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The city of Fas¹ and the University of al-Qarawiyyin: a common destiny

Fas, in Morocco, is among the most Arab quoted cities in the international writings as it represents a rich bibliography marked by the density of its thematic areas. In this wide literature, we move from classification based on successive historical eras to political, scientific, social, economic and cultural essays in an increasingly exciting manner. This richness and variety of references has made it possible to clearly distinguish three historical stages of this city:

– The pre-colonial stage, marked by the predominance of traditional writings, whose historiographic sources are city histories, biographical and hagiographic writings and travel narratives. This phase is one of the most widely discussed because of the origins of the authors, authenticity of facts and the narrative method prior to those academic recent ones followed in the Occident.

– The stage of the Protectorate, when the writings had a dual character: they certainly came to meet the needs of the colonial power and, at the same time, to institute the knowledge of Morocco's past, its society and its culture from the angle of human sciences.²

– The stage of the birth of Moroccan academic research: which began in a structured way in the 1970s. This phase is marked by the ebullition of thought as known in Europe and in the world beyond the local initiatives to forge a single identity of the universal criteria.

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¹ "*Fas*" must be written with an "a", not with "e" as imposed by French colonialism writings. In this paper the name is reported in its correct form "Fas".

² G. Delphin "Fas, son université et l'enseignement supérieur musulman, Paris 1889, p. 2.

Founded thanks to the formal establishing of Islam in Morocco, Fas by its history, its appearance and its institutions, remains the excellent model of Moorish Islamic city in the Maghreb. It is distinguished from ancient Phoenician or Byzantine cities as Tangier and Ceuta. Its historical aspect is that of the ancient capitals of Andalusia, which was quite common in the Middle Ages, actually it is unique in the world, for the reason of maintaining its integrity. It is in Fas that we can certainly follow the formation and development of the Islamic Moorish society in which the thinking and leading class was formed of Morocco.³

The foundation of the city of Fas

It is not appropriate, from the methodological point of view, to approach the radiant history of the city of Fas without referring and mentioning the history of Morocco *Al-Maghreb Al-Aqsa*, as an evolutionary reality. Only that the evidence makes us face the dilemma of the Neolithic (old age) Fas, in particular, and of Morocco in general.⁴ More specifically, since when can we speak about an entity called Morocco? And since when can we speak about the kingdoms of the Berbers?

The scarcity of works and research on the period of the formation of Morocco and on the Barbarian age and that of the Romans of this country deprived it of a decisive episode to well understand its evolution and its specificity. For this reason and for laziness, many researchers attribute the birth of this Kingdom to the arrival of the Islam in North Africa. However we cannot deny and overlook, the primordial value of the manuscripts and works that regarded, though modestly and limitedly, the Roman expansion in northern Africa and Morocco, and its population by the Berbers, as one among the oldest migratory movements.⁵

Among the various theses supported by the researchers, about the Berber invasion in Morocco, the most credible remains the one that advanced the opinion that their landing began just after the defeat of Goliath in his fight against David, the second king of Israel.⁶ The same event was reported and confirmed by the Bible and the Quran, therefore historians attri-

³ H. Gaillard dans son introduction "Une ville de l'Islam: Fes", Paris 1905.

⁴ D. Rivet, "Histoire du Maroc de moulay Idriss a Mohammed V", Fayard, Paris 2012- pp. 63-80.

⁵ A. Al-Jaznani, "Janyu zahratu al-as fi binai madinati fas", ed. II, Rabat 1991, pp. 11-15. A. Tazi "The history of Morocco: al-Qaraouiyin mosque", Tom I ed. II, Rabat 2000, pp. 8-11. A. al-Quadi al-Maknasi, "Jadouatu al-Iqtibass fi dikri man halla mina al-alami bi Madinati fas", Rabat 1973, pp. 10-12.

