniacal and magical powers. It was already remarked that the names of many illnesses have feminine or intensive forms ³⁾.

As to vessels and the importance attached to them, it may be allowed to me to refer another time to A. C. Kruyt's paper ⁴⁾ as well as to mention the custom to smash a man's kettle and plate on his tomb, a custom prevalent in early Arabia ⁵⁾. This custom may be based on the belief that there is a connection between these objects and the life of their possessor; I do not venture to say anymore of it.

Instruments and weapons. It is only natural in the train of thought described in these pages that instruments and weapons, those powerful helpers of man in his struggle with nature and his enemies, always ready to destroy the life or to spill the blood of anyone who handles them carelessly, were

1) Muslim *Ashriba*, tr. 96 2) l. c., tr. 99

3) See above, p. 14

4) See above, p. 38, note 2

5) Freytag, *Einleitung in das Studium der arab. Sprache*, p. 223 refers to *Ḥamāsa*, p. 17¹²

deemed to be seats of magical energy. War and warriors in general bore a sacred character; we are acquainted with several taboos of warriors. In the religion of Israel the peculiar state of warriors was consecrated to a certain extent at least. Yahwe was or became the lord of war. On the other hand weapons had to be kept out of the sacred territory and it seems doubtful whether the warrior to whom his own house was taboo, was allowed to enter the sanctuary. Perhaps this ambiguous state of things is reflected in the fact that some proper names of weapons are feminine (صَبَاةٌ), others masculine (ذو الفقار).

The magical influence once ascribed to weapons survives in some Muhammadan traditions; it is prohibited to pass on a sword without its sheath¹⁾ or to turn the point of any weapon in the direction of one's fellow-brother²⁾. Of course such prohibitions have a strong tendency to be rationalised as e. g. in the tradition according to which it is prohibited to pass through a mosque or a market with uncovered arrows "lest anyone be hurt"³⁾.

In some forms of these traditions, however, the old pattern of thought still shines through the Muslim dress. "Who directs an iron weapon against his brother, the angels curse him till he has laid it down, even if he should direct it against his brother by paternal and maternal descent"⁴⁾. This latter clausula as well as the words "till he has laid it down" imply that there can be no question of murderous intention; the fact that the murderous weapon is held in the direction of any person, causes curse on the part of the angels. Why? This is said in an other redaction of the same *ḥadīth*⁵⁾: "For it may be that Satan will impel his hand, and he would fall into one of the pits of Hell". Again we find "Satan" as the Muslim translation of the power we have called "magical energy". The tradition shows in a striking way how the Muhammadan eye looks upon the magic domain as a battlefield between supernatural powers. The expression "for it may be that Satan will impel his hand" is interesting also because it shows a striking analogy to a similar expression applied to a similar case in the Old Testament.

1) Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, III, 300, 347

2) *o. c.*, II, 256, 505

3) Muslim, *Kitāb al-Birr wa 'l-Ṣīla*, t. 120 and al-Nawawī's commentary

4) Muslim, *Birr*, t. 125

5) N° 126

In the Book of the Covenant (Ex. XXII, 12 sq.) it is said that the intentional murderer must be killed. If there was, however, no intention but "God gave occasion to the hand of the slayer" the later may flee to an asylum. Here it is God who "impels the hand" that holds the weapon, and it is God who reigns over the magical powers. It must, however, be observed that in the Hebrew text the archaic expression האלהים is used, which in several cases denotes supernatural powers which are not identical with the national God Yahwe¹⁾. The Law of the Covenant represents a stage in the religion of Israel in which Elohim and Yahwe have not yet been identified and in which the struggle between the two powers has not yet ended with the final victory of Yahwe²⁾. Even in the first Book of Samuel (XXVIII) אלהים is still applied to the souls of the dead in Sheol, a territory which always remained foreign to Yahwism. Even in early Syriac literature death and Sheol are ungodly powers.

As has been shown, the attitude taken by official religion towards magical powers was not uniform. The relation between wine and divine worship is another instance. The Nazarite was bound to abstain from wine absolutely, the priest immediately before he administered the sacred rites³⁾, "lest he should die"⁴⁾. In the course of time, however, the libation of wine became one of the constituent parts of the daily service⁵⁾. Islam prohibits wine. From the Koran it appears that one of the grounds which induced Muhammad to issue the prohibition, was the trouble during the *ṣalāt* by people who had indulged too much in the use of the appreciated liquor. It seems, however, not out of place to suppose that the primeval antithesis between wine and worship has been a cooperating factor.

