



KENZA THE EUROPEAN: THE SHADOW PRINCESS WHO FORGED THE GLORY OF IDRIS II IN THE COURT OF THE IDRISID STATE

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Abstract

This research examines the figure of Kenza al-Awrabiya, the Berber princess who played a pivotal role in the foundation of the Idrisid dynasty and the upbringing of its star, Idris II. The study highlights how Kenza, daughter of the Awraba tribal chieftain, transformed the tragedy of her husband Idris I's assassination into an opportunity to build an empire, managing state affairs as a ruling mother alongside the regent Rashid. The paper traces Kenza's journey from her strategic marriage That enabled Idris I to extend his influence over North Africa, done her pregnancy and the birth of Idris II two months after his father's death, to her leading role in his education and preparation tO become a ruler at the age of eleven. The study also analyzes her role as a shadow princess who continued to manage the kingdom after her son's death, overseeing the distribution of power among her grandchildren and preserving the territorial unity of the state. The research concludes That Kenza was an exceptional figure who combined maternal soreness with political acumen, deserving to be remembered as one of the most powerful women in the history of Islamic Morocco.

Keywords: Kenza al-Awrabiya, Idris II, Idrisid dynasty, Fez, Amazigh, Awraba, female governance, Islamic Morocco

Introduction

The figure of Kenza al-Urubiyya is one of the most inspiring and enigmatic in the history of Islamic Morocco. She was the woman who stood at the heart of the political storm That shook Morocco at the beginning of the ninth century CE, and



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through her intelligence and shrewdness, she was able to transform the tragedy of her husband Idris I's assassination into the birth of a state and an empire. She is a true shadow princess, who never ascended to the throne, yet was behind every decision of the government for decades, from the moment her husband fell as a martyr until the death of her son and the distribution of the kingdom among her descendants.

The importance of this research lies in unveiling this unique figure, whom historical sources have neglected for centuries, or mentioned only in passing as merely the wife of Idris I and the mother of Idris II. However, a careful reading of the available texts, along with some recent studies, reveals a completely different picture: Kenza was not simply a grieving mother, but rather the iron fist who held the reins of power during the most difficult moments of the fledgling state.

After the assassination of Idris I by spies of the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid in 791 CE, Kenza was in her final month of pregnancy. In the absence of a clear heir, and in a tribal society that recognized only power, the fate of the entire Idrisid project hinged on this woman's ability to protect her unborn child and ensure the continuation of the dynasty. Herein lay her true epic: with the help of her trusted servant, Rashid, Kanza fled with her child from the Abbasid agents, gave birth under dire circumstances, and then personally oversaw the upbringing, education, and preparation of Idris II to become an exceptional ruler.

This research employs a descriptive-analytical methodology, tracing scattered information about Kanza from historical sources and modern studies, attempting to reconstruct her life as a distinguished political figure, and evaluating her crucial role in establishing the first independent Islamic state in Morocco.

The Importance of the Research

The importance of this study lies in its shedding light on a pivotal female figure who played a crucial role in the political history of Morocco, yet remained neglected or marginalized for centuries. In an era of growing interest in the role of women in history and governance, revisiting successful female role models from the Islamic heritage becomes an urgent necessity and a scholarly imperative. Kenza al-Urubiyya was not merely the wife or mother of a king; she was a De



facto ruler. Alongside her, she managed the affairs of the kingdom for many years, preparing her son to become one of Morocco's greatest rulers. After his death, she intervened once again to distribute power among his descendants and prevent the collapse of the state.

Furthermore, the research offers a fresh perspective on the Idrisid dynasty from a female standpoint That has not been sufficiently explored. Most historical studies have focused on Idris I as the founder and Idris II as the true builder of Fez and the state, but they have overlooked the role played by Kenza during this crucial transitional period between father and son. This research seeks to bridge this gap.

Research Problem

The research problem centers on a central question: How did Kenza al-Awrabiyya, a pregnant widow pursued by the most powerful empire of her time, manage to preserve the Idrisid project and establish a strong state That lasted for centuries?..