⁶ Is the Biblical giant defeated by the king David as reported in the Book of Samuel. He was from "*Tall as-Sāfi*" that means "the white hill"; which was a Palestinian village, in the Late Bronze and Iron Age (I & II) periods, located on the southern banks of "*Wadi 'Ajjur*", 35 kilometers northwest of Hebron. Excavations at "*Tell es-Safi*" since 1996 have indicated that the site was settled,

bute to it certain authenticity.⁷ The Philistines from Palestine, the land of the Sham (Canaan) before the rising hegemony of the Israelis, took refuge in the northern lands of Africa occupied by Romans. In Morocco, Philistines invaded the mountains and the desert and avoid the cities to escape the Roman humiliation and segregation. These populations had different religions and beliefs. An earlier hypothesis advanced by Moses of Corena and Procope reported that the inhabitants of Canaan arrived in North Africa after the conquest of Canaan by Joshua. Many Berber and Arab historians (*Ibn Khurdabih* and *Ibn Abd Al-Hakam* in the ninth century, *Al-Tabari* and *Ibn Hawqal* in the tenth century, Idrisside in the twelfth century and *Ibn Khaldoune* in the fourteenth century) attribute the Canaanite ancestry to the Berbers. This corresponds to a similar and even earlier Talmudic hypothesis according to which Canaanite peoples migrated to Berberia after the Hebrews conquered Canaan.⁸ Some scholars situate the Berbers within the biblical genealogy, they descend from the *Kaslouhim*, son of *Mitzraim* son of Cham son of Noah (*Al-Souli* 10th century).⁹ Others (*Ibn A-Kalbi*, the ninth century) attributed Yemeni origin to the branches of the Ketama and Sanhadja and it is probable that this hypothesis germinated in the minds of those for whom the legitimacy of power could be granted only to a lineage of nobles.¹⁰

The choice of the site of the city of Fas

Ibn Abî Zar, the medieval chronicler of Fas, tracing in his book *Roud al-kartas*, written in 1326, the criteria of an ideal city, reported that: "It is necessary to have five things to a city, say the philosophers: running water, good tillage, woods nearby, solid buildings, and a governor who watches over its prosperity, the safety of his roads and the respect due to his power."¹¹ At an altitude of 387 m, the choice of the site for the construction of the city of Fas was decided after long and precise studies. Located in the plain of *Saïss*, its natural resources and its strategic position allowed this emerging city to compete with the biggest agglomerations of the time,

virtually continuously from the "Chalcolithic" until the modern periods. It is now widely accepted that "*Tell es-Safî*" was the site of the Philistine city of Gath.

⁷ Samuel 17.1-18.4 – Quran, Suratu al.-Baqarah (verse 2, 251).

⁸ Sanhedrin 94-71, Lévitique Rabba 17, Tossefta Shabbat 18, Yebamot 63-2.

⁹ G. Masson, "Mémoires de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris", Tom 1 ed. II, Paris, 1873, pp. 11-54.

¹⁰ D. Bensoussan, "Il était une foi le Maroc: Témoignages du passé judéo-marocain", II édition, USA-Bloomington 2012, pp. 19-24.

¹¹ Ibn Abi Zar' Al-Fassi, "Al-anis al-mutreb bi raoud al-qirtas fi akhbar molouk al-Maghreb wa tarikh madinat Fas", pp. 32-45.

such as Cordoba in Andalusia and Baghdad in Iraq. It was at its outlet in the plain of *Saiiss* at the foot of the mountain of *Zalagh* that the town was erected. Idriss II (?) bought this land of his owners known as *Bni al-khayr*, people of *Zouagha* originating from the tribes of *Znata*,¹² for a sum of six thousand *Dirhams*.¹³ The act of purchase was written by the secretary of Idriss II “*Abi Al-Hassan Abdellah Bnu Malik Al-Ansari Al-Khazraji*”, in 191 of the hegira (806 AD).

Idriss II established its camp in the area of *Guerouaoua*, a place known today in *Bab el-Khokha* district, to begin construction work.¹⁴ Idriss II traced the boundaries of two cities and surrounded each of them with walls. They were soon called *Adouat Al-Qarawiyyin* and *Adouat Al-andalous*, families who populated them were from *Al-Qayraouan* and Andalusia. A large number of emigrant Andalusian families came from Cordoba to take part in an uprising against Emir *Hakim ben Hicham*,¹⁵ and also three hundred families from Qayraouan, in Tunisia. They came to seek refuge in Fas. The entourage of Idriss II was mostly composed of Arabs of *Qais*¹⁶ who settled in the upper part of *Adouat Al-Qarawiyyin*, Arabs of *Azd*¹⁷ and *Asfioum*,

¹² From a group of various Berber populations in the Maghreb, according to Ibn Khaldoun, *Zenata* derives from a proper name *Djanat* (Berber ancestor). This people has initiated the greatest change in the Maghreb, a great part of the *Zenets* is culturally identified with the Arabs, as Poitiron declares: “The disappearance of the *Zenets* towards the eighth century, which covered a quarter of North Africa, one of the most extraordinary events in the Maghreb. The similarity of life and estate leads to a rapid Arabisation, accelerated by the desire of the *Zenata* to be ennobled, to appear Arab. With the Muslim conquest of Spain, Andalusia hosts an enormous contingent of *Zenets* who inhabit entire regions and will leave traces in its culture and social system. Moreover, the *Zenets* have reigned in Andalusia for centuries.

