

## RESEARCH PAPER

# Secondary Mosques in *Madinat Qurtuba*: Islamization and Suburban Development through Minor Religious Spaces

Carmen González Gutiérrez\*

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Mosques are the most obvious materialization of Islam. They are a clear sign of its presence in a particular territory, the building where the history and influence of Islamic governments is reflected through their artistic elements and architectural variants. However, they are also essential for the everyday life of the neighborhoods they belong to, because their inhabitants usually make use of them for daily prayers.

Despite this importance, mosques have received very uneven treatment by researchers. This has resulted in a strong weighting of scholarly interest towards Friday mosques, while smaller mosques have been largely forgotten by traditional historiography. This paper purposes to challenge the traditional way of researching religious spaces in al-Andalus. Focusing attention on Córdoba, this paper examines the role and impact of minor mosques in *Madinat Qurtuba*, the capital of al-Andalus, by exploring the part they played in the urban development and growth of the Islamic city. The present study focuses on the emiral period (when the first examples of these buildings start to appear, in the 8<sup>th</sup> century) to the Christian conquest in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, as after this event no new mosques were erected in the city.

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### Introduction: Mosques in Islam

It is well known that Islamic civilization has formed around a very strong religious component that permeates all its aspects and has always played an essential role in Muslim lifestyles, from former times until now. Consequently, attempts to understand any aspect of this culture have to be necessarily related, with higher or lower intensity, to religion. This component should never be artificially dissociated if there is an intention

to study this culture in all its complexity (Golvin, 1960).

It is due to this religious factor that mosques are taken to be the most obvious materialization of Islam, landmarks and indicators of its presence in a particular territory. However, this materialization is not exclusively related to their religious constituent, as they were not only buildings devoted to the practice of the Islamic faith. Although that might have been their main use, the erection of mosques in Medieval times and in a specific location had strong links with political power, which conceived of them as a means of monumental display for the benefit of

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\* Universidad de Córdoba, Spain  
[carmengonz28@gmail.com](mailto:carmengonz28@gmail.com)

the ruling authority (Bloom, 1989; Bianquis, 1988; Jurado, 1999; Souto, 2004; Longhurst, 2012). State authorities and others close to the head of political power (e.g. relatives, the wider Court or aristocracy) used the construction of mosques as a platform for auto-representing themselves and for launching precise and very meaningful ideological messages through specific artistic elements and architectural variants. In the case of *Madinat Qurtuba*, if possible to rely on, several testimonies collected in written sources affirm this, but probably the most revealing evidence is an inscription, dated at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, which commemorates the erection of a minaret and the renovation of the external decoration of a mosque. All this transformation was defrayed by the *sayyida Mushtaq*, the mother of al-Hakam II's brother (Souto, 2011, 55).

In the meantime, mosques were an essential component for the everyday life of the neighborhoods they belonged to. Not only did the inhabitants usually conduct daily prayers in them, but also attended the mosques in relation to several quotidian matters associated with education, justice and so on.

Despite the importance they had as a sign for the presence of Islam in a certain territory, as well as identifying specific political rulers and in the lives of regular people who inhabited the cities, mosques have received very uneven treatment from the point of view of research, which has traditionally concentrated on major mosques, leaving minor ones aside. Major mosques<sup>1</sup>, also called Friday or *al-Jami* mosques, where Muslims attend every Friday for the noon prayer, were primordial for the Islamic State because the *jutba*<sup>2</sup> was delivered during this prayer and, as a result, listened to by all the Muslim community of the city. Every Friday, these major mosques concentrated a large number of worshipers who, this way, were given very specific ideological messages through the prayer. In order to fulfill this delivery, mosques generally acquired decorative, architectural and monumental

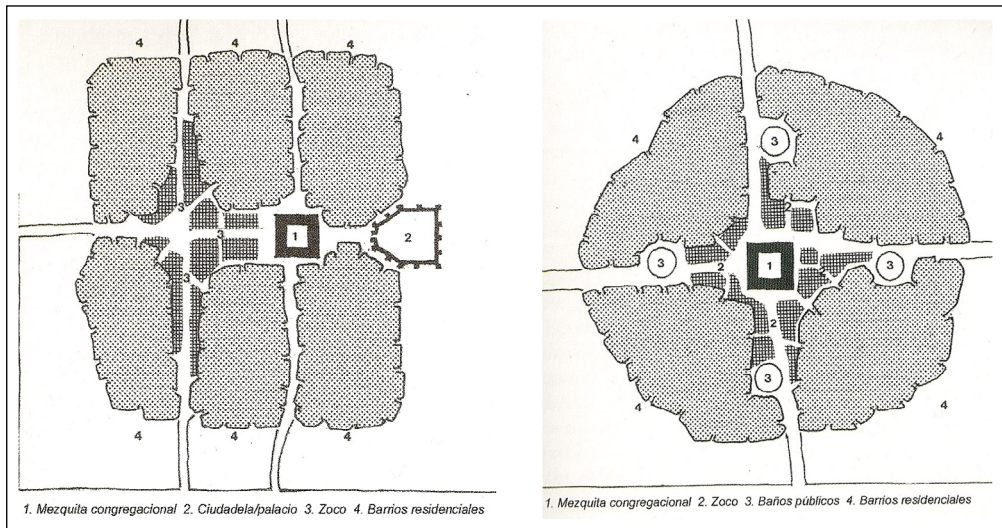
characteristics that, meticulously conceived to send those messages, have constantly attracted the attention of scholars over a long period. Therefore, because of their ideological and spiritual importance and features, these Friday mosques have been studied frequently and in great detail, while the rest of the mosques of the cities, that is to say, all the others (generically called *masajid*, which were not delivering the Friday noon prayer nor the *jutba*, and did not concentrate all the community of believers once a week), remain barely researched, particularly from an urban and topographical point of view.

