STUDIES ON THE TRASMISSION OF "QUR'ANIC READINGS" (QIRĀ'ĀT) IN AL-ANDALUS

INTRODUCTION

Despite efforts from Spanish scholars to deepen studies on different aspects related to Islamic history in the Iberian Peninsula, there has hardly been, until today, decisive results in relation to Qur'anic studies. This is specially so when comparing these works with the ones produced in relation to the development of other Islamic religious sciences in the Iberian Peninsula, as the study of *hadith* or Maliki law, where there already exist decisive contributions from Spanish as well as foreign scholars. As we will see, the majority of works on Qur'anic sciences in al-Andalus have been carried out by European researchers, especially German.

In this occasion I shall deal only with one aspect of Qur'anic studies: the variant "readings" of the Sacred Text. After the Prophet's death some different readings of the Qur'an existed and increased as his companions died. These readings were called *qirā'āt* and were transmitted by Qur'an experts. In the (AH) 4th/(AD) 10th century, it was decided to have recourse to readings handed down from seven authoritative "readers" (*qurrā'*). The result of this was "the seven readings" (*al-qirā'āt al-sah'*), each having two transmitted versions (*riwāyatān*) with only minor variations in phrasing, but all containing meticulous vowel-points and

other necessary diacritical marks. The "seven readers" were Ibn 'Āmir of Damascus (d. 118/736), Ibn Kathīr of Mecca (d. 119/737), 'Āṣim of Kufa (d. 128/745), Abū 'Amr al-'Alā' of Basra (d. 153/770), Ḥamza b. Ḥabīb of Kufa (d. 156/772), Nāfi' of Medina (d. 169/785), and al-Kisā'ī of Bagdad (d. 189/805) [Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., s.v. "Ķirā'a" (Rudi Paret)].

This article will be divided into two parts: first, I will try to outline a brief outlook on studies of Qur'anic readings in Spanish research; then, I will put forward some new facts on *qirā'āt* transmission in al-Andalus, which will enable me to highlight the points that could derive in new and necessary research. It may not be needed to note that Spanish scholars, due to historical and budgetary reasons, have paid special attention to Andalusi Islam.

1. STUDIES ON QUR'ANIC READINGS IN SPANISH SCHOLARSHIP

A study on Qur'anic readings' transmission in al-Andalus should be considered in relation not only to the development of religious sciences in the Iberian Peninsula, but also in relation to the education received by Andalusi Muslim scholars (' $ulam\bar{a}$ '), whatever their later dedication might have been. The learning of $qir\bar{a}$ ' $\bar{a}t$ is mentioned since the 4th /10th century in almost all the preserved biographies as the beginning of the training in religious sciences of Andalusi children and youth. Some of these ' $ulam\bar{a}$ ' devoted themselves exclusively to Qur'anic sciences; others combined it with the knowledge of other disciplines. Some simply considered them as a basic part of an intellectual education that later went in another direction.

The Andalusi intellectual life has been extensively studied during the last thirty years and there are already numerous works that enable to make general conclusions on the development of different aspects in this peripheral territory to the great Arab and Islamic world during the Middle Ages. Since the publication of the first great joint work in this sense in 1978, Dominique Urvoy, *Le monde des ulémas andalous du V/XIe au VII/XIIIe siècle: étude sociologique* [Urvoy 1978], numerous studies have been written, the majority in Spanish, on the introduction in al-Andalus of the different sciences, their later development by Andalusis, and the influence some of them had centuries later in the East. We can roughly describe a simplistic outline which however corresponds to the evolution of the majority of sciences: the introduction and gradual assimilation

during the 2nd/8th, 3th/9th, and 4th/10th centuries of what is produced in the great cultural urban centers of the Islamic world; the Andalusi creation during the 5th/11th, 6th/12th, and 7th/13th centuries; and the Andalusi export to the East of its great works since this last century, in many cases through its authors' emigration and others through the teaching of their works in the East. From this moment, the intellectual history of al-Andalus cannot be separated from the one of the rest of the Islamic world. It would be inconceivable to understand mysticism without Ibn 'Arabī of Murcia, law without Ibn Rushd of Cordoba, philosophy without his grandson Averroes, botany without Ibn al-Bayṭār, and so on. Al-Andalus returns to the East what it received and, in some aspects, more.

