# Fez, the Capital of the Idrisid State (172-375 Ah/788-985 Ad)

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### **Abstract**

The Idrisid state is one of the Islamic Maghreb countries (172 - 375 AH / 788 - 985 AD), specifically in the Far Maghreb. It is centrally distinguished from the center of the caliphate in the East and from the neighboring countries in the Islamic Maghreb, so they established the city of Fez to be the metropolis of the Idrisids. In this study, we will explain the most important measures taken by the school to establish their capital (Fez), and this study is summarized in two sections after the introduction or the summary. After discussing opinions in this regard, the second topic dealt with the real founder of the city of Fez and also dealt with during this second section the demographic structure of the community of Fez, so that the most important results come after it and then a list of the margins that included the sources and references.

**Keywords**: Fez, Islamic Maghreb Countries, Idrisid State, Al-Hamra.

The First Topic: The Geographical Scope of Fez and The Origin of The Name. First. Geographical Scope

## 1- Fez Location.

Fez is located within the geographical boundaries of the fourth region in relation to the seven regions, so the length can be ten degrees and sixty minutes, and the width is thirty-three degrees. The Atlantic Ocean is in the south. Thus, Fez has been characterized by an important geographical location that many Islamic cities had only a few of them. As a result of the distinguished location of Fez, it has come to dominate the trade routes that pass through its territory, and this is an important feature that added to Fez a great economic importance that was reflected in the society of Fez and the state's revenues as well. The city of Fez has other cities with which it was linked administratively, such as the city of Basra, which is located north of Fez, which was characterized by its abundance of plantations and bounties. In addition to its wide pastures, it was known by different names, such as Basra Linen, given that its people traded most of the linen, and also its soil was red, so Basra was called Al-Hamra. Between them, two horses fell on a white fold, famous for their abundance of crops and bounties. As for the east, Fez borders the city of Taza, which was known for its abundance of bounties and crops as well, and was famous for its large mountains.

## 2- Topography and Climate of Fez

Fez is characterized by clear natural terrain, as mountains surround it on all sides, as it is bordered to the west by the Sais plain. Its northern borders ended with the Zalg Mountains, while its southern borders ended with the Vasar Mountains. On the east side, Fez was bordered by the Mediouna hills, which connect to the south with the Dern Mountains. As for Mount Atghat and Mount Zerhoun, they border Fez from the west. As for the climate of Fez, this becomes clear. If we review the geographical location of Fez, we find that the most important characteristic of the climate of Fez is the characteristic of the temperate climate and the pleasant climate in all cases.

## Second. The Origin of The Name and The Reasons for Choosing the Place.

# 1- The original name.

Fez is one of the cities of the Far Maghreb and is written as Fatah Alfa, then Alif and Sein neglected, and Fez is also one of the Arab Islamic cities of foundation and emergence. After this brief definition of the city of Fez, it is necessary to get acquainted with the most prominent opinions of the people who named Fez by this name. There is an opinion that Idris II (177-213 AH / 793-828 AD) when the construction work began in Fez, he had participated in the construction of workers and masons, which prompted some It is close to making an ax out of silver for Idris bin Abdullah to use in construction, but this narration or opinion does not stand up to objective criticism, because Idris the First was known for his piety, knowledge and asceticism, and this contradicts these tolerant values. It is also said that Idris, when construction work was going on in the city. It is said that those close to Idris asked Idris what its content was, what do we call the city? Idris said, "Name itafter the name of the first person who will pass us by in this situation." A man passed by and was asked about his name, and he was suffering from a language problem. He said: My name is Firas. But, for certain language disability, the man did could not utter the /r/ and hence he said 'Faz'. Accordingly, Idris 'name the city as what this man had uttered. There is another opinion about naming Fez by this name is that when they started building work and digging the foundations, they found an ax in the place of excavation. It was not a historical incident that the books had referred to so that the name of the capital of the school is associated with this name. However, the most likely opinion is that Fez was named after the place on which it was built during the time of Idris I (172-177 AH / 793-828 AD). They used to name cities by the names of the places on which they are held, as happened in most Arab-Muslim battles when they named their battles after the places in which they were taking place.

