

The Center for Middle East Studies presents the
R. Stephen Humphreys Distinguished Lecture

THE TURBAN AND ITS MEANINGS IN AL-ANDALUS



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Center of Human and Social Sciences
Higher Council for Scientific Research
(Spain)

Monday, May 12 / 5pm
HSSB 4080

The way the Fatimids wore their turbans was severely criticized by Abu Bakr al-Turtushi, an Andalusí Maliki scholar who lived between the eleventh and twelfth centuries. He considered it an 'innovation' worthy of being censored, although of course for the Fatimids it was a practice deeply rooted in the Islamic tradition. Abu Bakr al-Turtushi was not the first to have paid attention to this piece of clothing. In fact, as shown already by Manuela Marín ("Signos visuales de la identidad andalusí", *Tejer y vestir: de la antigüedad al Islam*, Madrid: CSIC, 2001, 137-180), turbans played an important role in the way ethnic, political, religious, and social identities were manifested in al-Andalus. In my paper I will review some of the cases in which the turban played a role as the symbol of a specific Muslim group or as the symbol of Islam in contrast to those identifying with Christendom.

Maribel Fierro has researched and published on the religious and intellectual history of al-Andalus and the Islamic West. Among her recent publications are *Abd al-Rahman III: The First Cordoban Caliph* (Oneworld, 2005); "Decapitation of Christians and Muslims in the Medieval Iberian Peninsula: Narratives, Images, Contemporary Perceptions", *Comparative Literature Studies*, 45/2 (2008), 137-64; and, *The Almohad Revolution: Politics and Religion in the Islamic West during the Twelfth-Thirteenth Centuries* (Variorum, 2012). She is the editor of Volume 2 (The Western Islamic World, Eleventh-Eighteenth Centuries) of the *The New Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

*Sponsored by the Center for Middle East Studies,
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