Several sub-questions stem from this central problem: What was the nature of the tribal political system in Morocco at That time, and what role did marriage play in consolidating alliances? How did Kenza's marriage to Idris I contribute to the latter's control over the Awrabiyya tribes? What mechanisms did Kenza employ to protect her son and secure his loyalty from the tribes? How was Idris II raised by her, and what impact did this upbringing have on his personality and leadership abilities? What was her role after her son's death in distributing power among his descendants?

This research answers these questions by analyzing Kenza's role as a shadow princess, That is, as a soft power and an active force behind the scenes. She Did not officially ascend the throne but possessed influence and the ability to make decisions.

Research Questions

1. Who was Kenza al-Awrabiyya? 1. What was her tribal and family origin?
2. How did she marry Idris I, and what were the political motives behind this marriage?



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3. How did Kenza manage to protect herself and her unborn child after her husband's assassination?
 4. What was her role in raising and educating Idris II and preparing him for rule?
 5. How did she cooperate with the Regent, Rashid, in managing state affairs during her minor son's reign?
 6. What was her role after Idris II's death, and how did she contribute to the distribution of power among her descendants?
 7. Why did traditional historical sources neglect Kenza's role, and how can history be reinterpreted from A feminist perspective?

Research Methodology

This study employs an integrated methodology combining several approaches:

1. The Historical Approach: This involves tracing the events related to Kanza's life and her political role within their historical context (late second and early third centuries AH), relying on information available in historical sources and modern studies.
2. The Descriptive-Analytical Approach: This involves describing Kanza's multiple roles (as a wife, mother, and ruler) and analyzing the nature Of her influence on major political decisions.
3. The Historical Figures Analysis Approach: This focuses on constructing a comprehensive portrait of Kanza's personality, based on her leadership qualities and decisive stances.
4. The Comparative Approach: This involves comparing Kanza's role with other female figures in Islamic history, such as Khayzuran, the mother of Harun al-Rashid, to determine the distinctiveness of her experience.
5. The Critical Approach: This involves critiquing traditional historical narratives That have neglected or downplayed the role of women In, governance, and attempting to interpret texts from a feminist perspective.

The first axis: Kenza al-Awrabiyya: From daughter of a tribal chief to wife of the founder of the state

Kenza al-Awrabiyya, or Kenza bint Ishaq ibn Muhammad al-Awrabi, belonged to the Awraba (or Wariba) Berber tribe, one of the most powerful tribes in northern



Morocco at That time. Her father was Ishaq ibn Muhammad ibn Hamid, the tribe's chief and one of the region's leading figures. This noble tribal lineage would later grant her considerable influence within her community and make her a valuable political asset for any ruler aspiring to control the region.

Idris I ibn Abdullah came to Morocco fleeing the Abbasids after the Battle of Fakh (787 CE), where he sought refuge with the Awraba tribe, who welcomed him and pledged allegiance to him. However, Idris I quickly realized That remaining in power required more than just a fleeting tribal pledge; he needed a strong and lasting alliance with the tribe, and marrying the daughter of its chief was the surest guarantee of this alliance. (Ibn Abī Zarʿ al-Fāsī, 1972)

The marriage between Idris I and Kenza enabled Idris I to unite the Berber tribes under his banner and establish the nucleus of the Idrisid state. Kenza was more than just a wife; she was a valuable asset That Idris I leveraged to consolidate his rule, and a crucial link between the nascent central authority and the deep tribal roots of society.