As for Our'anic readings, until today, its study has been approached mainly in relation to this last period of the influence of Andalusis in the East. There are two interesting articles on the two great Andalusi figures, both from the 11th century, and the eastern impact of their work: Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib and Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, which were published simultaneously in 1986, although one of them had been exposed two years earlier. The latter was written by A. Neuwirth and titled "Koranlesung zwischen islamischem Ost und West" [Neuwirth 1986] and the former, "Un type d'échange culturel interméditerranéen au Moyen-Age: Les lecteurs du Coran entre l'Andalousie et le Machreq," by Louis Pouzet [1986]. Many years before, Otto Pretzl had edited the two works by Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, Kitāb al-taysīr fi-l-qirā'āt al-sab', published in Istanbul in 1930 and re-edited in Beirut in 1996 [Al-Dānī 1930/1996], and Kitāb al-muqni' fī rasm maṣāhif al-amṣār ma'a kitāb al-naqṭ al-imām [Al-Dānī 1932]. During the last twenty years, other works by this same author, dedicated to Our'anic readings as well as to other subjects, have been edited in different Arab countries [Al-Dānī 1982, 1983a, 1983b, 1988, 2005].

In the same way, we have to note a work by Rodríguez Mañas, "Las lecturas coránicas en al-Andalus, s. V/XI-VII/XIII, a través de la *Takmila* de Ibn al-Abbār" (Qur'anic readings in al-Andalus, 5th/10th-7th/13th century, through the *Takmila* of *Ibn al-Abbār*) [Rodríguez Mañas 1990], which verses on the issue from the internal point of view of the transmission of *qirā'āt* during late period al-Andalus through a known Andalusi biographical dictionary. As well as the preserved texts on Qur'anic readings by Andalusi authors, who are few with exception of the ones noted for Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, biographical dictionaries are the main sources to know what was the interest of Andalusis towards *qirā'āt*, which works they transmitted and which ones they created. Moreover, another Andalusi characteristic is that the dictionaries' au-

thors are aware of this cultural heritage for nearly all of them aim to continue a previous dictionary in order to avoid chronological gaps in the knowledge of the cultural tradition of Andalusi 'ulamā' [Mediano 1997; Ávila 1997; Penelas 1997]. This permits the tracing, from the 4th/10th century onwards, not only of biographies of numerous figures who dedicated their lives to science, preferably to religious science, but also enables the study of the development of different disciplines from this period until the 8th/14th century, when the last great Andalusi biographical dictionary was composed [Ibn al-Khaṭīb 2003]. There are textual references to two dictionaries composed in the 3rd/9th century but these works have not survived [Ávila 1997:38]. As for Qur'anic studies, as I have mentioned at the beginning of this article, that global work is still an unresolved matter, as well as the preparation of similar works to the one by Rodríguez Mañas for the 5th/11th and 6th/12th centuries but referring to other biographical dictionaries.

Similarly, another genre closely related to the one of biographical dictionaries, the one of fahrasa-s or fihrist, $barn\bar{a}maj$, etc., or compendiums of different kinds of biographies, could provide valuable information in order to carry out a study on the transmission of $qir\bar{a}'\bar{a}t$ in al-Andalus. This study does not yet exist, in the same way as we cannot find a general study on other subjects through these sources. To get an idea of the usefulness of these sources I would like to show a work that has already been carried out on one of these works. Juan Manuel Vizcaíno [2002] extracted meticulously during various years the bibliographic information from the Fahrasa of Ibn Khayr, a prestigious Sevillian author deceased in 575/1180. We are still waiting for a study of the bibliography he extracted, as well as the transmission chains of these works.

Juan Manuel Vizcaíno has documented, in the *Fahrasa* of Ibn Khayr, references to 133 works on Qur'an. Among them, 68 were composed by Andalusis. The majority of them have disappeared, but few have survived and are edited and even partially studied. Through the titles of the works on Qur'an, Vizcaíno groups them into three generic sections: Qur'anic readings, commentaries, and other [Vizcaíno Plaza 2002:103–4]:

1) The first section of Qur'anic readings includes 70 works. Some of them contain the term $qir\bar{a}'\bar{a}t$ in the title or specify "the seven readings" (al- $qir\bar{a}'\bar{a}t$ al-sab'); others mention the seven readers as a whole in their titles; only one of the works mentions the eight readers; and some titles refer specifically to one of these readers: Nāfi', al-Ḥaḍramī, or Ḥamza. In addition, there are some titles that refer to the differences between readings ($ikhtil\bar{a}t$) and to "irregularities" (shadhdh). A sub-section pertaining

to the one dedicated to Our'anic readings is constituted by works related to phonetic issues and Qur'anic recitation. Some of these works deal with certain letters: (hamza, yā', hā', rā' with shadda) or with a series of letters (hurūf). Occasionally, phonetic peculiarities of some readings are studied, for example, there is one document dedicated to the letters only read by al-Hadrami, the characteristic $r\bar{a}$ of al-Dani or the peculiar hamza of Hamza. Other works are mentioned dedicated to phonetic phenomena like imāla or idgām of some readings, for example, the imāla in the reading of Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā', Hamza, and al-Kisā'ī, and a text dedicated to the *imāla* of the seven readings. Finally, we can mention another sub-section of books dedicated to recitation (tilāwa) and to recitation and orthoepy (tajwid) at the same time. Furthermore, Ibn Khayr mentions three texts dedicated to pauses in recitation (wagf and ibtida'). 2) The second section of Qur'anic works is dedicated to commentaries, meaning the works of exegesis (tafsīr) as well as works related to philological issues (ma'ānin, garīb) and Islamic law, especially works dedicated to abrogated Qur'anic verses (al-nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh). There are a total of 38 commentaries, from which the most numerous are the philological works, followed by the ones related to law and, lastly, the works of Qur'anic exegesis, which are only nine.

3) Finally, Vizcaíno groups works of varied content that cannot be classified as Qur'anic readings or as commentaries.

Years before the study of the *Fahrasa* of Ibn Khayr, the *Fahrasa* of Ibn 'Aṭiyya, deceased some years before in 541/1147, was edited, being object of the doctoral thesis of José María Fórneas Besteiro [1970], who only published a summary. Other similar texts, as the *Gunya* of Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149) are edited since time ago although there is no study of their content in relation to the topic we are dealing with.

This is the picture that Vizcaíno offers of different Qur'anic works in other bibliographical repertoires.

Naturally, Vizcaíno's study can be extended and the rest of Arabic sources shown in this picture lack of a deep analysis.

To finish with this enumeration of the possibilities offered by biographical dictionaries and by bibliographical repertoires, I must mention a project that was carried out in Spain under the direction of Maribel Fierro during the period comprised between 1988 and 1993 [Fierro 1998]. I worked two years in this project, which was called HATA (Historia de los Autores y Transmisores de al-Andalus = History of authors and transmissions in al-Andalus), first extracting data from Arabic sources and then in the processing of these data. The project's aim was to prepare a bio-bibliographical compendium collecting scholars who had been

born or had lived during a period of their lives in al-Andalus, and who had written, shown, or transmitted any document. In order to do so, we carried out a detailed reading of all the preserved documents which were useful for the study of 'ulamā' biographies or of the development of different sciences in al-Andalus. These texts included numerous Eastern and North African works, which extended and completed the information provided by Andalusi sources. The data obtained, of an enormous volume, were classified into fifteen subjects: Qur'an, hadith, law, dogma, history, literature (adab), poetry, philosophy, grammar, mysticism, medicine, alchemy, astronomy, fahāris, and other.

The value of this work is unique for tracing the history of the introduction in al-Andalus of different sciences and their subsequent development. Although it has not been published, it can be consulted with the authorization of Maribel Fierro.

To finish the recount of the available resources for a researcher who wants to approach the study of Qur'anic readings and its transmission in al-Andalus, we have to mention the preserved Andalusi texts and the edited documents. As we explained at the beginning, German scholars were the first to study Qur'anic readings in al-Andalus.

After many years without any progress in this matter, we can say there has been a reemergence of these editions and, in the last years, many works have been published, especially the preserved books by Abū 'Amr al-Dānī. As I have already mentioned, the first edition of *Kitāh altaysīr* of al-Dānī by Otto Pretzl was re-edited in 1996.

None of these editions or reprints has been carried out in Spain. Since 1990, the collection of *Fuentes Arábico-Hispanas* (Andalusi Arabic sources) is published by the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. Since then, 36 volumes have been published, containing editions and translations of Andalusi Arabic works on different subjects: history, hadith, medicine, botany, literature, biographical dictionaries, etc. Some of these editions are accompanied by lengthy studies. However, until today, no attention has been paid to Qur'an, in none of its disciplines.