### **An Old Subject, a Renewed Point of View**

This prominence of Friday Mosques and the almost total absence of other *masajid* in bibliographies of medieval Islamic cities has been motivated by a general and very popular investigation trend that has shaped, until very recent dates, what we know and believe about Islamic cities and their material evidence. The study of mosques inevitably demands reference to be made to the concept of Islamic urbanism, a subject which has been popular in historiographical terms, and widely documented.

#### ***A brief historiographical review: conventional ideas and their turning point***

The interest in medieval Islamic urbanism emerged from the hands of several European and American scholars who were principally focusing on the study of the eastern territories of Islam (e.g. Grabar, 1983; Neglia, 2008). From their rather occidentalized perspective, the aim of their labour was not to identify the keys to understanding the form, development and running of these cities but, imbued by the Roman model for urban spaces and ignoring the Late-antique stage, to reveal an urban prototype where the topography and general structure of medieval Islamic cities could fit. These studies, although of great value in some respects, generally failed to find a unique pattern for



**Figure 1:** Models for Islamic cities in the Middle East and the North of Africa according to traditional scholars (W. and G. Marçais, R. Le Tourneau, J. Berque, Sauvaget, etc.). Sketch by Al Sayyad (Navarro, Jiménez, 2007: 13 and 14, figs. 3 and 4).

defining the urbanism of the Islamic cities. This failure was often interpreted as a consequence of the disorder and unstructured features that were believed to influence the configuration of Islamic towns. In other words, the apparent absence of formal prescriptions that could explain the genesis and development of these cities led some to see chaos and lack of structure, in contrast with the well organized, regular and orthogonal Roman town planning (Bennison and Gasgoine 2007, 2). As a result, the Islamic settlement was believed to be just a collection of several facilities such as a souk, city walls, citadel and a major mosque that was, due to the functions mentioned above, the heart and motor of city life (see **figure 1**).

Criticism of this definition of Islamic towns began around the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century thanks to, at some point, the introduction of archaeological evidence in these analyses, which brought substantial revision of works about Islamic urban planning. Focusing now on the study of the function and sociopolitical features of towns instead of on their forms, immutable patterns and generalizations were no longer accepted, as Islamic towns were now considered capable

of evolution. Western Islamic settlements also broke onto the scene, introducing fresh and very attractive possibilities for scholars to undertake new studies from different perspectives (Abu Lughod, 1987, 22; Neglia, 2008, 10–18; Raymond, 2008). Islamic town planning was not regarded as chaotic or patternless any more, but as the crystallization of non-material values different from Roman cities (Abu-Lughod, 1987, 162; Carver, 1996, 186–188; Wheately, 2001).

Nevertheless, although the concept of the unchanging and chaotic medina is being gradually abandoned and substituted by a more organic model, one of the characteristics of the previous prejudiced approach remains: the Major mosque as the *leitmotif* of urban activity and life (as it can be encountered in different publications very distant in time and methodology, e.g. Marçais, 1928, 97–98; Bianquis, 1988, 13; Wheatley, 2001, 231; or Souto, 2004, 103). However, as a result of having been the main focus for multiple and profuse studies, the analysis of the meaningfulness of their artistic styles through time, their sumptuous epigraphic and decorative programs and their often intricate architectural composition have

resulted in the isolation of these buildings from their urban surroundings. So, the relationship of these buildings to their surroundings remains unexplained in comparison to other aspects.