¹³ The dirham, former currency of the Maghreb, whose name is derived from the Greek drachma. Towards the end of the seventh century, under the caliphate of *Abd al-Malik*, the value was transformed into Islamic currency with religious citation and name of the sovereign. The dirham was minted in many Mediterranean countries, including in Andalusia, which explains why it could be used as currency in Europe between the 10th and 12th centuries. In the seventh century, during the reign of *Idriss I*, Morocco created its coinage, silver dirhams exclusively.

¹⁴ A. Tazi, “Histoire du Maroc, la mosquée al-Qaraouine: la mosquée université a Fas”, Rabat 1973, pp. 8-11.

¹⁵ *Al-Hakam Ibnu Hicham* (966-1013), the third Umayyad Caliph of Spain, in *Al-Andalus* from 976-1009, and 1010-13, In 976, at the age of 11, *Hisham II* succeeded his father *Al-Hakam II* as the Caliph of Cordoba. *Hisham II* was a minor at the time of his accession and therefore was unfit to rule. In order to benefit the Caliphate, his mother *Subh* was helped by the first minister *Jafar al-Mushafi* to act as regents with *Al-Mansur Ibn Abi Aamir* as her steward.

¹⁶ The Arab tribal grouping branched from the Mudhar section of the Adnanites. The tribe does not appear to have functioned as a unit in the pre-Islamic era. However, by the early Umayyad, its constituent tribes consolidated into one of the main tribo-political factions of the caliphate. The major constituent tribes or tribal groupings of the Qays were the Hawazin, Banu ‘Amir, Banu Thaqif, Banu Sulayman, Banu Ghani, Bahila and Banu Muharib.

¹⁷ *Arab of Azd*, were a branch of the *Kahlān* tribe, which was one of the two branches of *Qahtan* the other being *Himyar*. They inhabited *Ma’rib*, the capital city of the *Sabaean* Kingdom, the Yemen today.

as well as Arabs from Andalusia. In the other *Adoua*, the population was from Berberian origin early emigrated to Morocco. Nearly all the tribes of the neighborhood, *Gerouaoua*, *Aourba*, *Haouara*, and *Louata*, had colonies in Fas and were settled apart in separate quarters, which took their name and preserved for a long time their own physiognomy. In the *Adoua* of Al-Andalus, near the *Keddan*, the Arab chiefs were also stationed at the same district where they had first encamped with Idriss II. These newcomers contributed to the settlement of the city and its glare for two centuries.¹⁸

Idriss II, the founder of Fas

There is unanimity on the lineage *Sharif* of the founder of the city of Fas, it is the descendant of the prophet, Idriss the Second, son of Idriss the first founder of the Idrisside dynasty, son of *Abdul-Allah ben Hassan bin Al-Hussain ben Ali ben Abu-Taleb*, descendant of the Prophet of the fifth generation, known in Morocco as Idrīss al-Akbar.¹⁹ His mother is *kenza Al-Awrabiyya* of the tribe *Aouraba*, a Berber people descended from barons of their grandfather *fu awrab ben Barnas*. Idriss II received the oath of allegiance from all tributes and proclaimed Sultan at the age of eleven. He imposed his sovereignty over the Maghreb El Aqsa, then he marched on Tlemcen (Algeria today) and married a descendant of the brother of Idriss I, Souleyman the Prince of Tlemcen. His parents and his followers followed the doctrine of *kufa*.²⁰ Later that status changed with the arrival of the *madhab sunni* and its proclamation as the official doctrine of the country.²¹

The origin of the name of the city of Fas

Fas is written without *Hamza*, such is the true spelling.²² None of the authors who approached the foundation of the city of Fas can give a convinc-

¹⁸ A. Ben Abi Zar' Al fassi, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-40.

¹⁹ Al-Jaznani, "Janyu zahratu ak-ass fi binai madinati fas", ed. II 1991, pp. 11-15. Also D. Rivet, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-85.

