

## ***Windmasters Baronial Champions***

THL Violante de Sant Sebastian

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### ***Caveat Emptor***

Very little primary documentation survives for this period. While the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries offer many figural depictions, any such evidence from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries seems to have been destroyed in the course of the Berber and Christian invasions of al-Andalus. The following description of costume in this time period is based on:

- the few surviving artifacts, mostly jewelry and textiles
- period Arabic literary sources
- evidence from figural depictions in the preceding and following centuries
- contemporary evidence from elsewhere in Spain or the Middle East
- and a some educated assumptions, also known as “guesses”

This document is intended for the lay person, a reenactor who has some interest, but little to no familiarity with Moorish costume. It does *not* include long winded arguments to substantiate the various logical leaps and hypothesis put forth below; if you are interested in all that, please see the bibliography, or email me at violante01@aol.com.

### ***Historical Setting***

The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries were tumultuous times for al-Andalus. The Umayyad Caliphate came to an ignominious end in 1031, and the city-states – which had been growing in power for some time – became the official heirs of the Umayyads. With the loss of central authority, the petty - or *taifa* - *kings* of al-Andalus became easy prey for the Christian kingdoms in the north. To help stave off the threat of invasion from Leon, Aragon, and Asturias, the taifas turned to the Berbers in North Africa for support.

In response to the fall of Toledo in 1085 to Leonese armies, the Almoravids invaded the peninsula in the first of many Berber incursions to drive back the Christians. The Almoravids, like the Almohads who succeeded them, were religious fundamentalists who destroyed much of the decadent and impious art they found in the palaces of al-Andalus as they displaced one petty king after another. The Almoravid governors, however, succumbed to the charms of the conquered cities, and by 1147 – when the Almohads supplanted their power – were as decadent as the Moorish kings they had themselves displaced.

The Almohads brought a new infusion of religious fervor to the peninsula which left its mark on the population of al-Andalus. Few, if any, Christians remained under Islamic rule, and the Jews who remained in al-Andalus were subjected to strict laws governing their manner of dress. Despite many victories in battle – including a crushing defeat inflicted on the Christian armies at Alarcos in 1197 – Almohad power was not to last in Spain. After losing the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, the Almohads never again regained their supremacy, and the 13<sup>th</sup> century marked one of the greatest for the Christian reconquest of Spain.

### ***Moorish Costume in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries***

#### Textiles

Available textiles: Cotton, silk, linen, and wool, although the first two would only have been available to the wealthy.

Patterns: Period silk textiles feature large, repeating designs which could be extremely complex in the number of design elements. The designs were often, but not always, based on circles. Design elements might include animal and human figures, vegetal motifs, geometric shapes, and words written in Kufic script.

Colors: The majority of extant textiles from this period are crimson, though a variety of other colors survive as well, including blue, green, brown, black, and yellow. The rich used gold-wrapped thread to embellish their fabrics.

Color preferences changed throughout the year. The summer favored lighter or even white colored clothing, whereas brighter colors were chosen for the fall and winter.

There is little evidence from Moorish Spain regarding the use of different colored fabrics to label Jews or Christians in this time period, but it seems probably given the increasing religious intolerance which the Berbers brought with them to al-Andalus. Jews may have been required to wear yellow belts, and in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, laws were enacted forcing them to wear clothing of deep blue-black color. No similar legislation seems to have been enforced for Christians, but most of them had left for the Christian kingdoms in the north by the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

## Tunics

Men: In the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, men could choose from two styles of tunics: a short, close fitting tunic with a comparatively full skirt and narrow sleeves (Arabic *al-shaya*) or a floor length, flowing garment with wide sleeves (Arabic *al-jubba*). The shaya was preferred for hunting, hawking, jousting, and other active outdoor sports where a floor-length garment would be cumbersome. The jubba, on the other hand, was worn for court occasions, feasting, and listening to music and poetry. Worn as a robe of state, the jubba was known as a *khil'a* and often featured tiraz bands. Whereas the jubba and shaya opened only at the neckline, another garment, known as the *durr'a*, opened all the way up the front.