From the outset, Kenza's character was exceptional. The daughter of a tribal leader, she had been trained in politics and negotiation from a young age. When she married Idris I, she was not merely a woman behind the throne, but a true partner in building the state. Sources describe her as "intelligent, affable, of sound mind, and skilled in statecraft and law"—qualities That qualified her to manage the affairs of state under the most challenging circumstances. This marriage did not last long. A few years later, the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid sensed the danger posed by this new political entity in the far reaches of Morocco and sent his spies to assassinate Idris I. Idris I was poisoned by one of the Abbasid spies, leaving behind a widow in her final month of pregnancy. Here begins the most important chapter in Kanza's life, the chapter of the "Mother of the Shadow" who would save the state from collapse. (Eustache, 1986a) In the context of the sectarian conflict That characterized this period, it is worth noting That the Idrisids belonged to the Zaydi branch of Shi'ism, which made them a direct target of the Sunni Abbasid Caliphate. Some later Zaydi sources indicate That Kanza herself was aware of this sectarian dimension and That her alliance with Idris I was not merely political, but also a defense of an Alid-Zaydi project against Abbasid hegemony. This sectarian dimension made Kanza more than just a



traditional wife; it made her a "protector of a religious and political project." Some rare sources mention That Kenza had memorized some of the Qur'an and was knowledgeable about the rulings of the religion, which qualified her to be a religious authority for the people of her tribe after the death of her husband.

The Second Theme: The Shadow Mother: Kenza and the Protection of the Throne After the Assassination of Idris I

The assassination of Idris I was the most difficult and dangerous moment in the history of the fledgling Idrisid state. Idris I was killed without leaving a clear heir. The Awraba tribe, which had been the backbone of his rule, could have revolted or sought a new ally. The Abbasids in Baghdad were lying in wait to eradicate any remaining Alawite influence in Morocco. In this terrifying political vacuum, Kenza's character emerged powerfully.

Kenza, who was nine months pregnant, suddenly found herself a widow and the leader of a nation without a leader. In cooperation with Rashid, Idris I's trusted servant and regent, Kenza managed the situation with shrewdness and wisdom. Her first decision was to keep the news of his death secret until after she gave birth, then to flee Fez to escape potential assassination attempts targeting the unborn child who held the future of the state. (Eustache, 1986b).

Exactly two months after her husband's assassination, Kenza gave birth to her son, whom she named Idris II, after his father. And so, in a miracle akin to fate, the heir to the throne was born, after everyone had thought the Idrisid state had ended before it even began. This newborn, who carried the blood of the Prophet on his father's side and the blood of the Berber nobility on his mother's, represented the only hope for the continuation of the Idrisid project.

Kenza's mission did not end with the birth of her son; rather, it had just begun. She had to ensure her son's survival in a world teeming with enemies and opportunists. She also had to maintain the loyalty of the Awraba tribe to the infant and manage the affairs of state with the regent, Rashid, until her son reached adulthood. During this critical period, Kenza was the "protective shadow" of the throne, the unseen hand That guided every aspect of the state.

This situation continued for years, with Kenza effectively ruling alongside the regent, Rashid. She met with tribal leaders, negotiated with them, and secured



their loyalty to the new ruler. She oversaw her son's upbringing and education, becoming his first and last teacher. She was the rock upon which all the Abbasid conspiracies and plots of their adversaries shattered.

It is noteworthy That Sunni historical sources have greatly wronged Kanza by neglecting to mention her or downplaying her role, perhaps due to cultural bias against women's participation in government, or perhaps due to an attempt to legitimize Idrisid rule religiously by focusing on Idris II's Alawite lineage on his father's side and ignoring his Berber roots on his mother's side. However, the truth is That Kanza was the true ruler of the Idrisid state in its early years, and she paved the way for her son to become its greatest ruler. (Goldziher & Lewis, 1981) From a Shi'a historical perspective, Kanza's story is of particular importance because it presents a model of female leadership within an Alawite-Zaydi context. In the Zaydi school of thought, which the Idrisids adopted, women are not prohibited from holding leadership positions if they possess the necessary competence, which explains why the Awraba tribe accepted Kanza's leadership after her husband's death. Some rare Zaydi sources mention That Kanza herself sat in the council of governance, received tribal ambassadors, and issued commands and prohibitions in the name of her infant son, even sealing official correspondence with the temporary state seal. This unique scene in the history of Islamic North Africa places Kanza among the most powerful women who ruled in a regency, such as Khayzuran, the mother of Harun al-Rashid, but with the difference That Kanza ruled in a country far removed from the Abbasid center of power, and under far harsher and more dangerous circumstances.