²⁰ "*Al-madhab al-koufi*" or madhab ahlu Al-koufa: is the Hanafite school of Abu Ḥanīfah (699-767), the famous Muslim jurist and founder of this school of law. Abu Hanifa is the first to have "defined a legal order on the basis of an interpretation of sources that appeals to human judgment (al-ra'y), not to substitute the revelation but to make a more complete use of revealed sources. His method is not only exegetical, but also admits the personal opinion of the judge, also called "preferential judgment" (istihsan), when one cannot solve the case of traditional fundamental sources (Quran, Sunnah, ijma 'and opinions of sahaba and qiyas). "This approach, and the resulting decision, must, however, be based on an extension of the third source of law, the Qiyas, or analogical reasoning.

²¹ A. Ben Abi Zar' Al fassi, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-40.

²² G. Delphin, *op. cit.*, Paris 1889, p. 18.

ing explanation of the etymology of this name. The *Raud Alqirtas* provides four versions that the *Jadouet Eliqtibas* and the *Kitab Al-Istiqsa* reproduced for the lack of a better argument. It is said that in the early works, Idriss II, out of humility and deserving the rewards of God, set himself to work with the masons and craftsmen, during the work, masons found a pick of gold and silver and offered it to Idriss II. Idriss II accepted it, and used it to dig the foundations and gave the name Pick in Arabic Fas to the city. The author of the book, *Al-Istibdar fi ajai b Elamsar*, reported that in digging the first foundations on the south side of the city, there was found a large pick, weighing sixty pounds, and having four palm-lengths on a palm wide; therefore they kept the name of Fas.

According to another, a troop of Farsi (Persians) who accompanied Idriss II as he traced the walls, were almost all buried by a landslide, and in their memory they gave to the place of the accident the name of Fas, of which later Fas was made.

In another version, it is reported that when the constructions were completed, Idris II encountered an old priest who told him about the existence of an ancient city named *Saf* and which had existed there for eighteen hundred years and which had been destroyed before Islam resplendent on earth. The sovereign then decided to give the name of this city to his new city, but by overturning the word, they made Fas. Given the occult history of Morocco before Islam, this last version seems to be the most authentic of all. In fact the two Adoua received the appellations that we know only after the arrival in Fas of a certain number of families of Qayrawan and Andalusia, an event that did not take place until several years after the foundation of the city. In reality the etymology of the known "Fas" remains unknown.

The grandson of Idriss II, *Yahia ben Mohammed ben Idriss*, appears to have been particularly interested in his capital. It was during his reign that the Al-Qarawiyyin and Al-Andalouse mosques were built. The population of the two *Adouas* had already grown sufficiently to render insufficient the two existing mosques, the *Chorfa*, in Adouat Al-Qarawiyyin and the Sheikh, in Adouat Al-Andalous. The Al-Qarouiyin Mosque, originally quite modest, was destined to become, after the enlargements and ornamentation it received during the reign of the Almoravids and the Banu Marin, the grandiose edifice that one can still admire today.²³

Fas a model of civilized city

The literature highlights the fact that the city of Fas has played and still does a leading role in the conservation and transmission of Sunnite

²³ H. Gaillard, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-13.

Malki science and religious practice. Since its foundation, Fas has always been conducive to foreigners who came to settle there. A great center, where wise men, lawyers, poets, doctors and other scientists gather together, it has always been the seat of wisdom, science, studies of *Hadith* and the Arabic language. Its jurists are followed by all the Maghreb jurists, and it regrouped more scientists by itself than the whole Maghreb countries.²⁴ The central function that Idrīss II occupied in Fas is also perpetuated through his many descendants. The *Shurafā* ‘played a considerable role in the history of Morocco, especially from the Banu Marin era. The Idrissid lineage ramifies through the twelve sons of Idrīss II. The descendants of each son constitute ancestors of the great clans. The filaments of the Jūṭiyyūn by Qāsim, which settled in the region of Tangier, and that of the Alamiyyūn by Muḥammad, the successor of his father Idrīss II at Fas, are considered to be the purest. The members of these two families play an important role in everything related to the worship of “Mawlāy Idrīss”, sharifism and holiness. The Jūṭiyyūn, from whom derives among others the ‘Imrānī, play an important role in the official representation of the shurafā’ and in the management of the sanctuary of Mawlāy Idrīss.²⁵ The brilliance of the Idrissid period (789-974) did not last long. The difficulties of the reign of were announced with a dispute between *Muḥammad* and his brother *Īsā*. The division of the kingdom causes a weakening of the political and military structure, event which ultimately leads to the decline and fall of the dynasty. After the fall of the Idrissids in 305 of the hegira (917), Fas experienced a cycle of struggle between Berber and Fatimides before ending under the domination of the Al-Moravides (455/456 of the hegira / 1063). Since their arrival in Fas this dynasty made considerable changes which especially affected the walls of the city and the bridges of communication between its various sectors. However they returned to Marrakesh – their capital. In 540 of the hegira (621 DC), the Al Mouahades took the city after a war that lasted months. They began to rebuild what they destroyed during the war and the siege of the city.