The words denoting wine in several Semitic languages are masculine. This fact shows anew that these languages in their historical period do no longer reflect the old conception of gender; it is only mutilated remnants we are dealing with. Yet in the present case a trace of the conception has been preserved

1) See e. g. Ex. XXI, 6, XXII, 7

2) See especially Ex. XXII, 19 where sacrifices to האלהים are prohibited, those to Yahwe are lawful only

3) Lev. X, 9

4) Cf. Eerdmans, *Alttestamentliche Studien*, IV, 56 sq.

5) Exodus XXIX, 40

in the gender of Arabic خمر which is feminine. If the word should belong to the genuine stock of Arabic, this would make it probable that the word was feminine in the primitive Semitic language as well. Guidi, however, has forwarded the view that it was a loanword in Arabic, borrowed from Aramaic¹). If this opinion is right, the word must have been borrowed at a time when it was still feminine in Aramaic.

That the usual Hebrew word for wine, יַיִן, is masculine, need not take wonder, its original meaning being not that of "wine" but of "black grapes".

The names of animal products, parts of trees and plants, stones and minerals. As to the gender of stones (Hebrew אֲבִנִּים, Aramaic حֲבָאִים are fem., Assyrian *abnu* is comm. gen.), it is hardly necessary to point to the importance attached to stones by the early Semites. In this case again, Yahwism did not at once abolish the old rites; the *maššeba* (with the fem. ending) is not abhorred in early Yahwism; the black stone is kissed by Muslims till the present day.

That honey was considered as a product with a magical working, may appear from its being enumerated in Muhammadan tradition among the three things from which healing was expected²).

Salt was one of the constituent parts of meals and sacrifices; "there is bread and salt between them" is still the usual expression for the sacred relation between a man and his guest; salt was also a symbol of utter destruction (Judges IX, 45); the Salt Sea was looked upon as an infernal place and at present salt is used in several magical rites³). These references may suffice here; I could easily augment them.

The feminine gender of words denoting parts of plants and trees can be understood as an outflow of the magical, mysterious character of the growing and budding of plants and trees and the ripening of harvest.

It is well known that the ripening harvest gives rise to several taboes among many peoples; Professor Eerdmans has endea-

1) In his *Della sede primitiva dei popoli semitici* in *Memorie della R. Ac. dei Lincei*, ser. III, vol. III

2) e. g. Bukhārī, *Tibb*, b. 3

3) Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique du Nord*, p. 64, 118; Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, Paisley and London 1899, p. 259, 261

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voured to explain the prohibition of leaven during the Feast of Maṣṣot as such a taboo¹⁾. It may be called probable that in the corn-producing parts of Syria harvest-time was once connected with characteristic rites and it is only natural that the ear as the "mother of corn" was also feminine.

As to the names of letters (fem. in Arabic and Syriac) and words as such (feminine in Arabic), it is difficult to say whether their gender is based upon that of *كلمة*, *آية* and synonymous terms or whether it is due to the magical character ascribed to words and to their expression in script. It may be observed, that many denominations of words of portentous meaning have a feminine termination in the Semitic languages²⁾. This applies also to several denominations of songs in Syriac. Even now music and song have retained something of the magical character once ascribed to them by the Semitic peoples; it is no doubt on this ground that official religion has always looked upon them as upon something to be admitted very cautiously only; *Ghazālī* and *Bar Hebraeus* hold the view that mystics may make use of them with great caution only³⁾. Islām prohibits the use of the human voice in musical performances; instrumental music is not under an equally severe verdict⁴⁾. The performance of the two female singers in which 'Ā'isha indulged on a day of festival, is styled "develish music" by *Abū Bakr*⁵⁾. In the *Mé'arrat Gazzē*, the Syriac legendary biblical history, it is said that the vices which spread among the generation of the deluge, were chiefly due to their musical performances⁶⁾.