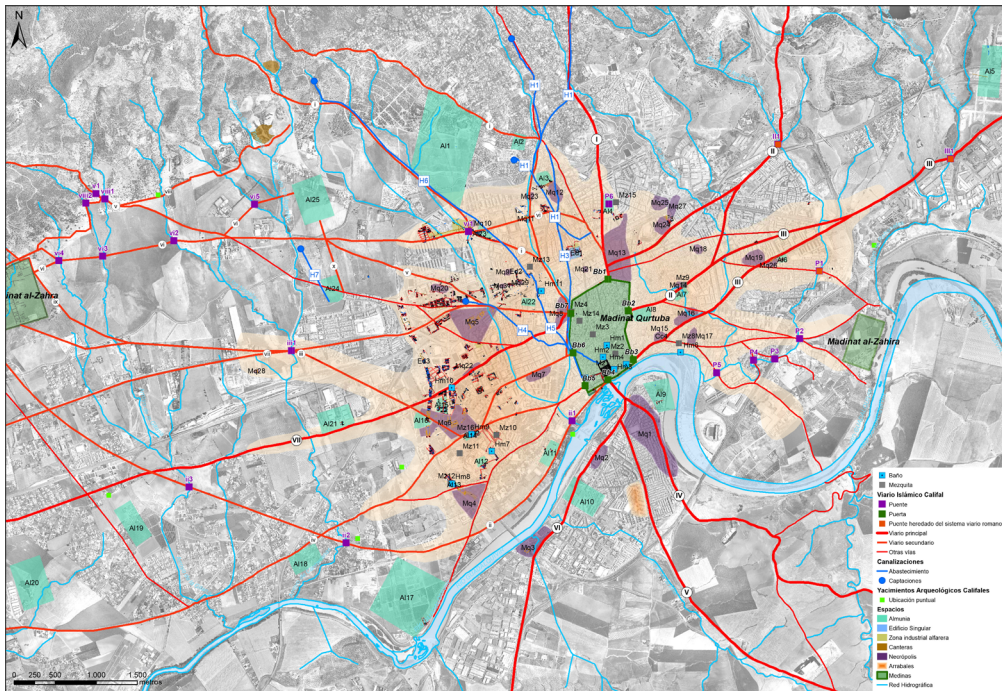
### ***Cordoba in this panorama***

The shadow casted by the striking characteristics of major mosques over other urban elements less eye-catching, has resulted in deep deficiencies in the knowledge of the rest of Islamic urbanism as a whole, especially in some specific towns. Cordoba –*Madinat Qurtuba* under the Islamic domination and the capital of the occidental Islamic world in the Middle Ages- has been no exception until very recently. Under the rule of Islam, the city experienced an astonishing urban growth that turned it into one of the biggest metropolis, of the day. This process of expansion was one of the ‘hot topics’ for pioneer researchers (Castejón, 1929; Ocaña, 1935; Levi-Provençal, 1932; 1957; etcetera), whose main efforts in this respect were dedicated to the reconstruction of the topography of the city when it reached the maximum of its extension, that is to say, during the Umayyad Caliphate and, more specifically, during the 10<sup>th</sup> Century.

However, until very recently there has been a significant lack of archaeological evidence that could suitably support the intent of these scholars in building accurate and precise recreations, which led them to rely on information contained in written sources. Even though it might seem safe to assume that some specific urban elements, such as secondary mosques, should have played an essential role in the configuration of new domestic spaces and the development of a genuine Islamic lifestyle, written sources remain silent about it. This silence, accompanied by the shadow of the Great Mosque<sup>3</sup>, is another factor responsible for the general lack of awareness about the architectural features of minor mosques in Cordoba and, specifically, their function in the built environment.

Fortunately, this panorama is undergoing remarkable and enriching change thanks to emerging building and real-estate activities in Córdoba during the last two decades<sup>4</sup>, which involved multiple archaeological interventions all over the city. Within the context of these interventions, and focusing on the medieval stage, archaeologists have been able to exhume extensive evidence of Islamic suburbs<sup>5</sup> made up of archaeological remains of considerable quantity and quality and, in some cases, in an excellent state of preservation. Among them, some outstanding examples of urban and suburban elements such as cemeteries, baths, *almunias*<sup>6</sup>, domestic spaces and also minor mosques have been identified, allowing the first approximations of the blossoming and growth of the Islamic metropolis to be based on proper archaeological evidence, as well as the beginnings of a quiet but progressive multiplication of bibliographical entries about *Madinat Qurtuba* and its urban configuration. Among these, it is appropriate to highlight works about cemeteries (for example Pinilla, 1997; Casal 2001 and 2003; León, 2008–2009), domestic architecture (such as Fuertes, 2002), global perspectives (Van Stäevel, 2002) or the young journal *Anejos de Anales de Arqueología Cordobesa*, in which the dissemination of results emanating from archaeological interventions in the medieval phases of the city has a very important presence.

The gradual assumption of this novel research direction is essential for establishing a correct comprehension of this period of Córdoba’s history, in which Islamic culture was established for at least five centuries. As the capital of al-Andalus, the occidental Islamic dominion, *Madinat Qurtuba* was one of the most significant and famous conurbations of its time. Thus, its better knowledge will also and undoubtedly be of advantage to an improved comprehension of the dynamism and configuration of cities in al-Andalus and western Islam more generally.



**Figure 2:** *Madinat Qurtuba* at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century (Vaquerizo, 2010: 541, fig. 251).

### Innovative perspectives: integral archaeological study of minor mosques of *Madinat Qurtuba*

As one might expect given the foregoing discussion, and concerning spaces for prayer, the Major Mosque has featured heavily in studies about *Madinat Qurtuba*<sup>7</sup>. But now, and for the first time in the case of Cordoba, archaeological data is allowing scholars to systematize, analyze and verify the role of minor mosques in the development of the city, especially beyond its walls (see **figure 2**)<sup>8</sup>. The usual disregard for the urban role of secondary mosques in general, in spite of the appearance of new and very eloquent information referring to them, has motivated the author's desire to develop a serious archaeological approach to them, including a reassessment of the written sources in order to confirm or deny conventional positions adopted in the historiography. This is challenging because, even though interest in deciphering the topographical configuration of the capital of al-Andalus is not strictly a

new field, the intention to observe its birth and development through the analysis of minor mosques, which were probably the most emblematic buildings of the city during its Islamic stage, has not been attempted before.

In addition to the important fact that Cordoba was the capital of al-Andalus, and the incomparable opportunity that the splendid characteristics of its archaeological remains afford for the comprehension of its Islamic past, the selection for this research topic is also motivated by the general lines of work developed by the *Sísifo* Research Group from the University of Córdoba<sup>9</sup>. *Sísifo* Research Group works on the basis that the city is an integral archaeological site whose urban development must be studied diachronically as a whole, and in which every historical stage has the same relevance. This holistic analysis of the historical trajectory of the city is composed of different lines of action, such as the diachronic study of the topographical evolution of the city from its origins to the