## 2- Motives and Reasons for Choosing the Fez Site:

The reasons and motives for choosing a site, and whether for any project, whether building a city or other projects that need an important and strategic location, must have some natural ingredients, which in turn create both economic, social and political capabilities as well. Water sources, as well as soil fertility and suitability for agriculture, and any agricultural soil when it is

suitable for cultivation, water must be available, and this is what **Fez** was and, in many places, and regions of which it enjoyed this characteristic with the presence of water. This, in turn, led to a mild climate, good air, and purity. Fez had good fruits because it was far from the deserts, but close to the forests and trees, which in turn softened the atmosphere and gave elegance to the place. In addition to the natural elements that were among the motives for choosing the location of Fez, we see that the economic elements were also present, as the city of Fez was a proximity to the sources of salt extraction, which is known for its quality and fame. In addition to that, Fez was close to some mineral sites such as stones, sand and wood that were from sources The construction materials that used to fill the need of the Fassi society for such materials.

It was also one of the elements of choosing the site of Fez, because of its military importance, which gave the city a kind of natural barriers because it was surrounded by mountains in all its aspects. It is clear that the choice of this site was not a coincidence, but the choice came after some attempts by Idris bin Idris (177-213 AH / 793-828 AD), who went to the Jabal Zaligh area after he liked the environment and the mild climate, so he ordered the construction of the second phase of the city, so the wall was built except that one day the torrent came from the top of the mountain and demolished the wall, which Idris did not agree with and decided to leave this place and go to another place. However, Idris II did not stop trying to find a suitable place to build his new metropolis, so his second attempt came in the year 191 AH / 806 AD when he was wandering and reached Wadi Sebou. He liked the place and ordered the construction of the foundations of the city, but he ordered to stop the construction when the winter season came. That is what he saw from the frequent river floods, which prompted him to stop construction and then return to the city of Volubilis. After that, Idris II assigned his minister, Umair bin Musab Al-Azdi, to find the appropriate site for the construction of the new metropolis. In fact, Umair bin Musab Al-Azdi began his tour until he arrived during the year 191 AH / 806 AD to the area of a spring of water flowing, specifically near Sais, so he performed ritual ablution and prayed noon, where he found the water springs that supply Fes River later in addition to the trees that are located on both sides of the river. However, this site, which the Minister of Idris II admired, Amir bin Musab Al-Azdi, was not devoid of residents. Rather, it was inhabited by some of the Zenata tribes, such as the Bergshan tribe and the Zawagha tribe. Thus, Umair bin Musab sent to Idris II to inform him that the place was good for building the city. Idris II responded to him and ordered him to buy the site In fact, Umair bin Musab Al-Azdi bought the place for an amount of six thousand dirhams. The contract was concluded in 191 AH / 806 AD, which he wrote and was a witness to the liar Idris II, known as Abu al-Hasan Abdullah bin Malik al-Khazraji.

# The Second Topic - The Real Founder of the Capital, Fez, and the Demographic Structure of The Community of Fez.

First. The Actual Founder of The Capital, Fez.

The issue of the real founder of the city of Fez, the capital of the Idrisids, has been marred by some ambiguity that prompted historians to ask the question about who founded or laid the first foundation stone for the construction of Fez? Or was the free foundation laid during the reign of