As we have been able to see through this brief presentation of sources, there is a lot of material and a lack of studies, although of high quality. As well as the ones mentioned, we have to point out, on the one hand, the works referred to Qur'anic commentaries and, on the other, studies on *qirā'āt* in other Islamic fields, especially in North Africa. On the studies of Andalusi exegetical works (*tafsīr*) we must mention, for example, an article by Vincent Cornell titled "*'Ilm al-Qur'ān* in al-Andalus: The *tafsīr muḥarrar* in the works of three authors" [Cornell 1986] and above all the works by Mustafà Ibrāhīm al-Mashīnī, *Madrasat al-*

tafsīr fi-l-Andalus [Mashīnī 1986] and Ihn al-'Arabī al-Mālikī al-Ishbīlī wa-tafsīru-hu Aḥkām al-Qur'ān [Mashīnī 1991].

As for Qur'anic readings in al-Andalus in 1971, a doctoral dissertation was carried out at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid titled "Las controversias coránicas en al-Andalus y Marruecos" (Qur'anic controversies in al-Andalus and Morocco) by R. Thami Lacmmi [1971], which has not been published. The book by S. A'rāb [1990], al-Qurrā' wa-l-qirā'āt bi-l-Magrib and another one by Aḥmad 'Abd al-Salām Qānūnī [1981], al-Madrasa al-qur'āniyya fi-l-Magrib min al-fatḥ al-islāmī ilà Ibn 'Aṭiyya, have both been published. The former is the completest study written until today on the diffusion of Qur'anic readings in North Africa from the Almoravid period.

QUR'ANIC READINGS IN AL-ANDALUS

After this general overview of existing sources and bibliography, I will try and offer a general picture of what we already know on the creation and transmission of Qur'anic readings in al-Andalus.

In philology we can talk about methodological practice and fundaments which are differentiated into two main disciplines: on one hand, the study of texts or textual critique, which is the science intended towards the correct preservation of transmitted texts, and, on the other, practical hermeneutics. The latter can be considered an auxiliary science of religious doctrines, in the case of Islam, and of $shar\bar{\iota}'a$, understanding this concept in its theological as well as its juridical sense. As for the case of Qur'anic studies, these two philological perspectives produce three disciplines: recitation $(tajw\bar{\iota}d)$, the study of Qur'anic readings and its consequence for exegesis, and, finally, the exegesis itself in its purely hermeneutic aspects $(tafs\bar{\iota}r)$.

As in other sciences, al-Andalus is at first debtor of the East. The first and confusing times of the different versions of Qur'an and its readings in the East were studied by Bergsträsser [1932–33], Pretzl [1986], and Beck [1948–53]. These authors analyze the process by which the elections of Qur'anic readings, as well as their number, were gradually limited during the first centuries of Islam. As it is well known, it was Ibn Mujāhid from Bagdad (d. 324/936) who, with official help, carried out a selection of readings he considered valid, limiting them to seven.

The Qur'an and its recitation were taught in al-Andalus since the 2nd/8th century, shortly after the conquest. The sources mention some ' $ulam\bar{a}$ ' who transmitted readings in general, $qir\bar{a}$ ' at long before Ibn

Mujāhid fixed a number. Among these readings, which were linked to a religious authority and a place where the 'ulamā' practiced his teachings, we find the readings of Nāfi' b. Abī Nu'aym from Medina (d. 169/785), which would later become the most spread and studied reading in al-Andalus. The reason for this success is linked to the diffusion of Maliki religious law in the Iberian Peninsula and the prestige among the followers of this doctrine of religious custom and practice in Medina. The reading of this Nāfi' was transmitted mainly through the version of Warsh (d. 197/812). Ibn Waḍḍāḥ al-Qurṭubī (d. 287/900) introduced this reading in al-Andalus.

At first, eastern influence in al-Andalus on religious sciences comes mainly from Mecca and Medina, as shown by Mahmud 'Ali Makki, an Egyptian professor who carried out his doctoral thesis in Spain. His work meant the first serious study on the transmission of sciences in the Iberian Peninsula, Ensayo sobre las aportaciones orientales en la España musulmana y su influencia en la formación de la cultura hispano-árabe (Essay on eastern contributions to Muslim Spain and its influence on the formation of Arab-Hispanic culture) [Makki 1968]. Although this study is 40 years old and since then numerous works have been edited, it is still a work of reference to know the geographic and human means through which eastern knowledge reached al-Andalus and later developed.

Through Makki's study we can trace, for example, the influence of Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687) to whom the first Qur'anic commentary in the West is ascribed.