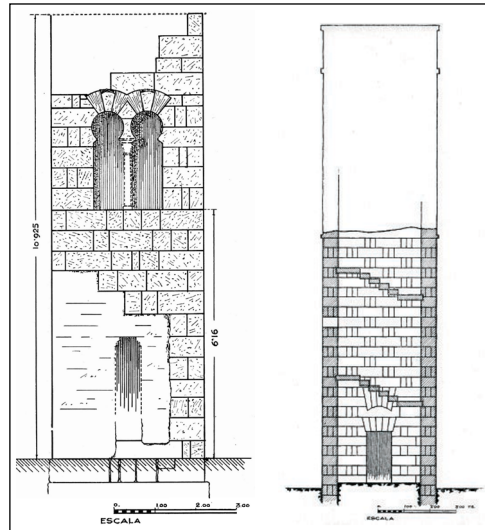
15<sup>th</sup> Century. This way, Cordoba is conceived as a giant puzzle that can be assembled by analyzing individually its smaller pieces. The present work on minor mosques is one part of a greater puzzle: *Madinat Qurtuba*. The assembling of all these efforts will bring a major comprehension of the dynamism of the city over time and a possible recreation of its different images through the centuries. In this respect, one of the most significant results of the work of *Sísifo* has been the recent publication of a monograph dedicated to the archaeological study of the urban area occupied by the Roman amphitheater and its evolution between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries (Vaquerizo, 2010) containing, therefore, several historical stages.

***New goals from previous starting points: the trail of preceding scholars***

In the path towards the goal of understanding the Islamic and, at the same time, vernacular configuration of *Madinat Qurtuba* through analyzing the function that secondary mosques performed in its growth and progress, we have to make mention of some previous researchers that have acted as the starting point. Many of the explorations related to minor mosques in the city are not devoted to urbanism, but they make reference to these buildings from architectural, topographical or philological perspectives that contribute to and enrich the present work.

The first publication that must be highlighted is the paper written by R. López and A. Valdivieso (2001). Although it is not a research paper specifically about these buildings and does not deal with urban environment, this is a review of all the secondary mosques known in the city at the time of publication which provides much information known about them at that moment. At the same time, and much more important, it is probably the first publication calling for attention to be given to them and highlighting their relevance to the city and its suburbs.

About the structural and constructive configuration of mosques, the work of F.



**Figure 3:** Samples of the drawings made by F. Hernández. On the left side is the minaret of San Juan (Hernández, 1975: 136, fig. 127). On the right side, the minaret of Santa Clara (*Ibid*, 206). Made at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century but published later, these are still the only scientific drawings available for these architectural elevations. Although they need some revision that should include information from modern archaeological research, these drawings are still valuable and considerably accurate.

Hernández (1975), although outdated at some points, is still of primary importance, as until now it contained the sole architectural study of the remnants of some Islamic minarets that can still be seen in the city, reused as belfries of several churches, as well as detailed and precise drawings of them (see **figure 3**). Given the numerous similarities that these minarets demonstrate, Hernández suggested the possibility of the existence of a canon or specific Cordobesian style in their construction. This was followed later on by L. Golvin (1979), who tentatively proposed a possible Cordobesian building school which had built all of the mosques of the city following similar architectural and size patterns. In this respect, the present research continues with the attractive propositions

made by Hernández and Golvin by completing their analyses with the newly available archaeological information that they were not able to consult. This task, as will be seen in the following section, has potential to confirm or refute their hypothesis about the existence of a Cordobesian building school and the influence of a Cordobesian constructing manner in terms of typology and dimensions.

Very interesting propositions are also provided by a more recent work of Murillo *et al.* (2004), who are almost the first researchers in Cordoba, together with M. Acién and A. Vallejo (1998), concerned with the study of the urban evolution of the city in the light of new archaeological information. They believe in the clear and essential role that minor mosques undoubtedly played on the Islamization of urban and suburban landscapes, acting at the same time as a display of new political power. Similar characteristics are found in the work of Casal *et al.* (2006), who interpret a plausible functional relationship between mosques and other facilities recently identified by archaeology, specifically baths and cemeteries located very close to minor mosques. These authors claim that the possibility of a relation between the implantation of mosques in a determined urban area and the islamization program promoted by the State should be examined in more detail. The current research picks up this baton, intending to examine the involvement of these buildings on the political and aristocratic sphere and, at the same time, into the ordinary life of the city.

To finish, we have also considered the work of A. Jiménez (1991) and M. Rius (e.g. 2000; 2006) as a qualitative advance in the knowledge of the meaning of these buildings for medieval Islamic culture. Holding very different views and methodologies, these investigations are devoted to the analysis of the direction of religious buildings in al-Andalus. These researchers accomplish the examination of the orientation of Andalusí *qiblas* to determine if they were homogeneously

facing Mecca or, on the contrary, if there were significant deviations, and the possible reasons for this we are also applying this study methodology to *qiblas* in Cordoba, although this lies beyond the scope of this paper (see González Gutiérrez, 2012).