Idris bin Abdullah I (172 - 177 AH / 788 - 793 AD) or was it during the reign of Idris bin Idris (177 - 213 AH / 793 - 828 AD) and thus Fez was built in the form of two different phases in the date and time of establishment, as each city had its own entity and peculiarity that distinguished it with its own doors and walls. Where the first city is known as Fez, specifically the one that was founded on the eastern bank of the Fez River, which was called the enemy of Andalusia. As for the second city, it was known as the enemy of the villagers, which was founded on the bank of the Fez River. Accordingly, during the year 193 AH / 809 AD, Idris II began construction work and laid the foundation stone in the place of the Zwagha tribe, as previously mentioned, which will be known later as the enemy of the villagers, as he raised his hand to heaven and prayed with this supplication transmitted by Ibn Abi Zara (T.: 726 AH / 1325 AD). By saying: "Oh God, make it the abode of knowledge and jurisprudence, in which your book is recited, and your limits are established, and for the sake of its people, clinging to the Sunnah and the community as long as I keep it." After that, Idris II planned his house, and next to it was a mosque next to the market that knew Caesarea, which is the central mass market of the city. Thus, Idris II confirmed the name of the city with the enemy of the villagers, after some of the Ouran people came to him after the completion of the building, whom Idris honored and gave them the opportunity to settle and live in this enemy that was named after them. From the foregoing, it is clearly evident that Idris II is the actual and real founder of the enemy of the villagers in 193 AH / 817 AD. However, the problem exists that a solution to the foundations of the enemy of Andalusia exists. There are opinions that Idris II established Fez the capital in two stages, the first of which was during 192 AH / 816 AD) when he established the enemy of the Andalusians, while the second was the enemy of the villagers, and this was done by Idris II during the year (193 AH / 817 AD).

However, the assertion that Idris II was the one who built the city of Fez remains a relative fact because there is historical evidence transmitted by some historians about the date of the foundation of Fez or the date of the foundation of the enemy of Andalusia and the date of the foundation of the enemy of the villagers. There is a narration transmitted by Al-Kalahandi (d. 821 AH / 1418 AD) according to which the city of Fez was established in the form of two phases, each phase specialized in a city. Idris, I founded the city known as the enemy of the Andalusians, while the second city was founded by Idris ibn Idris, known as the enemy of the villagers. In addition, there may be other narrations that indicate that Idris I was the one who founded the enemy of the Andalusians, not Idris II. Historians have relied on a set of material and historical evidence that does not come under discussion and extrapolation in the actual founder of the capital, Fez.

## Second: The Population Structure of The City of Fez.

The Fez society consisted of a heterogeneous mixture of minorities that differed with each other with ethnic, religious and sectarian differences as well. In this topic, we will clarify these minorities or population elements of Fez, the main ones:

### 1- Berber tribes.

The Berbers are written and read with two unified and concordant lines separated by a raa that is neglected and static, and in the other a neglected r. Qais bin Aylan. Among the historians are those who return the Berbers to the Qahtaniyah tribes who inhabited the Levant, and the Persians forced them to leave the Levant, so they traveled to Morocco and settled there. Ibn Khaldun (d.: 808 AH / 1405 AD) reports that the Berbers were divided into two great groups, as mentioned by the Pyrenees and Madghisis, who was called the "Abter", as his people were known as "Amtar" and accordingly, the Berber tribes are of two types: the "Bitter" and the "Pyrenean". The Pyrenees department had several tribes, including the Samouda tribe, the Azdaga tribe, the Urba, the Kutama, the Ajisa, and the Sanhaja. As for the Berber section, it also has tribes such as the Adasah, Wawata, Darisah, Nafusa, Zwawa, Maknasa, and Zawagha tribes. It is clear from the foregoing that the Berber tribes were divided into two parts, the Bethir and the Pyrenees, and this division in general had its own tribes, which took places that were known by their names later. As for the most important Berber tribes that inhabited the city of Fez, they were from the Al-Bitr and the Pyrenees tribes alike. We found the tribes of Louata, Masmouda and Sanhaja whose populations were distributed throughout the city, in addition to the influx of Berbers from the desert, mountains and hills to live and settle in the city of Fez.Among the prominent Berber tribes is the Orba tribe, which settled near the heights of Zarhoun, which is located near the city of Fez, where this tribe had a major role in supporting the Idrisids and enabling them to establish their state. Zwawa. From the foregoing, it is clear that the Berbers had settled in the city of Fez, with their different tribes, whether Pyrenean or El-Attar.

### 2- Arab tribes.

The Arabs and their presence in the land of Morocco, specifically the Far Maghreb, go back to the days of the Islamic conquests, specifically to the days of the leader Musa bin Nusair (89 AH / 708 AD), who left some Arab leaders to teach people the teachings of the Islamic religion.

