APPENDIX FOUR: BENJAMIN OF TUDELA ON THE JEWISH PRESENCE IN NORTHERN ARABIA

[...] we have traveled on the road of the land that is called Land of the Right next to the Land of the Left against the north. And they walked twenty days in the wilderness, and there were Jews called Gibb, and Gibb was the leader of their community, and there was Hanno the president under them. And it was a large city and they walked sixty days between the mountains of the north. And they had large cities and in them were no Gentiles and they walked in large cities and in them were no Jews that feared them and in them were farmers and those who possessed. And their land extended in all directions, and among them were sages and they gave abundance to all that they had to the sages who resided in the house of study, and the poor of the people were barren of Zion and barren of Jerusalem and they did not eat flesh and they did not drink wine, and they were dressed in black, and they sat in caves or hid, and they suffered all day except the Sabbath. And they asked in the houses of prayer before the Most High to have mercy on the exiles of Israel that he may have mercy on them for his great name, and all the Jews of Gibb, and the city of the great king that is like a hundred thousand Jews and there was Solomon the president, and a relative of Hanno the president, and between the two brothers the land, and they are of the house of David as is written, they have them and they send many questions to the chief of the exiles in Baghdad and they question forty days a year about the Jews residing in the exiles and there is like forty-states and hundreds between the cities and enclosures and the heads of the state conditions. And there is in each country like three hundred thousand Jews and a city of the condition, like so many thousands of Gibb, and in it were sages and people strong in war with the people of the Left and the North land next to them that was the beginning of the land of India.
Translation:

[70] From this place it is a journey of twenty-one days by way of the deserts to the land of Sheba, which is called the land of al-Yaman, lying at the side of the land of Shin’ar which is towards the North. Here dwell the Jews called Khaybar, the men of Teima. And Teima is their seat of government where R. Ḥannan the Prince rules over them. It is a great city, and the extent of their land is sixteen days’ journey. It is surrounded by mountains—the mountains of the north. The Jews own many large fortified cities. The yoke of the Gentiles is not upon them. They go forth to pillage and to capture booty from distant lands in conjunction with the Arabs, their neighbors and allies. These Arabs dwell in tents, and they make the desert their home. They own no houses, and they go forth to pillage and to capture booty in the land of Shin’ar and al-Yaman. All the neighbors of these Jews go in fear of them. Among them are husbandmen and owners of cattle; their land is extensive, and they have in their midst learned and wise men. They give the tithe of all they possess unto the scholars who sit in the house of learning, also to poor Israelites and to the recluses, who are the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem, and who do not eat meat nor taste wine, and sit clad in garments of black. They dwell in caves or underground houses, [71] and fast each day with exception of the Sabbaths and Festivals, and implore the mercy of the Holy one, blessed be He, on account of the exile of Israel, praying that He may take pity upon them, and upon all the Jews, the men of Teima. For the sake of His great Name, also upon Ṭīlmas the great city, in which there are about 100,000 Jews. At this place lived Salmon the Prince, the brother of Ḥannan the Prince; and the land belongs to the two brothers, who of the seed of David. For they have their pedigree in writing. They address many questions unto the Exilarch—their kinsman in Baghdād—and they fast forty days in the year for the Jews that dwell in exile.

There are here about forty large towns and 200 hamlets and villages. The principal city is Tannai, and in all the districts together there are about 300,000 Jews. The city of Tannai is well fortified, and in the midst thereof the people sow and reap. It is fifteen miles in extent. Here is the palace of the Prince called Salmon. And in Teima dwells Ḥannan the Prince, his brother. It is a beautiful city, and contains gardens and plantations. [72] And Ṭīlmas is likewise a great city; it contains about 100,000 Jews. It is well fortified, and is situated between two high mountains. There are wise, discreet, and rich men amongst the inhabitants. From Ṭīlmas