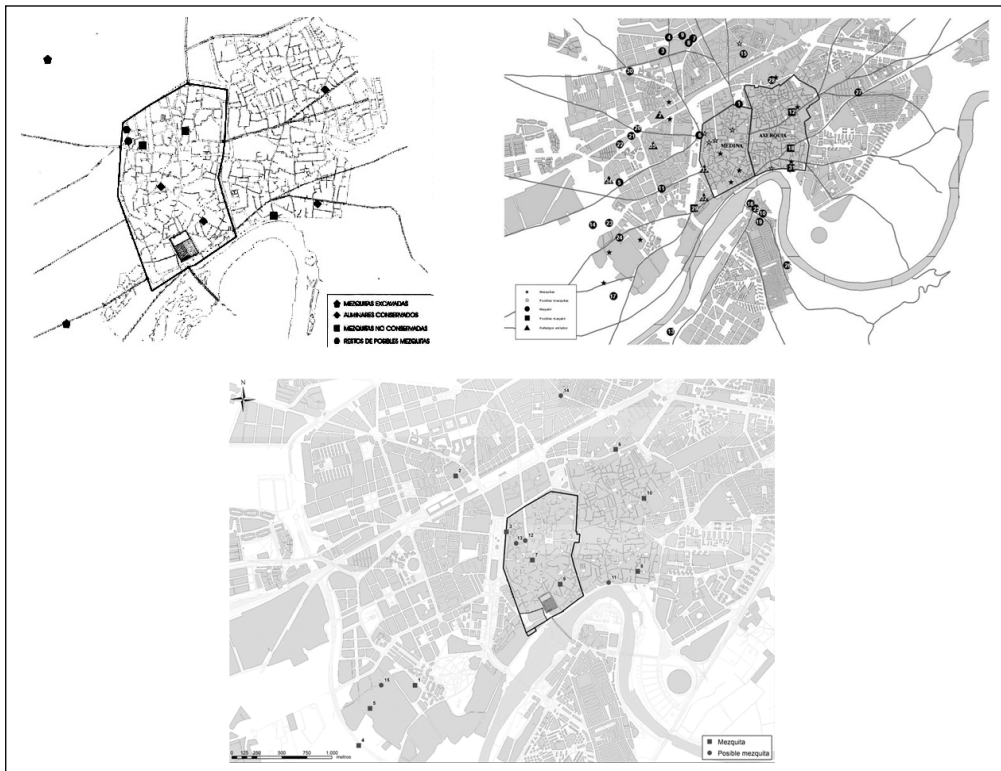
### Main provisional results

Continuing this research has required the use of the most updated archaeological information. The principal methodological step has been, until now and after an exhaustive bibliographical and historiographical review, the design and creation of a catalogue that includes, homogenizes and systematizes all the information, mainly (but not only) archaeological, related to minor mosques in the last decades in Cordoba<sup>10</sup>. The basis of the catalogue is a file model integrated by different fields that aim to cover every single characteristic of a mosque. The assignation of a file per mosque and the transference of the information of each mosque to its correspondent file has enforced uniformity of the very disparate data relied on. Of course, not all the fields are completed for each mosque, as the information collected in each case is unequal, but the catalogue is a tool with the capacity to be enlarged if new archaeological discoveries about mosques are made in the future, or if more information of another sort is found. The uneven nature of the data becomes evident if the elements included in the catalog are examined. 15 files have so far been completed and interpreted as old mosques. Of these, just 7 have been documented during the course of archaeological intervention (which has provided a very unequal level of information because of the different states of the conservation and quality of the reports), while the other 4 are actual churches. In addition, 4 other files have been included which can be less reliably interpreted as old mosques, but are nevertheless suggestive and contain a number of points of interest. A summary of all elements interpreted as mosques, their chronology and location can be consulted in **table 1**.

MOSQUE	TOPOGRAPHICAL POSITION	SUGGESTED CHRONOLOGY
1. Mosque of Fontanar	Western quarters	Caliphal.
2. Mosque in the Bus Station	Western quarters	Caliphal.
3. Mosque of Puerta de Gallegos	Madinat	Emiral.
4. Mosque of Ronda Oeste	Western quarters	Possibly founded in Emiral times, it suffered a possible enlargement during the Caliphate. There are no data about its survival in the late-Islamic stage.
5. Mosque in the Centro de Transfusión Sanguínea	Western quarters	Founded in Caliphal times, its courtyard experienced an enlargement during the Caliphate. It was devastated during the <i>fitna</i> .
6. Mosque of Ollerías	Northern quarters	Late-Islamic.
7. Mosque in the Church of San Juan	Madinat	Built in the Emirate, it survived all the Islamic stages until the Christian Conquest, when it was reconverted into a church.
8. Mosque in the Church of Santiago	Eastern quarters	Built in the Emirate, it survived all the Islamic stages until the Christian Conquest, when it was reconverted into a church.
9. Mosque in Santa Clara	Madinat	Built in Caliphal times, it survived all subsequent Islamic stages until the Christian Conquest, when it was reconverted into a convent.
10. Mosque in the Church of San Lorenzo	Eastern quarters	Possibly built in the Emirate, it survived all the Islamic stages (with strong reformations during the Caliphate) until the Christian Conquest, when it was reconverted into a church.
11. Possible mosque in the Church of San Nicolás de la Axerquía	Axerquía (walled eastern quarter)	At least late-Islamic.
12. Possible mosque in the Church of San Nicolás de la Villa	Madinat	Undetermined.
13. Possible Church of Duque de Fernán Núñez	Madinat	Emiral.
14. Possible mosque of Santa Rosa	Northern quarters	Late-Islamic.
15. Possible mosque of Naves de Fontanar	Western quarters	Caliphal.