Names of species of animals. The difficulties presenting themselves to our inquiry are paramount in the names of animals. Domestic animals are in many cases denoted by special words for the male and the female. In Arabic the word for horse has preserved the original gender of the species. As it has been seen, the ground for the feminine gender is still indicated by the *ḥadīth*: "Bad luck is in women, houses and horses only". Camels are often connected with demons. According to a tradition ritual

1) *Nöldeke-Festschrift*, p. 67, sqq.

2) Above, p. 34

3) See *Bar Hebraeus's Book of the Dove*, Leiden 1919, p. 118 sqq.

4) See *Snouck Hurgronje, Islam und Phonograph, Verspr. Geschr.*, II, 419 sqq.

5) *Bukhārī, Manāḥib al-Anṣār*, b. 46; *Muslim, Ḍā'ir*, t. 19

6) ed. *Bezold*, p. 58 sqq.

prayer may be performed in hurdles of cattle, not in those of camels "for camels are demoniac" ¹⁾).

The word for camels, إبل, is feminine in Arabic; but it cannot be decided whether it owes this gender to its being a collective noun without a *nomen unitatis*, or to the magical character ascribed to the species.

The Semitic languages possess two words for the ass, one (حمار) for the male, one (اتان) for the female. The more remarkable it is, that also the former is construed as a feminine in a tradition which accentuates the animal's demoniac character ²⁾ In the same tradition the cock, usually called ديك, is called ديكة with the feminine termination: "If you hear the crowing of the cock, you must pray for Allāh's bounty, for it has seen an angel" ³⁾. It is only due to chance, that such instances have been preserved; they entitle us to conjecture that the animal world as a whole, because of its being looked upon as the playfield of magical powers, was "feminine". Arabic حَبَّة "serpent" has the feminine termination; Aramaic ܡܡܠܐ has become masculine; in the plural it has the feminine termination; Hebrew no longer uses the word; it has adopted the denominative נחש.

The peculiar awe and horror with which the animal world was once considered, which was lessened to some extent by the domestication of some species, have left a remarkable trace in the distinction between pure and impure animals in the religion of Israel. In the Bible some criteria are given for the distinction between the two kinds (Lev. XI and Deut. XIV). Some of them seem highly artificial; the line of demarcation runs, generally speaking, between domestic animals, game and fishes on one side and beasts of prey, reptiles and the like on the other. Of domestic animals, however, the camel, the horse, the ass, the dog and the swine are impure. — In Muhammadan tradition no such strict rules are given; as to the domestic ass, the dog, the swine there is a strong verdict; on the horse, the lizard, the hare contradictory opinions are given; from this fact may be concluded

1) e. g. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, IV, 85

2) Bukhārī, *Bad' al-khalk*, b. 15: وإذا سمعتم نهيق الحمار فتعوذوا بالله من الشيطان
فإنها رأت شيطاناً

3) *l.c.*: إذا سمعتم صياح الديكة فاسألوا الله من فضله فإنها رأت ملكاً

that the popular view on this point was not uniform, in other words that the archaic feelings were fading away. Traces of old beliefs are still found in connections between some animals and *djinn*, as mentioned in Arabic literature ¹⁾.

V

CONCLUSION

The data discussed in the foregoing pages show that the ideas underlying the distinction of gender underwent important changes in historical times. They culminated therein that sex finally became the only criterion of gender common to all Semitic languages. This state of things is the result of a long process the outlines of which we have endeavoured to trace in several languages.

A comparison between the groups of words feminine by meaning in the different Semitic languages, induced us to conjecture that there was a time when persons, animals, objects, natural phenomena etc. to which a heightened magical energy was ascribed, were given the grammatical influence which we call feminine.

This means that our linguistic inquiry goes back to the phase of Semitic thought which has been discovered and elucidated by students of Semitic religions during the last fifty years. So there appeared to exist an intimate connection between gender and the "pre-religious", dynamistic phase of religion.

I am well aware of the fact that gender may have presented itself under different aspects. It is one of the merits of Féghali and Cuny that they have pointed to a phase of language in which gender did not yet exercise the grammatical influence which became characteristic for it in historical times. The present paper only touched this phase ²⁾, our scope being the elucidation of a later one. What I hope is only this that my results may afford a base for future research.

1) Cf. Goldziher, *Abh. z. arab. Philologie*, I, 207 sqq.

2) See above, p. 23 sq.

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