Despite the usefulness of Makki's work, we must wait for a study on the introduction of Qur'anic sciences in the Iberian Peninsula to be carried out, a work that would relate the development of Qur'anic sciences between them and with the other sciences; a research work which would clarify what happened in the Iberian Peninsula during the 3th/9th and 4th/10th centuries, especially during this last century when the Umayyad caliph of al-Andalus al-Hakam II promoted the acquisition and diffusion of eastern manuscripts. It is at this moment, as Neuwirth has pointed out [1986], when the qirā'āt are conceived in the East as a closed and complete reading system. This is how they are going to be transmitted in the West and how the great Andalusi figures of the following centuries are going to conceive them. That research would have to try and elucidate what was the role of Qayrawan as mediator in the transmission of science from side to side of the Mediterranean and deepen in said link between the diffusion of Malikism and Qur'anic readings, especially through the transmission of the reading of Nāfi'.

The historical period comprised between the 5th/11th and 6th/13th centuries in relation to the Qur'anic readings is much better known through the works by Urvoy [1978], Neuwirth [1986], Pouzet [1986], Rodríguez Mañas [1990], etc. We know that since this century there is a considerable increase of the interest of Andalusi 'ulamā' on Qur'anic readings. This increase is due to the two great figures mentioned at the beginning of this article, Makkī b. Abī Tālib and Abū 'Amr al-Dānī. These two authors are contemporary and they were both taught by the oriental master Tāhir b. Galbūn (d. 399/1008), author of the work titled Kitāb al-tadhkira fī-l-qirā'āt. Makkī b. Abī Tālib was born in Qayrawān, but settled in Cordoba in 393/1003 and started one of the two diffusion nuclei of this science, the Seville-Cordoba axis. Another 'ulamā' from Qayrawān, 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Ganī al-Ahrab (d. 488/1095), also known as al-Husrī, settled in the Taifa kingdom of Seville and also exerted an enormous influence in al-Andalus. He was blind and wrote two poetic works which had great repercussion: a poem (qasīda) on the Qur'anic reading of Nāfi' and another love work not related to the subject that concerns us.

According to Pouzet, in the 5th/11th century four relevant geographical areas had been defined for the diffusion of Qur'anic readings, each of them linked to a transmitter:

- 1) Seville: Muḥammad b. Shurayḥ (d. 476/1083)
- 2) Cordoba: Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib
- 3) Denia: Abū 'Amr al-Dānī
- 4) Valencia: Abu-l-Ḥasan Ibn Hudhayl (d. 564/1169)

According to Rodríguez Mañas, there were actually only two great centers in al-Andalus: Cordoba-Seville and the East of the Iberian Peninsula (*sharq al-Andalus*), with the cities of Valencia, Denia, and Xativa, for the readers of each of these foci are linked through a master-disciple relationship.

All readers of the first focus are linked to Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib. On the other hand, Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, known by Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, founded a school of Qur'anic studies whose center was in Denia but whose ramifications covered an ample area of eastern al-Andalus (*sharq al-Andalus*). His school was lead by another known author, Abū Dāwūd al-Muqri' (d. 496/1103), after his decease.

One century later, another Andalusi author of this eastern region wrote a work that had great repercussion in the East. He was the blind Qur'anic reader Ibn Fīrruh al-Shāṭibī, deceased at Cairo in 590, author of the didactic poem on Qur'anic readings known as *al-Lāmiyya* or *al-Shāṭibiyya*, which was intended to become a manual for readers of his

time. This poem, as *al-Taysīr* by Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, will be object of numerous commentaries in the East and the West. Pouzet has traced the influence of al-Shāṭibī in Cairo and other Middle Eastern cities—Damascus, Aleppo, Wasit, or Mosul—where his disciples continued teaching these readings until late 7th/13th century.

To finish the study possibilities offered by Andalusi *qirā'āt*, I would like to draw attention on a recent book written by Salvador Peña [2007], where he studies the relation between linguistic sciences and religious sciences, especially through the work of a known Andalusi grammarian, Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī (d. 521/1127). In this magnificent study, Peña analyzes the use of Qur'anic readings from a philosophical point of view, this is, their influence on Qur'anic interpretation; and, on the other hand, researches on the use grammarians did of them in order to establish linguistic rules. Peña points that, in the case of Ibn al-Sīd, "we find *qirā'āt*, which are undoubtedly used as testimony in morphology, syntax, and vocabulary. However, we have not detected any clear case of counter-rule established from the sole testimony of a reading" [Peña 2007:264–65]. This work shows how Qur'anic sciences are present in many different genre, among which linguistics and grammar take a prominent place.

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