**Table 1:** Location and chronology of secondary mosques documented to date in *Madinat Qurtuba*.



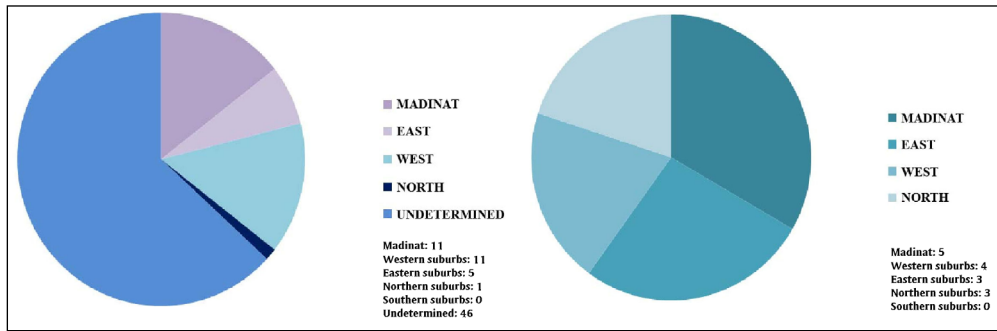


**Figure 4:** Evolution of dispersion maps of secondary mosques in *Madinat Qurtuba*. The first one, from 2001 (López and Valdivieso, 2001: 222, fig. 1). The second one, also showing the presence of cemeteries, from 2006 (Casal *et al.*, 2006: 263, fig. 4). The last one, elaborated in 2010 with data from our catalogue (González Gutiérrez, 2012: 202).

An innovative and principal contribution to the topic has been made by providing scientific investigation with a current and up-to-date catalogue that gathers together an enormous quantity of information that was unpublished until now. But the archaeological interpretation of data contained in the catalogue can go some way to answer the different questions asked by contemporary research, so the description of remains and the compilation of information are by no means the end of the labor. This catalogue, which is no more than a tool to reach the main purpose of understanding minor mosques of the city within their building environment, has allowed us to elaborate a dispersion map of these buildings which updates previous ones and permits us to reach some conclusions in terms of

topography and the location of these buildings (see **figure 4**).

Even though the archaeological record is the most important source for studying the urbanism of *Madinat Qurtuba*, it is not the only one, so a rigorous consultation of medieval written sources available was also required to have a complete overview of the topic (see **figure 5**)<sup>11</sup>. In total, these sources mention approximately 70 mosques<sup>12</sup>. The strong disparity existing between the figures given by written sources and the ones documented in archaeological remains is immediately evident, as is a remarkable discrepancy concerning location. Our dispersion map shows vast areas of the city in which no mosque has been documented, although medieval chronicles locate them everywhere around the city. This prompts a suspicion that



**Figure 5:** Location of mosques according to written sources (first graph) and archaeological findings (second graph).

these mosques might have existed, but that they have not yet been correctly identified.

The archaeological evidence shows that, excluding the south area of the city, cordobesian minor mosques were located throughout the city, inside the *Madinat* and also in the outskirts. This spatial dispersion does not seem to follow, at first glance, any chronological pattern, but future research must go deeper into the chronological analysis of this dispersion, in order to determine why certain mosques were located in specific positions at a particular moment, and whether the erection of mosques in particular areas coincided with the general evolution and growth of the city. The abundance of mosques in the western sector of the city can be explained as a result of the strong urbanization and growth processes experienced by this area of the town in Caliphal times. The erection of mosques everywhere in the city from emiral times seems to confirm the existence of a strong process of Islamization that started quite early, maybe immediately after the Islamic conquest, and that grew stronger during the Caliphate. Geographical and chronological dispersion of mosques may be a response to a desire within this new population to introduce typical Islamic elements in the new *Madinat Qurtuba* (Ación, Vallejo, 1998, 115; Murillo *et al*, 2004, 262–264). The lack of archaeological remains interpreted as mosques in the south<sup>13</sup>, as well as relative scarcity in the north should not be interpreted as a real absence, but probably as a

distortion provoked by the uneven distribution of archaeological activities in the city, which has been much more abundant in the western sector.

The study of the structure, organization and possible typologies of mosques in *Madinat Qurtuba* has been arduous principally because the state of preservation of the remains is not always as good as might be desired. The documentation of the whole plan of a building is unusual, and it is more frequent to find partial and in some cases unconnected fragments. Consequently, the addition of this new information to previous studies has not been always possible. However, with all the data it is possible to follow the pattern advised by Golvin (see section 3), who proposed the existence of a Cordobesian building school of mosques. By “Cordobesian building school” Govin referred to a general typology that would have been the basis for the construction of all these buildings. They would have widely had the following characteristics:

*“Le plan s’inspire des mosquées à nefs perpendiculaires au mur de la Qibla [...]. Il comporte toujours une nef axiale privilégiée. La cour s’étend souvent en largeur [...]. Elle est bordée sur trois des ses côtés de galeries, mais on ne trouve jamais de galerie précédant la salle de prière. Les supports sont de colonnes, le plus souvent provenant de monument antiques. Les murs sont renforcés de*

*piliers contreforts. Le minaret, de plan carré, est généralement construit au centre du mur nord de la cour [...].*

*L'appareil joue surtout sur la multiplication des carreaux et des boutisses selon les dispositifs précis [...]. Les formes arquées offrent une grande originalité avec les arcs lobés et les entrelacs d'arcs ainsi que nous le verrons plus loin [...]" (Golvin, 1979, 100–101).*

Archaeologically, and regarding all the aspects that could be used to affirm or refute Golvin's suggestions about a possible general building style, we have been able to analyze several structural elements of these spaces for prayer, summarized as follows:

The *mihrab*, or niche that indicates the direction to Mecca, is an element always found in every mosque and, at the same time, the most heterogeneous in terms of shape and decoration. During prayer, all the believers focus on this point, so it houses rich decorations and forms. In Córdoba, 4 *mihrabs* have been identified, all of them different and belonging to the *qibla* wall. This wall is present in all the prayer rooms found –a total of 6– that were usually organized in several naves. Only in very few cases have these naves been identified, and in all of them the central one is, as Golvin suggested, wider. Besides, too few columns, capitals and other architectural elements have been found to determine if they were systematically reused from antique monuments or not.