Third Axis: Kenza and the Preparation of Idris II: From an Orphaned Child to the Greatest Idrisid Ruler

Kenza's most important mission in life was preparing her son, Idris II, to be a great ruler. She realized That political inheritance alone was not enough; a child needed education, training, and systematic preparation to be able to bear the burdens of governance. Here, Kenza's genius as a teacher and mentor shines through.

Kenza began educating her son from a very young age. She ensured he memorized the Holy Quran and gained a deep understanding of the faith,



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surrounding him with the best teachers and scholars. But she didn't stop at theoretical education; she also focused on teaching him the arts of leadership and politics from an early age. She would take him with her to meetings with tribal leaders so he could learn how to negotiate, how to build alliances, how to listen to others, and how to persuade them of his point of view.

The result was astonishing; his brilliance led historians to describe him as a child prodigy. According to some sources, Idris II could read at the age of four, write at five, and had memorized the entire Quran by the age of eight. He also possessed extraordinary intelligence and an exceptional capacity for learning, to the point that he was personally compared to Ibn Sina in his genius. This genius did not arise from nothing, but was the fruit of meticulous planning and direct supervision by his mother, Kenza. (Hastings, 2003)

When Idris II was eleven years old, and after the death of his regent, Rashid, who was also assassinated at the instigation of the Abbasids, Kenza felt the time had come for her son to officially assume power. Idris II was proclaimed Imam of Morocco in the mosque of Volubilis (Walila), in the presence of prominent tribal leaders and state dignitaries. This proclamation at the age of eleven was unprecedented in Moroccan history, but everyone's confidence in this child's exceptional abilities stemmed from what they knew about his upbringing at the hands of his mother.

Kenza understood that handing over power to her son at such a young age required close monitoring and supervision, but she had faith in his abilities. Most importantly, she was confident that she had instilled in him the values and principles that would make him a just ruler capable of bearing responsibility. Thus, Idris II transformed from an orphaned child into the greatest ruler in the history of the Idrisid dynasty. He is credited with the vast expansion of the state, the founding of Fez as the new capital, the consolidation of its foundations, and the triumph over all who challenged him. (Ibn Khaldun, 2005) Idris II's achievements were not solely the result of his innate abilities, but rather the culmination of years of meticulous preparation, planning, and upbringing by his mother, who was behind all his successes. At the same time, she remained the "shadow princess" who stood behind her son, supporting him and ensuring the stability and security of the state. Interestingly, some later Ismaili Shi'a sources,



which adopted the concept of the Hidden Imams, attempted to weave a special legend around Kanza, linking her to the idea of the "Blessed Mother" who carries the Hidden Imam. This mythical dimension, though exaggerated, reflects the profound impression Kanza left on the collective Shi'a memory, where she became a model of the strong and wise mother who protects her son's imamate against tyrants. This later influenced some Shiite sects in Morocco, who elevated strong mothers to symbols of resilience and resistance.

Kanza was not raising an ordinary son; she faced three extraordinary challenges simultaneously. First, early orphanhood: Idris I died poisoned, leaving his unborn child in her womb. This created a tremendous psychological and political void, as there was no father to serve as a direct model of authority. Second, the constant Abbasid conspiracies. The Abbasids had assassinated his father and were lying in wait for the child. Kanza was preparing her son to be not just an ordinary ruler, but a resistance fighter and a bulwark against a vast empire. Third, the warring tribes. Morocco at That time was a collection of fragmented and warring tribes, and the child needed an extraordinary figure to persuade them to obey and submit to his rule. For this reason, Kanza realized she was raising a "time bomb" of intelligence and prestige, destined to explode in the face of the Abbasids and unite Morocco under one banner.

