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Hāshid

Hāshid is the name of a set of tribes in northern Yemen. In genealogies from the Islamic period, Hāshid and Bakil appear as brothers descended from Hamdān b. Zayd, and Hamdān had been the name of the leading Hāshid family before Islam. The fourth/tenth-century account of the geographer and genealogist al-Ḥasan al-Hamdānī (d. 334/945) suggests complex layering of identity. Khārif, for example, now a major Hāshid tribe, is depicted as widely scattered rather than a discrete entity, yet Khārif sent a delegation to the prophet Muḥammad. Until at least the early seventh/thirteenth century most of Khārif's present-day territory was identified with a tribe named al-Ṣayad, which itself later figures as one of the three sections of Khārif.

The four major Hāshid tribes in the post-mediaeval period are Khārif, al-ʿUṣaymāt, ʿIdhar, and Banī Ṣuraym, which between them occupy most of the area between ʿAmrān and Ḥūth. Al-ʿUṣaymāt's territory contains much of the area of al-Baṭana, west of Ḥūth, where run-off from the mountains allows

intensive sorghum cultivation. At all periods, however, the Hāshid tribes depended largely on rain-fed farming and were thus vulnerable to drought. All four of the tribes mentioned were repeatedly in alliance or dispute with non-tribal rulers, often over control of richer land elsewhere in Yemen. In recent times Sanḥān (originally seen as part of Madhḥij), Hamdān Ṣanʿā, and Bilād al-Rūs have also been considered Hāshidi.

The Hāshid tribes are less extensive than those of Bakil but have often been more coherent politically. The al-Aḥmar family, from al-ʿUṣaymāt, have been recognised as paramount *shaykhs* (sing., *shaykh al-mashāyikh*) since the early twelfth/eighteenth century. The grave of ʿAlī b. Qāsim al-Aḥmar (d. 1140/1727), probably the second of the al-Aḥmar line, is at al-Khamrī, near Ḥūth. The family was prominent throughout the nineteenth century. The recognition of Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad Ḥamīd al-Dīn as Zaydī *imām* in 1904 is said to have owed much to the support he received from Nāṣir b. Mabkhūt al-Aḥmar.

In 1960 Imām Aḥmad, who had succeeded his father, Yaḥyā, as *imām* in 1948,

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