Mosques were also provided with courtyards –5 identified so far– with porches attached to some of their sides, apparently not following any pattern. But the most prominent component of Cordobesian mosques was the minaret, the tower from which the *muezzin* calls Muslims to prayer. 10 of the 15 buildings included in the catalogue seem to have had a minaret (some of them reused as belfries up to present day; see **figure 6**). Whose location in the whole of the mosque does not seem to follow any pattern either. Their structural homogeneity

is perceived in their similar proportions, as all of them except for one have a slightly squared plan with the same dimensions (from 3.5 m to 5 m., see **table 2**), as well as their architectural and decorative elements: windows and merlons also have many proportional resemblances that contribute to support the possibility of a school or determined building scheme and call for deeper proportion and architectural analysis that are currently being carried out.

### **What is next? Conclusions and future steps**

At this point in the research, and with the results so far obtained and briefly showed in the preceding section, it seems already possible to set out some significant conclusions that, as well as shedding a bit of light on this topic, can also contribute to the development of future research.

About the location of mosques, we have been able to perceive great disparity between information provided by written sources and that obtained through archaeological evidence. Islamic written documentation does not focus on secondary mosques but they are only mentioned when narrating other events, so it is infrequent that they offer specific data about descriptions, chronologies or location of these buildings. The sources mention a number of mosques higher than can be observed in the archaeological data recovered up to now (see **figure 5**), a phenomenon that can have two causes: written sources may have conventionally exaggerated the number of mosques existing in *Qurtuba* because they were symbolizing the presence, power and prestige of Islam, or perhaps these buildings are not being properly identified through archaeology. In this respect it must be stressed that some of the buildings included in our catalogue are considered mosques despite presenting great problems of identification. The immediate priority is to undertake a chronological analysis able to shed light on the topographical evolution of the city in relation to these buildings.

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

MOSQUE	HARAM (Prayer room)		SAHN (Courtyard)		
	NAVES	MIHRAB	DOORS	PORTICOS	
				MINARET	
Mosque of Fontanar	Three naves, perpendicular to <i>qibla</i> and divided by columns. The central one is wider (6.67 m) than the other two (5.55 m and 6.12 m).	In the center of the qibla, it is rectangular both in its inner and outer ground plant and it is flanked by two buttresses.	3 doors documented (in bad state of conservation), located in the north-east, north-west and south-west walls.	Only found in one side. With a width of 2.25 m, it ran parallel to the north-west wall of the sahn.	Quadrangular (4.18 x 4.24 m), in the eastern corner of the north-west wall of the sahn.
Mosque in the Bus Station	Not documented.	Octagonal ground plant. Walls painted in white and possibly covered with marble plates.	Not documented.	Not documented.	Not documented.
Mosque of Puerta de Gallegos	Not documented.	Not documented.	Not documented.	Not documented.	Quadrangular ground plant (c. 5 x 4 m), probably in the western corner of the north-west wall of the sahn.
Mosque of Ronda Oeste	Although the <i>haram</i> has been documented, no signs of its division in naves have been found.	Quadrangular ground plant in the outside, semi-circular in the inside.	Two, one in the north-east wall and another in the north-west.	There was a porticoed gallery attached to north-west wall of the sahn.	In the north-west corner of the sahn, it was documented only partially (its dimensions remain unknown).
Mosque in Centro de Transfusión Sanguínea	Not documented	Not documented	One access documented from the street to this courtyard, in its south-west wall.	Built later in the south-west and north-west side of the courtyard.	Quadrangular plant, only the foundations were documented (3.41 x 3.13 m), very devastated.

**Contd.**

MOSQUE	ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS				
	HARAM (Prayer room)	SAHN (Courtyard)	DOORS	PORTICOS	MINARET
	<b>NAVES</b>	<b>MIHRAB</b>	<b>DOORS</b>	<b>PORTICOS</b>	<b>MINARET</b>
Mosque of Ollerías	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	In the south-west side of the courtyard, it was made of quadrangular ashblars.	In the western corner of the north-west wall of the <i>sahn</i> , it has a squared ground plant (2.6 x 2.7 m).
Mosque in the Church of San Juan	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Probably located in the eastern corner of the north-west wall of the <i>sahn</i> . Quadrangular outer plant (3.70 x 3 m). Provided with mullioned windows in its four sides.
Mosque in the Church of Santiago	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Outer squared plant (3.9 m), with at least one mullioned window; inner circular plant with a staircase.
Mosque in Santa Clara	Three naves, perpendicular to <i>qibla</i> and divided by columns. The central one is wider.	Not conserved nowadays, it was documented in older archaeological interventions. Ground plant unknown, it was flanked by buttresses and provided with a horseshoe arch in its entrance.	Confronted in the north-east and south-west walls of the courtyard, they were provided with buttresses.	Two porticos, one in the south-west side and another one in the north-west.	In the east corner of the north-west wall of the courtyard, it had a squared outer (4.36 m) and inner ground plant.

Contd.