As for the most important Arab tribes that inhabited Fez in the days of the Idrisids, we cannot forget Idris bin Abdullah and his family and those who came with him from the East to the Far Maghreb, such as his brother Suleiman bin Abdullah, who lived in Tlemcen and ruled there and by order of Idris bin Abdullah, who became independent with his ruling in Tlemcen, in addition to that, the Andalusian and Kairouan's tribes that flocked to Idris bin Abdullah during his reign, and these tribes continued to flock until the reign of Idris II, who was among them Umair bin Musab Al-Azdi, who was the first minister of the Idrisid state, Idris I.

# **3-** The People of Dhima Among the Jews and Christians.

The presence of Jews in the city of Fez dates back to the early founding years of the Idrisid state and the capital, Fez, specifically during the rule of Idris I, who allowed large numbers of Jews to settle in Fez, specifically in its northwest, in the Aghlan region, located in Adwa Al-Qarawiyin. The area inhabited by Jews is the name of the Jewish market. In addition to the Jews who lived

in Fez, the Christians had a share in the residence and induction in the city of Fez, but the reference to the Christians and their residence in Fez was mentioned by Al-Bakri (T.: 739 AH / 1338 AD) when he was mentioning the gates of the enemy of the Andalusians. He mentioned the "door of the church" and this indicates a clear indication of the presence of The Christians in Fez in the days of the early Idrisis and also later. From the foregoing, it is clear that the Fez community had included various elements, which included the Berber tribes of all kinds, from the Pyrenees and the Pyrenees, as well as the Arab tribes that settled in Fez from the days of the Islamic conquests, as well as the tribes that came to IdrisI and his son from Andalusia and Kairouan as well, in addition to the presence of religious minorities From the Jews and Christians, and this, if it indicates something, only indicates the religious freedom in embracing the religions that the Idrisid state had granted to its subjects and people, especially in the city of Fez.

## **Conclusion and the Most Important Results**

- 1. The Idris wanted to be alone with a kind of privacy by giving a kind of centralization to their rule, so they wanted to establish a capital for them and actually he established the city of Fez to become the Idris capital.
- 2. The school made a number of attempts, specifically during the reign of Idris II, to find a suitable location for the new capital. The enemy of the villagers.
- 3. The site of Fez was distinguished by natural features that qualified it to be an appropriate and important place for the construction of the capital of the Idrisid state.
- 4. As for naming, the most correct opinion is that the origin of the name Fez with this name is due to the place and the place that was called Fez in the place on which the city of Fez was actually built, given that the Arabs named their cities and battles after the names of the places on which5- As for the reasons and motives for choosing the place, it was after the attempts made by Idris II and his minister, Umair bin Musab Al-Azdi, because of the natural importance of the place and special features represented by the abundance of water and the fertility of the soil.
- 5. As for the community of Fez, it was a mixture of Arabs and Berbers. The Arabs had tribes that had settled since the early stages of the Islamic conquests, and later in the days of the Idrisids, the Berber tribes of the two categories of Amtar and Pyrenees were originally present in the Maghreb, specifically in the Far Maghreb, regardless of their tribes the site was found or on which it was located. Events took place.

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- 12. Al-Zuhri, Geography, p. 115; Unknown author, Insight into the wonders of the regions, p. 193.
- 13. The Zaligh Mountains: They are the heights bordering Fez from the north, starting from the Sabwa River in the east to descend to the south. The Zaligh heights were known to be devoid of population. See: Al-Wazzan, Description of Africa, Part 1, p. 293.
- 14. Mediouna Heights: They are mountains that border the city of Fez from the east to extend and connect to the mountains of Dern in the south, inhabited by the Berber tribe of Mediouna.
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- 16. Mount Atghat, a mountain located west of the city of Fez known for its high altitude, see: Al-Wazzan, Description of Africa, Part 1, p. 299.
- 17. ) Mount Zarhoun: Mount Zarhoun is located to the west of the city of Fez and is located specifically between the city of Fez and Meknes in the west, where its width reached 10 miles. See: Al-Wazzan, Description of Africa, Part 1, p. 294.

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