In addition to the memorization and religious instruction mentioned in the text, Kenza followed a profound educational approach That could be termed the "hidden method." First, she taught him finished direct exposure. Not content with simply sending him to tutors at the palace, she personally took him to the gatherings of tribal leaders, allowing him to hear firsthand about tribal disputes, political deals, threats, and alliances. He learned how to disperse a meeting when tensions rose and how to enter when tempers had cooled. This method is equivalent in modern psychology to what is called "leadership immersion training." Second, she cultivated emotional intelligence. Through accompanying him to these meetings, Idris II learned to read the emotions of others, when to remain silent, when to speak, when to threaten, when to make promises, and when to act decisively. Third, she instilled in him a sense of security and awareness of conspiracies. Since his father had been assassinated by poison at the hands of Abbasid agents, Kenza undoubtedly trained him to be wary of excessive trust, To



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detect infiltrators, and to deal with poisons and plots. Some sources even suggest That she taught him "the art of political dissimulation," meaning concealing one's true intentions in perilous moments, feigning weakness when strong, and strength when weak.

The sources also mention That Idris II was personally compared to Ibn Sina in his genius, and this comparison is not arbitrary. Just as Ibn Sina memorized the Quran at around the age of ten, Idris memorized it at eight, and could read at four and write at five. However, the greatest difference between them is That Ibn Sina was a purely academic scholar, Who spent his life immersed in books and theoretical sciences, while Idris II was a scholar, ruler, military leader, and diplomat all at once. His genius was not purely academic, but rather a practical, political genius—a rare quality in history. How many geniuses has the world known in jurisprudence, medicine, or mathematics, and how many in leadership, politics, and statecraft? Idris II combined both talents, thanks to his mother's program, which integrated theoretical knowledge with practical training from childhood.

He was the pledge of allegiance to Idris II at the age of eleven was an unprecedented event, one That would not have been possible without Kenza's organizational genius. She had spent years prior to this pledge on a unique diplomatic assignment: visiting tribal leaders one by one, convincing them That her son was no ordinary child, but a wise imam from a young age, endowed by God with wisdom unmatched by others. When the day of the pledge arrived at the Walila Mosque, Kenza left nothing to chance. She presented her son to the assembly, likely asking him to deliver a sermon, adjudicate a pending case, or surprise the attendees with his knowledge of genealogy, laws, and decisions. When he astonished them with his brilliance, Kenza herself stepped forward to be the first to publicly pledge allegiance to him. This step was crucial, for the pledge of allegiance from the founder's widow and the mother of the prodigy lent immense moral legitimacy to the event, compelling the tribal leaders to pledge allegiance one after another without hesitation. The entire scene was a carefully orchestrated political drama, directed by Kenza with unparalleled skill. (Hastings, 2003)



Kenza's extraordinary zeal in raising Idris II cannot be understood without understanding her psychology after her husband's assassination. She transformed her dream of a powerful Idrisid state into an obsession with immortality. She made Idris II a new embodiment of her martyred husband, and simultaneously her weapon for revenge against the Abbasids who had assassinated him. For this reason, according to most sources, she never remarried, but rather dedicated her entire life to creating an "ideal king" who would achieve what others could not. Idris II was, in a sense, her greatest artistic achievement, much like a sculptor crafts their life's work. This explains why she continued to observe, support, and guide him even after he became an independent ruler, never relinquishing her role. Idris II's genius was not a spontaneous miracle, but rather the fruit of ages of meticulous planning, direct supervision, and a love That transformed into a comprehensive political project.

Fourth Axis: Kenza After Idris II: The Wise Woman Who Divided the Kingdom and Prevented Collapse

After the death of Idris II in 828 CE, the Idrisid state faced a new challenge: the absence of the strong leader who had united the tribes and recognized the state. Idris II left behind twelve sons, and without a clear division of power, the struggle for rule among them threatened the state's disintegration. It was here That Kenza intervened once again, despite her advanced age, to save what she, her husband, and her son had built.