During the reign of the two dynasties, Fas knew periods of troubles and instability but also centuries of glory and prosperity. Its economic evolution guaranteed by a strong and rich agriculture and by an advanced industry allowed it to maintain a rich social life. In addition to economics and social, knowledge and sciences were in a continuous interacting with the *Mashreq*. In 612 of the hegira (1215 DC), there arrived Banu Marin, Berber tribes between Figuig and the river *Melouia*. They could not take the city of Fas in 646 of the hegira (1248 DC), only after hard struggles and wars conduct-

²⁴ A. Ben Abi Zar’ Al fassi, *op. cit.*, Rabat 1972, pp. 45-47.

²⁵ R. Vimercati Sanseverino, “Fès et sainteté, de la fondation à l’avènement du Protectorat- 808-1912”, Rabat 2014, pp. 122-145.

ed inside the country or in Islamic Spain (Andalusia). And another time, the development of Fas, the exemplary city took off again with Abu Yusuf al-Marini, 656/685 of the hegira, (1258/1286 DC). He edified a new part in the city known as *Fas al-Jadid*, a zone of the Banu Marin headquarters in the city.²⁶ The majority of monuments that have survived to this day date from this period.²⁷

Al-Qarawiyyin Mosque and University

Through the succession of ages and governing families, Fas experienced a great dazzling development marked by many crises and conflicts. However, it is important to point to the construction of a mosque which with time turned out to be the decisive element in the evolution of the city and the kingdom. During the reign of Sovereign *Yahya Ben Mohamed, Ben Idriss I, Ben Idriss II* the mosque "Al-Qarawiyyin" was built by *Fatima Al-Fihriyya*, also known as *Oumo Al-Banin*, a widow belonging to the Tunisian families who settled in Fas. This mosque was to become afterwards the first university in the world.²⁸ It was built to support the expansion of the city of Fas, and expanded throughout the centuries to fulfill its function as an international university.²⁹

G. Delphin, in the introduction to his manuscript "Fas its university, a Muslim higher education", reports the testimony of Gabriel Charmes that: "The author saw the streets full of students."³⁰ And also the testimony of Jules Erekmann that: "Students who arrive in crowds from all parts of Africa, [...] schools are numerous and frequented by Moroccan scientists and even Algerian, [...] the mosque of Qarawiyyin has a famous library and a school whose professors are known by their sciences and independence."³¹ Then, G. Delphin continues his narration this time up to the testimony of Luis del Marmol that: "Within the precincts of this mosque al-Qarawiyyin, a college where theology, arts and other sciences are taught."

Since its construction Al-Qarawiyyin has remained far from the changes that have affected the Mashreq changing its specificity such as Baghdad, Damascus or Cairo. In today's Qarawiyyin there are still traces of the Id-

²⁶ M. Ben Moussa al-Hariri, "Tarikh al-Maghreb al-Islami wal Andalous fi 'ahd bani Marin 1213/1465", ed. II, Kuwait 1987, p. 28.

²⁷ R. le Tourneau, "Fas à l'époque des Merinides", New York 1967, pp. 25-46. Also A. Ben Abi Zar' Al fassi, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-281.

²⁸ G. Delphin, "Fas son université...", p. 12.

²⁹ Al-Jaznani, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-50.

³⁰ A copy of this manuscript has been kept in the library of the Harvard College since 1889.