Women: Women also wore the shaya, jubba, and durr'a, although the shaya was probably relegated to the poorer, working class women.

Necklines: Necklines were usually round, or a perfectly straight slit as seen in some Coptic and Roman tunics. In the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, some tunics featured a peculiar overlapping keyhole neckline, but this Moorish contrivance seems to have disappeared under the influence of the Berbers.

Embellishments: In addition to tiraz, tunics could also be embellished with contrasting fabrics at the hems and sleeve cuffs, or at the neckline. Also, gold plaques called *bractea* in the shape of stars or crosses may have been sewn along the borders of a garment. Embroidery was also a likely way to further embellish one's garments.

## Tiraz

The decorative band at the upper sleeve on robes of state (*khil'a*).

Designs: Surviving tiraz from this period feature very intricate designs employing vegetal, figural, and geometric motifs, as well as Kufic script.

Materials: All the extant tiraz are tapestry woven of silk and gold-wrapped thread. **Reenactor's note:** There are many other ways to make tiraz, using evidence from other time periods or geographical regions. It is possible that tiraz might also have been: embroidered (figure, split, and stem stitches are all contemporary techniques); card woven (either double-face or brocading would achieve the desired effect); or painted with pigment, or sizing which would then be gilded.

### Undergarments

Men: Under the jubba or durr'a, men might have worn another tunic, whose name varied depending on the kind of fabric or the specific cut. The bottom-most layer was always the *qamis*, a long shirt of white linen or cotton. Men also wore *sarawil*, or pants; under the sarawil, or instead of them, men might also wear *tubban*, full drawers which ended in a cuff under the knee.

Women: Women also wore a qamis under their garments. Whether or not they also wore sarawil in this time period (as women did elsewhere in the Middle East) is unknown, but it seems likely given that the use of sarawil by women was ubiquitous by the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

**Reenactor's note:** Sarawil are not harem pants. They are not gathered at the ankle! They should narrow to the ankle, if possible. A lot of ladies' clothing stores sell plain linen drawstring pants which will do quite well, especially under a long tunic.

### Over garments

Burnus: A hooded cloak whose cut is based on a full or partial circle.

'Izar: A large wrap, rectangular in shape, which might be draped or wrapped around the body in a variety of ways. **Reenactor's note:** A piece of lightweight wool 60" wide and 3 – 4 yds long will make a fabulous 'izar.

Malhafa: Another wrap, perhaps smaller and lighter weight than the izar, used by women to cover primarily the head and shoulders.

**Reenactor's note:** There is no evidence for the use of the aba/abaya at this time in al-Andalus.

### Headwear: Men

Turbans: In the first part of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the turban (*'immama*) were not as ubiquitous as elsewhere in the Middle East. Under the Umayyads, scholars and jurists and Berbers wore turbans, and few others. As al-Andalus fell under increasing Berber influence, first from the Almoravids and then the Almohads, turbans became fashion necessities. Moorish turbans were wrapped from a very long, narrow strip of cloth called a *mi'zar*. The turban typically featured a piece which passed under the chin, thereby covering the neck, as well as a long tail which draped down the back. This tail may have been decorated with fringe, or a tiraz-like band.

**Reenactor's note:** Most reenactment turbans are made from a lightweight, lightly-colored cotton gauze. The turban will work better when wrapped from a long, narrow mi'zar. For example, 30 inches wide by 10 yards long will produce good results. A crocheted skull cap or pillbox-shaped hat will help make the turban stable; otherwise, you will have to wrap the turban very tight to keep it on your head. To wrap the turban, pass the fabric

over your head, under your chin once or twice, and *then* start wrapping it. When you have wrapped all but the length you want for the tail, just tuck it through several wraps at the back of your head in such a way that it hangs straight down your back.

**Skull caps:** A variety of skull caps existed in this period. Any of them might have served as a base to a turban, to provide a more stable platform about which to wrap the mi'zar. These skull caps came in a variety of colors, and fabrics, including woven and felted wool.

