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Hamdānids (Yemen)

The **Hamdānids** were the Ismāʿīlī polity ruling Ṣanʿāʾ and the surrounding regions between 492/1099 and the Ayyūbid invasion in 570/1174. There were three successive independent dynasties: Banū Ḥātim I, Banū l-Qubayb, and Banū Ḥātim II. The Hamdānids are often referred to also as the Banū Ḥātim (or Ḥātimids) and are not to be confused with the Syrian Ḥamdānids (written with *ḥā*).

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Following the end of the Yuʿfirid dynasty (r. 232–387/847–998), Ṣanʿāʾ was fought over for decades by the elites of the surrounding tribes, with occasional incursions by Zaydī Imāms. The Zaydīs only rarely produced Imāms capable of raising forces sufficient to take Ṣanʿāʾ, and the city and nearby districts had no centralised state power. Only limited Ismāʿīlī activity persisted in the western mountains after the first, strong push of Ismāʿīlism in Yemen represented by the activities of Ibn Ḥawshab Maṣṣūr al-Yaman (d. 302/914) and Ibn al-Faḍl (d. 303/915); a notable example is the

Zawāḥī family based in Shibām, where Sulaymān b. ʿAbdallāh held the position of Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* (scholar-summoner representative of the *Imām*). In 439/1047 this fragmented political situation changed, with the sudden appearance on the political scene of ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayḥī from Ḥarāz, as well as his Ismāʿīlī *daʿwa* (mission) and Fāṭimid support. He was a chief *dāʿī* who also took the title of sultan, and his army and tribal allies managed, within a few years, to take large parts of Yemen, including Aden, and the coastal areas, even north to Mecca. He did, however, meet much resistance in the highlands north of Ṣanʿāʾ from various local tribes, especially the descendants of the Zaydī Imām al-Qāsim al-ʿIyānī based in Shahāra (called al-Ashrāf al-Qāsimiyyūn, al-Qāsimiyya or al-Ḥusayniyya), as well as the eponym of the Zaydī Ḥamzawiyya/Ḥamza-clan, Ḥamza b. Abī Ḥāshim (d. 459/1067). ʿAlī al-Ṣulayḥī (d. 459/1066 or possibly 473/1080–1) founded the Ṣulayḥid state and dynasty, and his stronghold were the tribal lands south of Ṣanʿāʾ and the fortresses of the western mountains between Taʿizz and Ṣanʿāʾ. He also relied on Yāmī forces from lands north of

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