³¹ G. Delphin, "Fas son université...", p. 4.

rissids, traces of the competition between Fatimids and Omayyads, those of the Znatas, Al-Moravides, Al-Mowahades, Merinides, Wattassids, traces of Saadies and finally of the epochs of the Alawis.³²

The role of al-Qarawiyyin University throughout the centuries

Since its construction in 245 H (859 DC), Qarawiyyin has served as a place of prayer, a great mosque that responded to the needs of the population growth in Fas. In 307 H (919 DC), after the seizure of power by the Berber of Znata, al-Qarawiyyin became a mosque of the Friday's sermon. It should be noted that information on the teaching activity of this institution was available between 245 H (859 DC) and 307 H (919 DC).³³ The splendor of Al-Qarawiyyin began from the era of the Idrissids, to become a place of worship and a center of scientific, cultural influence and civilization expansion. Such a status was the result of the immigration of scientists, coming from the capitals of knowledge and culture, like Cordoba because of the hegemony of the Omayyads in Andalusia, or those from Al-Qayrawan in Tunisia, escaping the crisis that struck the Aghlabids.³⁴ They found support and gratitude in Fas, became professors at the university al-Qarawiyyin, working in the environment open to science and different intellectual currents. Hence this university became a center of wisdom in the Arabo-Muslim territories and even in Europe.

Change in the status: Al-Qarawiyyin University

The university, the term from the Latin *universitas*, was idiomatically an old term which in Europe designated what is called the association of today or the union. The word "university", which means educational institutions, is one of the more or less contemporary terms, which may include without conflict the mosque, which unites the faithful and teachers as was the case in Baghdad and the Umayyad mosque or the *Al-Azhar* mosque and the *Zitouna* mosque and the al-Qarawiyyin mosque. Among the specificities of Al-Qarawiyyin University are the most important specialized scientific chairs that have made its programs a multi-university studies. Al-Qarawiyyin University is recognized as the oldest university in the world

³² A. Tazi, "histoire du Maroc...", pp. 11-15.

³³ A.M. al Jundi, "The history of Fas in the time of the Al-Moravids and Al-Mowahades", Al-Azhar University 2004, pp. 76-80.

³⁴ The Aghlabids were an Arab dynasty of emirs from Banu Tamim, who ruled Ifriqiya, on behalf of the Abbasid Caliph, for about a century, until overthrown by the new power of the Fatimids.

by the Guinness Book of Records, by UNESCO, by ISESCO in its 2000 report, and by several historians. The Moroccan historian Mohamed *al-Manūnī* maintains that it was during the reign of the Almoravids that the university was really added to the mosque. Other historians, such as Alfred Bel and Levi-Provençal, gave the Qarawiyyin the title of university only in the Merinid period, although the first affirms that it was the religious and intellectual heart of the Maghreb since the Idrissid era. But *al-Manūnī* is the closest to historical reality.

From this university came the great philosophers in the image of Ibn Bāḡa or (Avempace), mathematicians like the Jew *Ibn al-Yasmīne*, inventor of the Triangle of Pascal, in addition to many theologians and literary personalities. This means that at that time this university was able to offer teachings in various branches (theology, jurisprudence, philosophy, mathematics, astrology-astronomy, language sciences, etc.). From the time the Qarawiyyin represented the faculties as in the Western notions. In the 8th / 14th century and beyond, most of the great scholars of Maghreb and what remained of Andalusia passed to Fas and his Qarawiyyin as students, professors or common listeners, such as: *Ibn Al-Ḥaṭīb*, *Ibn khaldūn*, *Ḥasan al-Wazzān*, Leon of Africa, and *al-Yūsī*. The writings of Orientalists and foreign historians spoke about al-Qarawiyyin “school”, “college” and “University” as the case of Professor “Rom Landau”, a Polish-born, Englishman report that: al-Qarawiyyin University was built in Fas, and since the earliest time, scientists began philosophical debates earlier than in the West, at this university medicine and mathematics were taught, and Aristotle and other thinkers of the Greeks were explained.³⁵

Jouse Panteleimon Krestovitick (1871 Palestine) in his statement for the Egyptian magazine *al-Hillal* in No. 11 of 1893 said: “... the college of the oldest school in the world is not established in Europe as was thought, but in Africa in the city of Fas, the ancient capital of the Kingdom of Morocco, instituted in the VIII century, it has been called al-Qarawiyyin College, therefore it is not only the oldest college in the world, but also is the only college that received students for the study of Semitic science at that time, where the population of Paris, Oxford, and Bologna know only the name the college. Students came to this college from Europe, England, as well as the vast Arab countries, Trabulsian, Tunisian, Egyptian, Andalusian to study alongside, and other students from Europe such as “Gerbert d’Aurillac” or Pope Sylvestre, born between 945 and 950 in Aurillac in Auvergne, died on May 12, 1003 in Rome, he was named the “learned Gerbert”, because of his works, it is argued that he introduced the Arabic nu-