MOSQUE	ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS				
	HARAM (Prayer room)		SAHN (Courtyard)		
	NAVES	MIHRAB	DOORS	PORTICOS	MINARET
Mosque in the Church of San Lorenzo	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Outer squared plant, with at least one mulioned window.
Possible mosque in the Church of San Nicolás de la Axerquía	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented
Possible mosque in the Church of San Nicolás de la Villa	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented
Possible Church of Duque de Fernán Núñez	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented	Quadrangular base with undefined location in the <i>sahn</i> . Total dimensions unknown.
Possible mosque of Santa Rosa	The space interpreted as the <i>haram</i> does not seem to have been organized in naves.	There is a small rectangular niche interpreted as a mihrab.	Not documented	Not documented	Not documented
Possible mosque of Naves de Fontanar	Three naves, perpendicular to <i>qibla</i> and possibly divided by columns. The central one is wider (4.40 m) than the other two (3 m).	Not documented	Two of them in the <i>haram</i> (one in the north-east wall and another one connecting the <i>haram</i> with the <i>sahn</i> ). In the courtyard, an access is located in front of the portico.	A possible portico has been documented parallel to the north-east wall	Not documented

**Table 2:** Main architectural features of the secondary mosques of *Madinat Qurtuba* (brief summary).



**Figure 6:** Minarets reused as belfries: a) Church of San Lorenzo; b) Church of Santiago; c) nunnery of Santa Clara; d) church of San Juan. (Photographs: © C. González Gutiérrez).

During the analysis that has been carried out on the structure of minor mosques it has been possible to identify, at first glance, notable formal and proportional similarities among them. This is particularly clear, for instance, in the case of minarets and their decorative schemes. A conscientious study in modulation and proportion using newly available archaeological data must now be carried out as this has the potential to enrich understanding of mosques and the context of their construction, continuing on the path set out by earlier scholarship (Hernández, 1961–1962 and 1975; Pavón, 1976). This is not the only track for future research that remains open. A systematic study of the environment surrounding mosques should also be carried out, as these surroundings documented almost invariably demonstrate overwhelming rich characteristics. Following proposals of Casal *et al.* (2006), future research objectives include the intention

to establish whether proximity between mosques, cemeteries, baths and other significant facilities responds to functional links, or if it is due to other reasons. It would be also desirable to investigate whether mosques were generating urbanism around them, or if they were built in already defined neighborhoods. This involves an exhaustive revision of all the archaeological interventions located around mosques and, above all, a meticulous chronological analysis of all the remains that will allow us to reconstruct the structural sequence of the neighborhoods, the buildings established in them and the temporal relations among them.

This urgent need to carry out landscape analysis, as well as being essential for the knowledge of minor mosques, is being projected as a separate aspect of the formal and structural analysis of *Madinat Qurtuba* carried out by *Sísifo* Research Group, as the final and more ambitious goal is, indeed, a complete knowledge of the urbanism of the city (insofar as it can be reconstructed from the surviving archaeological and documentary evidence). The present work has only been a first approach to a topic that undoubtedly still has many lines of enquiry. As part of the wider goal, this research intends to fulfill basic steps systematizing information and designing a suitable methodology –suitable enough to be enlarged and improved according to new findings and collaboration with other researchers– that will open new research horizons first in Córdoba but with the possibility to widen it to a vaster Andalusí territory. It promises to be a very productive road for the understanding of the Islamic city, its topographical organization and the lives of its inhabitants.

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### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> More detailed information at this respect can be found, for example, on the Encyclopedia of the Islam (in the bibliographical section we refer to it as Bosworth *et al*, 1991).
- <sup>2</sup> This was a dissertation or speech that, delivered by the Imam before Friday prayer, was designed to encourage the support of the citizens for the ruling political regime of the moment.
- <sup>3</sup> The research publications about the Great Mosque of Córdoba are so abundant and varied that it is impossible to provide a complete bibliographical list. We can mention, for instance, Creswell, 1979; Ewert, 1987, 1995; Nieto, 1998; or Marfil, 2010; but they are just a few examples of a larger historiographical tradition.
- <sup>4</sup> These building activities, in vogue during the nineties and the first years of 2000 are now paralyzed because of the well known general crisis that Spain is experiencing.
- <sup>5</sup> Terms suburb and suburban are used to make reference to all the extension of the city beyond its original walls, without implying any pejorative meaning or a different quality of life for inhabitants. 'Suburban elements' is said to mean facilities and buildings located in quarters outside the walls.
- <sup>6</sup> More information about them in López Cuevas, 2011.
- <sup>7</sup> The Mosque, now Cathedral, together with other outstanding examples of the Islamic past of the city (such as the citadel or *Madinat al-Zahra*) has been a privileged witness to the history of the city, as well as proof of its development and mutability through time. Historiography is almost exclusively devoted to these monuments, due to their singularity, monumentality and special significance within the history of the art and architecture of Islam.
- <sup>8</sup> The great growth of the city, specially documented from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century and until the *fitna* or civil war (years 1009–1031), has mainly been recorded beyond the walls, focusing on the west side of the city.
- <sup>9</sup> Further information can be found at [www.gruposiffo.com](http://www.gruposiffo.com)
- <sup>10</sup> This catalogue, with all the files that compose it and the detailed description of the secondary mosques of Córdoba can be consulted in the Chapter 3 of our monograph *Las mezquitas de barrio de Madinat Qurtuba. Una aproximación arqueológica*, published in Cordoba in May 2012 thanks to Diputación Provincial de Córdoba.
- <sup>11</sup> The use of all the available sources of information of any kind has proved to be very beneficial in these kind of analyses, as S. Calvo has demonstrated when researching about rural mosques in al-Andalus (Calvo, 2004, 2007).
- <sup>12</sup> The complete and detailed list of them, as well as the documentation consulted, can be also found in our monograph, Chap. 2.
- <sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, it is not expected to find mosques for the Caliphal stage in the south of the city, as these lands correspond to the emiral neighborhood of Saqunda, which was devastated in the year 818 B. C. under the command of the Emir al-Hakam I. After it a possible new occupation or urban recovery of this space was prohibited.



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