Kenza took charge of organizing the Idrisid household internally, distributing regions and provinces among her descendants in a way That ensured the unity of the state and prevented conflict. She acted as the "Mother of Princes," whose moral authority over the entire ruling family was unshakeable. Thanks to her wisdom and discernment, the kingdom was divided among the twelve lads, each governing a specific region under the sovereignty of the Idrisid family as a whole. The division of power was not the end of the matter; for years afterward, Kenza continued to monitor the affairs of her descendants, address their problems, and guide them. She traveled between their regions to check on their well-being, resolve their disputes, and ensure their loyalty to the unified Idrisid dynasty. This behavior reflects her commitment to the unity of the state and her efforts to



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prevent its fragmentation, despite the immense challenges facing the government after the death of its most powerful ruler. (Marwa Padila, 2022) In one of the most compelling pieces of evidence of her continued role, we find That even years after her son's death, Kenza continued to visit her descendants in their respective regions. Among these descendants was Daoud ibn Idris II, the governor of Taza. Sources indicate That she visited him in his region at a time when the state's need for cohesion was growing. This behavior demonstrates That Kenza acted as a "soft power" That held the disparate factions of the ruling family together and maintained its unity, which delayed the collapse of the Idrisid state for decades after her death.

In this sense, it can be said That Kenza, the European, was the "third pillar" of the Idrisid state, after Idris I (the founder) and Idris II (the builder). She was the wise woman who worked behind the scenes, from beginning to end, to ensure the continuity of a political project That nearly misshapen more than once. Her legacy was not merely a great son, but an entire state That endured for centuries thanks to her wisdom and decisive interventions.

From a comparative perspective with Shi'a history, Kanza's role in the Idrisid state can be likened to That of Lady Fatima al-Ma'suma (peace be upon her) in Qom, or to the role of some women of the Ahl al-Bayt in preserving the Imamate. Just as Alawite women played crucial roles in transmitting knowledge and preserving the Imamate line in times of danger, so too was Kanza the "guardian" of the Idrisid project and the "patron" of his descendants. This contrast, even though Kanza was not a descendant of the Ahl al-Bayt by lineage, made her part of this context through her marriage to Idris al-Alawi, thus qualifying her to be mentioned in some later Shi'a sources as one of the "Mothers of the Believers" in the broad sense—That is, the women who preserved the Alawite Imamate and Caliphate in the most dire circumstances. (Zweiri & König, 2008)

After the death of Idris II in 828 CE, Kanza found herself facing a problem That Idris I had never encountered. Idris I died with only one son, who was still in the womb, while Idris II left behind twelve sons, each a legitimate prince aspiring to rule. The greatest problem was That the Idrisid state had not yet established a clear mechanism for succession; it was a fledgling state built on the personality of a single individual, Idris II. With his passing, the stage was set for a full-blown



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civil war, as each tribe would support one prince against another, and each region would see its own prince as the sole rightful successor. Kanza immediately realized That this was not merely a passing family conflict, but rather the beginning of the end for the state if she allowed the grandsons to fight amongst themselves without decisive intervention.

Kanza did not distribute the regions among her grandsons arbitrarily or according to personal whims, but rather established a precise system based on three astute criteria. The first criterion was competence, not age. The oldest grandson was not automatically given the throne simply because he was the oldest, but rather the one with the greatest wisdom, loyalty, and ability to manage the affairs of the people. The second criterion was balanced geographical distribution. Each grandson was given a region as far apart as possible from the others to minimize the chances of direct friction and conflict between them. The capital, Fez, was designated a neutral zone under the supervision of the central family council, not controlled by any single prince. The third criterion was the system of provinces and financial contributions. Each prince was required to pay a regular slice of his province's revenues to the central treasury of the Idrisid dynasty, ensuring That no province would secede from the main body of the state. This plan, which closely resembles a modern federal system, was more than a thousand years ahead of its time and proved That Kenza was a political strategist of the highest caliber. One of the most remarkable behaviors recorded in the sources is Kenza's continued visits to her grandsons in their respective provinces, despite her advanced age and the hardships of travel in those days. These visits were not merely affectionate family visits, but rather carried profound political objectives. The first purpose: surprise inspections. When Kenza visited her grandson without prior notice, she witnessed firsthand the full truth: how he ruled, whether he oppressed the people, whether he neglected their affairs, whether he planned secession from the mother state. The second purpose: a maternal display of power. By being present in her grandson's territory, she reminded him, his supporters, and the tribes of the region That their ancestor's mother was still alive, watching, and holding ultimate authority. This was enough to deter any thought of rebellion or disobedience. The third purpose: direct resolution of disputes. If a conflict arose between two grandsons over territorial boundaries or rights, Kenza would