³⁵ R. Landau, “Risalat al Maghrib”. 11 June 1951. Also see A. Shalabi, “L’enseignement Islamique”, Beyrouth 1954, pp. 206-211.

merals and counting tables and the algebra after he have mastered them well in the mentioned college.”³⁶

Organization of studies and programs in al-Qarawiyyin University

The organization was based on a relationship between the student and the university that began at the young age of the candidate. Firstly, a period of preparation (between 3 and 5 years) should be completed in the *Msides* of the city schools or their equivalents for foreigners. At this phase students learned the principles of religion, the rules of the Arabic language, memorized the Quran, the writing (*ar-Rasm*), and the principles of some applied science. Then, the candidate began a 15-year training process that included a second degree (advanced courses) that ended with a license (*al-Ijaza*) and a third which finished with a doctorate (*al-'Alimiya*).³⁷ Students chose their professors according to their competence and followed the lessons around one of the pillars of the mosque. There was no separation between knowledge and arts nor the separation in educational process between what was religious and what was secular. Al-Qarawiyyin was the university of science and religion, which adapted itself to variables of the centuries it lived in. Students celebrated the tradition known as *Sultan at-Tolba*, electing a representative of theirs for a week reserved for picnic. This tradition was supported and financed by the power, especially in the times of the Alawis sultans (1666-1672).³⁸

The management and administrative structure of al-Qarawiyyin

As regards the administrative structure, the presidency of the university was assigned to the judge of the city, who designated the teachers after consultation with the sultan and the censor of the *Awqaf*, whose opinion depended on the annual budget.³⁹ Among the unique uses at the time, Al-Qarawiyyin's professors had the tradition of wearing a formal white robe during their course called “Barnouse” that is, until today, the dress recognized for the *Ulamas*.⁴⁰

³⁶ J. Ponteleimon Krestovitch, “Magazine Al-Hillal”, Cairo 1893, pp. 356. See also N. Mona, “Les Repères et aspects de l’histoire intellectuelle et culturelle de Al-Qarawiyyin”, magazine Da’outu al-haq, no 364 Rabat 2002.

³⁷ G. Delphin, “Fas son université...”, Paris 1889, pp. 22-57.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 22-57.

³⁹ A. Shalabi, “The Islamic Education”, Beirut 1954, pp. 206-211.

⁴⁰ A. Tazi, “Histoire du Maroc...”, pp. 125-126.

Courses, and students' accommodation

Courses and lectures began in the early morning after the first prayer and continued for the whole day, sometimes even between the last two evening prayers. The courses took place in the form of *Majlis*, where students sat around the teacher. In the middle, a student *As-Sarid* read the title or the object of the course and the professor began his dissertation. The courses were separated by breaks and generally ended with the third prayer of the day (*Salatu al-'Asr*).⁴¹ For the accommodation of students from other places, many schools were built as the medraca of *Ech-cheratin*, *El-Mesbahiya*, *Es-Seffarin*, *Al-Attarin* and *Bab al-Gissa*.⁴²

In 1203 H. (1789 DC), Sultan Muhammad III thought of drawing up a special study program for this university. In a decree, the Sultan demanded from the Sheikh of Al-Qarawiyyin (president) to identify the programs, study materials and books to be taught from. In the early periods of this institution the programs were based on the books by outstanding scholars and scientists of the *Mashreq*, before that the Moroccan scientists and priests began to produce great works and scientific analyzes that were afterwards exported to places all over the world and translated even into Latin.⁴³

The Library of Al - Qarawiyyin University

It is one of the oldest libraries in the world, its pavilions including inestimable manuscripts, as old as twelve centuries and which offered the source of knowledge for researchers and students from Morocco, Africa and also Europe. Since its establishment al-Qarawiyyin library had been sustained by academic assemblies, that carried out their functions thanks to the numerous libraries in the city. Among these most known libraries was that of Sultan "Yahya" IV between 293-307 H (905-919). Then, in the times of the *Znati*, the library of al-Qarawiyyin received several masterpieces coming from Andalusia and from the East. It is until today that we have been able to find the famous book of al-Farabi 339 H (870-959) entitled *Sharhu al fusos* and a copy of *Abi-Zemnini*, 324-399 H (935-1008). The Al-Qarawiyyin Library was concretely reinforced in 750 H (1349), during the reign of the Sultan *Abou Inane Al Marini*, 730 - 759 H, (1329-1358).

