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JILLALI EL ADNANI

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Hilāl, Banū

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The **Banū Hilāl** were an Arab tribe in the Najd at the beginning of Islam. They were descended from the mythical Hilāl; their lineage is Muḍar → Ẓays 'Aylān → Khaṣafa → 'Ikrima → Maṣṣūr → Hawāzin → Bakr → Mu'āwiya → Ṣa'ṣa'a → 'Amir → Hilāl. The Banū Hilāl were divided into three main branches, the Zughba, the Riyāḥ, and al-Athbāj. They were located primarily in the Najd, in the centre of the Arabian Peninsula (al-Idrīsī, 145; Saada, 141), although drought sometimes induced them to emigrate to Iraq and Syria, where they carried out raids. They were not amongst the first Arab tribes to convert to Islam and even rebelled after the death of the Prophet.

In the early fourth/tenth century, the Banū Hilāl joined the revolt of the Qarmatians against the 'Abbāsids in northeastern Arabia and may have participated in the looting of Mecca in 317/929 (Galley and Ayoub, 15). At the end of the fourth/tenth century, after the conquest of Egypt by the Fāṭimids and their victory over the Qarmatians, the Banū Hilāl were forcibly moved to al-Ṣa'īd, in the area of Luxor in

Upper Egypt, in order to separate them from the Qarmatians (Galley, 75).

1. ARRIVAL IN THE MAGHRIB

The arrival of the Banū Hilāl in the Maghrib is presented by the sources as a Fāṭimid punishment. After several years of strained relations, the Zīrid ruler al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs (r. 406-54/1016-62) decided in 440/1048-9 to declare his independence in Ifrīqiyya, to adopt Sunnism, and henceforth to recognise the 'Abbāsids (al-Tijānī, 17; Ibn Khaldūn, 4:75). This prompted the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mustansir (r. 427-87/1035-94), advised by his *wazīr* Abū Muḥammad al-Yāzūrī (d. 450/1058), to send the Banū Hilāl, at that time settled in al-Ṣa'īd, to the Maghrib. Although the Banū Hilāl were paying taxes (*a'shār*) to the Fāṭimids in Egypt (al-Bakrī, 1:153), they were apparently difficult to manage (Hamet, 243; Marçais, 193). It is said that up to fifty thousand left Egypt for the Maghrib; the most important members of the tribe received property titles (*iqṭā'*) (Lacoste, 95).

Of the three divisions of the tribe, the Zughba conquered Barqa and then Tripoli in 446/1054, while the Riyāḥ continued west to Ifrīqiyya, where they initially agreed to serve al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs before turning against him and attacking his lands. This was due to a misunderstanding between al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs and the leader of the Riyāḥ, Mu'nis b. Yaḥyā. The *Geste hilalienne* (the main historical source for these events; see below), however, ascribes the conflict to a confrontation between the Banū Hilāl and a leader of the Zanāta and does not mention tensions with al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs (Berque, 102). Although the identity of the leader of the Zanāta is uncertain, he is sometimes identified as Abū Ṣu'da (d. mid-fifth/eleventh century), who