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travel from one region to another like a "roving court," listening to both sides and ruling according to what she deemed right, thus preventing minor disputes from escalating into major wars. One of the most famous of these visits was her visit to her grandson, Daoud ibn Idris II, the governor of Taza, at a time when the state desperately needed cohesion and unity.

The original text used a precise expression when it described Kenza as "the arrest." "The soft hand." Let's analyze this look in depth. The fist signifies strength and the ability to compel and deter, while "soft" means That she never used armies, prisons, or executions to impose her will. Instead, she employed four key tools: the respect she had cultivated in the hearts of her descendants over the years, the wisdom by which they understood her decisions, the supreme moral standing That made disobeying her a disgrace, and tears when the situation demanded it. Kenza struck with a velvet fist, striking without wounding, deterring without oppressing, and winning without creating enemies. Her descendants obeyed her not out of fear of her sword, but because they knew with certainty That she was the only guarantor of their unity, and That without her, they would devour one another, and the state built by their grandfather and father at the cost of their lives and blood would crumble. Kenza was not alone in history in having done what she did, but she was among the first to assume this role. She can be compared to Queen Catherine de Medici of 16th-century France, who was also the widow of a king. She was assassinated, assumed regency over her sons, and divided the provinces among them to prevent civil war, remaining the de facto ruler until her death. She can also be compared to Princess Olga of Kiev in 10th-century Russia, whose husband was assassinated. She ruled fiercely, avenged her husband, converted to Christianity, and groomed her son to rule. However, the difference between Kenza and these two queens is That Catherine and Olga ruled officially and held positions of power openly, while Kenza ruled from behind the scenes throughout her life, without claiming a throne or assuming a formal regency. This makes her experience unique and more nuanced in Islamic political history.

Looking at the results objectively, Kenza's plan was largely successful, but it was not a lasting miracle. The positive aspect is That Kenza gave the Idrisid state an additional fifty to seventy years of life after the death of Idris II, a rare



achievement That immortalizes any politician in history. The negative aspect is That the Idrisid state ultimately disintegrated after several decades, for three main reasons. Accumulated: First, the ruling family's numbers reproduced with each successive generation, creating a far greater pool of claimants to the throne than Kenza's strategy could accommodate. Second, some tribes allied themselves with the Umayyads in Andalusia and the Abbasids in Baghdad against certain Idrisid princes, exploiting internal conflicts. Third, no leader with the strength of Idris II and the wisdom of Kenza emerged to reunite the family. Nevertheless, Kenza deserves credit for ensuring the state survived a full generation after the death of its most powerful ruler, a feat most states built on the charisma of a single individual have failed to achieve. (Marwan & Padila, 2022) Perhaps this is the greatest paradox in Kenza's story: a woman who never held an official position, was never regent, never declared herself queen, never wore a crown, yet wielded real power during the state's most critical moments. She chose Idris II's tutors and determined his educational program. She decided when her son, despite his young age, would be proclaimed king. She was the one who divided the kingdom among twelve grandsons after his death. She was the one who resolved disputes among them, visited their regions, and monitored their affairs for many years. All of this proves a fundamental truth in political science: power is not always in official position, but rather in wisdom, history, moral standing, and the ability to solve problems when everyone else is incapable. Kenza al-Urubiyya is the earliest example in Moroccan and Islamic history of a woman who managed the state from behind the scenes without seeking the throne, yet left an indelible mark on the entire course of the nation. She Is an enduring lesson in wise female leadership, which needs neither pronouncements nor titles, but only keen vision, unwavering patience, and a love That transforms into a political project changing the history of an entire nation.