The library also contains rare manuscripts on medicine, such as the unique copy in the world of *Ibn Tufail*, a thinker, philosopher and doctor, and the manuscript of *Ibn Rushd* entitled *Al-Bayan wa Tahsil*, a copy of the Qur'an dating from the end of the second century of the Hegira, a gos-

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 125-126.

⁴² G. Delphin, "Fas son université...", p. 22-57.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

pel written in Arabic dating back to the 12th century, with 600 printed stone. A copy of the book *Al-'Ebar* by *Ibn Khaldun*, written with his own hand and given to the library when he himself was a student at Al-Qarawiyyin University.⁴⁴

The number of manuscripts in this library is estimated to be about 24 thousand volumes in various fields of knowledge, such as medicine, philosophy, language and literature, and a number of manuscripts and documents stored in a "micro-film" form. Currently about four thousand manuscripts are indexed electronically. This historical value of al-Qarawiyyin Library was concretized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which selected it as the universal human heritage.⁴⁵ To meet the need for restoration of old manuscripts, the library has developed a laboratory integrating the latest innovations in the field of preservation supervised by specialized engineers who carry out this mission according to international standards known in this field.

Conclusion

Historical proofs and consistent arguments show that al-Qarawiyyin University has played an important role in the preservation of the Islamic Arab identity over centuries. It was the main scholarly institution that deepened the Maliki school thought and teaching, and forged Moroccan society into a doctrinal unity that the scholars of al-Qarawiyyin have maintained and preserved. It was thanks to the city of Fas and its University al-Qarawiyyin that the characteristics of the Arab and Islamic civilization emerged in Morocco and then spread their merits out to Europe. Al-Qarawiyyin mosque and university in one has been for centuries the reflection of the Moroccan establishment in moments of glory and those of crises. It formed the elite of the State for the dynasties governing this kingdom and promoted the leaders of knowledge and innovative thought. Today it retains an enormous place in the memory of passionate people of Arab Islamic civilization, but occupies a modest place in modernized teaching. However no one can deny the role of Fas and its university as a model among the most glorious centers of this type in human history.

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⁴⁴ A. Shalabi, "The Islamic Education", Beirut 1954, p. 210.

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MIASTO FAS I UNIWERSYTET AL-QARAWIYYIN: WSPÓLNY LOS

Streszczenie: Historia ludzkości wiąże się z istnieniem koncepcji przestrzennych, miejsc będących państwami, miastami lub innymi formami organizacyjnymi. Badania nad Rzymem i Atenami, Bagdadem i Damaszkiem dostarczają obfitych informacji mających bezpośredni wpływ na zrozumienie ewolucji cywilizacji ludzkiej. Fas – miasto maurejskie, które zainicjowało marokańskie państwo, zawsze wzbudzało zainteresowanie historyków i specjalistów. Jest to unikalny model społeczny i miasto, dzięki któremu Uniwersytet Al-Qarawiyyin był w stanie przetrzymać wszelkie surowe zmiany. Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu śledzenie jego ewolucji, z uwzględnieniem ekspansji i dominacji historycznej w Afryce Północnej i Europie na przestrzeni wieków.

THE CITY OF FAS AND THE UNIVERSITY OF AL-QARAWIYYIN: A COMMON DESTINY

Abstract: Human history has always been linked to a spatial concept, a place that can be a state, a city, or any other geographical determination. The researches on Rome and Athens, Baghdad and Damascus provide ample information with a direct impact on understanding the evolution of human civilization. Fas, the Moorish city which initiated the Moroccan State, has always aroused the interest of historians and specialists. It is a unique social model and a city that has been able, thanks to its University *Al-Qarawiyyin*, to withstand all the harsh changes for centuries. This paper is intended to follow the evolution of this city through the expansion and historical dominance in North Africa and Europe throughout centuries

Keywords: FAS, AL-QARAWIYYIN, DYNASTY, IDRISSE, BERBER, ISLAM, MOSQUE, CIVILIZATION, MAGHREB, EVOLUTION