

and doubtless they were known in many other areas from which, however, no evidence of their presence has survived. We have no evidence as to when they arrived in N. Arabia, but it was possibly at an early period.<sup>1</sup> Arabian legend places their first settlements there in the time of Moses and Aaron.<sup>2</sup> Acts ii, 11, would seem to indicate that there were settlements of them there at the commencement of the Christian era, and in the Mishna (Shabb. vi, 6)<sup>3</sup> we have fairly reliable evidence of early settlements in that area.<sup>4</sup> It has been frequently suggested that the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 drove many Jewish families to seek refuge in N. Arabia, and thus added to the importance of the communities already settled there.<sup>5</sup>

There were Jewish settlements also in S. Arabia.<sup>6</sup> Whether they were founded by Jews who had followed the spice road from N. Arabia,<sup>7</sup> or by traders who had crossed from Egypt or Abyssinia,<sup>8</sup> it is impossible now to say. Perhaps there were communities there from both these centres of trade. That they exercised no little religious influence there is indicated both by the Jewish imprint on many of the S. Arabian religious inscriptions,<sup>9</sup> and by the fact that we have very consistent tradition as to the conversion of one of the Himyarite kings to Judaism.<sup>10</sup> It was the persecution of the Christian communities by this proselyte Dhū Nawās, or Masrūq, which was said to have led to the Axumite invasion and occupation of S. Arabia.

The polemic of the Qur'ān itself is sufficient evidence of the importance of the Jews as a religious body in the community to which Muḥammad addressed his message. As, however, these Arabian Jews all bear Arab names, are organized in tribes on the Arab fashion, and, when we meet them in the literature, act and talk like genuine Arabs, some have thought that they were not real Jews but Arab

<sup>1</sup> Torrey, *Foundation*, 10 ff., argues for a considerable settlement of expatriated Jews in Taima as early as the sixth century B.C.

<sup>2</sup> *Aghānī*, xix, 94.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. fol. 65a.

<sup>4</sup> Notice also that there are numerous Arabic words and Arabisms in the Mishna, cf. Margoliouth, *Schweich Lectures*, p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> Caetani, *Annali*, i, 383; Leszynsky, *Die Juden in Arabien*, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Aghānī*, xiii, 121.

<sup>7</sup> Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, p. 1; Wellhausen, *Reste*, 230.

<sup>8</sup> Caetani, *Studi*, i, 261.

<sup>9</sup> Margoliouth, *op. cit.*, 67 ff., thinks there is some doubt about this, but see *MW*, xix, 13.

<sup>10</sup> Moberg, *Book of the Himyarites*, xlii ff.; Fell in *ZDMG*, xxxv, 1-74; Ibn Hishām, 20 ff.; at Ṭabarī, *Annales*, i, 918 ff.; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, i, 129.