Conclusion

In concluding this journey through the life of Kenza, the European princess who forged the glory of Idris II, we realize That history is not made solely by kings and great leaders, but also by those who work behind the scenes, away from the limelight, yet with an impact no less thoughtful or significant. Kenza was one



such person. Her story is a testament to a woman's ability to be a true partner in building civilizations, even in the harshest and most challenging circumstances. Kenza began her political life as the daughter of a tribal chief and the wife of a state's founder, but she quickly transcended these roles to become a leader and ruler during the state's most perilous moments. When her husband was assassinated while she was expectant, it would have been easy for her to succumb to despair or flee to safety. But she chose to fight: she fought for the survival of her unborn child, for the survival of her husband's dream, and for a legacy yet to be born.

Her greatest achievement lay in her remarkable ability to prepare her son to become the greatest ruler of the Idrisid state. She understood That the future is not built with words, but by cultivating future leaders. Thanks to her upbringing, education, and training, Idris II became the legendary leader who unified Morocco and founded its capital, Fez. This achievement was not merely a natural outcome, but the fruit of long-term planning and tireless, behind-the-scenes work. After her son's death, Kenza proved once again That She was not only a "great mother," but also a "skilled statesman." By wisely dividing the realm among her descendants, she averted the early collapse of the state and ensured the Idrisid dynasty's continuity. This is leadership That does not seek glory, but creates it.

Findings

1. Kenza, the European, was not merely a wife or mother, but a de facto "shadow ruler": The study showed That Kenza wielded power straight and indirectly during three crucial periods: after her husband's assassination (as a de facto regent alongside Rashid), during her minor son's reign (as a key advisor and guide), and after his death (as the divider of the kingdom and guarantor of unity).
2. The alliance with the Awraba tribe through Idris I's marriage to Kenza was the decisive factor in the achievement of the Idrisid project: Without this marriage, Idris I would not have secured the loyalty of the Awraba tribe, and consequently, the Idrisid state would not have been established. Kenza was the winning political card.
3. Idris II's exceptional personality was a direct result of Kenza's systematic upbringing: The accounts of Idris II's brilliance and his memorization of the



Quran at a young age were not amazing, but rather the result of a well-structured educational plan overseen by his mother. 4. Traditional historical sources neglected Kenza's role due to cultural and political biases: either because they did not consider women fit to rule, or because they wanted to focus on the Alawite lineage to lend religious legitimacy.

5. Kenza saved the Idrisid state from collapse twice: first, after her husband's assassination, by protecting her son and securing the allegiance to him; and second, after her son's death, by distributing power among his offspring and preventing conflict.

Recommendations

1. For researchers and historians: It is essential to reread Islamic history from a feminist perspective, to search for the marginalized roles of women in the sources, and to try to uncover female figures who played central roles but remained in the shadows.
2. For educational and cultural institutions: Include the European figure of Kenza in school curricula and cultural programs as a model of a leading woman in Islamic history, especially in Moroccan curricula That study the Idrisid state.
3. For filmmakers and historical drama producers: Draw inspiration from Kenza's story for a dramatic work or film. It is a story full of suspense, conflict, and emotion, and has the potential to be a historical epic par excellence.
4. For those interested in women's issues: Presenting Kenza al-Urubiyya as a role model for contemporary Arab and Muslim women, as she proves That women are capable of leadership, governance, and influence even in the most difficult circumstances.
5. For libraries and publishing houses: Focusing on printing and translating studies related to Kenza al-Urubiyya into widely spoken languages, tT disseminate the biography of this remarkable woman more broadly.



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