**Qalansuwa:** The conical cap known as a *qalansuwa* appears to have fallen out of favor with the rise of the turbans (i.e., the increasing need to appease the Berbers).

**Face veil:** Men in certain occupations or of particular ethnicity might also veil their face. Mounted soldiers, armed guards, and some Berber tribes veiled either with piece of their turban which passed under their chin, or with the tail of the turban brought back around and across their face. The Almoravids wore a face veil called the *litham* which so distinct they were known as the *al-mulaththamun* – “those who wear the litham”. Wearing the litham by any but the Almoravids was forbidden in al-Andalus because of the fear it struck among the locals.

**Headwear: Women**

**Lifafa:** Women's head coverings were composed of several layers, beginning with the lifafa. This could be a scarf tied at the nape of the neck, or a simple cap pinned to the hair, and served to anchor the other veils in place. **Reenactor's note:** A bandana will work smashingly!

**Miqna'a:** The next layer of veil was the miqna', which passed over the head, around the neck under the chin, and back over the head. It might be embroidered or embellished along the edges.

**'Isaba:** The 'isaba was a narrow filet, or embellished strip of cloth, which rested on the crown of the head, and held the miqna'a in place. **Reenactor's note:** A circlet will work well for the 'isaba, or a piece of cardwoven trim. While there isn't any evidence for cardweaving in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, the large number of samples from the 13<sup>th</sup> century suggest there was some knowledge of the art in previous centuries.

**Taj:** In place of the 'isaba, wealthy ladies would have worn the taj, a diadem made of metal plaques combined with a strip of fabric which joined the two ends to make a circle. The fabric allowed for a snug fit.

Other large wraps or coverings, such as the *'izar* or the *milhafa*, might also variously be used to cover the head or face; they might be combined with the afore mentioned veils, or not. **Reenactor's note:** If you wish to keep a large veil or wrap in place on your head throughout the day, make sure to wear some sort of scarf or cap under it. This gives the veil something to adhere to against the pull of gravity or a blowing wind. For even more security, a) use bobby pins to affix the scarf firmly to your hair and b) pin the wrap to the scarf with a brooch, or a straight pin and a pendant.

**Face veils:** Noble ladies, and wealthy bourgeoisie women, veiled their faces with the khimar whenever they left the house, or in mixed company. The *khimar* was a gauzy kerchief which served this purpose. It covered the lower half of the face only, and probably tied

behind the head, or attached to the 'isaba or miqna'a. It would have been removed during times of mourning, or in gatherings of women, or sometimes even in mixed company within the home (much to the scandal of the religious scholars).

Some women did not veil their face at all, depending on social status, profession, or ethnicity. For example, veiled faces were not found among women of lower social classes, hawkers in the market place, ladies of disreputable professions, and slaves. Also, Almoravid women did not veil (whereas the men did). However, these women could always hold the ends of their 'izar or milhafa in front of their face should decorum require.

### Shoes

**Boots:** Moorish boots came in a variety of heights, from ankle to knee, and were made of leather, or felt.

**Slippers:** Soft slippers made of white goat skin gained such fame they, and shoes like them, were known as *cordobans*, after the city of Cordoba.

**Sandals:** Sandals and clogs were made with soles of wood, cork or plaited reeds.

### Accessories

**Men:** Pouches were worn by a strap over the shoulder. Swords were straight-bladed, rather than curved, and hung from a sheath at the belt. Only a shaya would have been belted; never a jubba.

**Women:** Moorish women had access to cosmetics such as kuhl to line the eyes, and henna to paint the feet and hands. The wealthy would have worn gold jewelry – bracelets, necklaces, earrings, and rings – set with gems; the lower classes would have used silver and vitreous paste or agate. Coins were incorporated into jewelry as well.

### Glossary

**burnus:** large hooded cape

**durra'a:** a tunic which opens up the front

**'imama:** turban

**'isaba:** a filet or strip of fabric or cloth which holds a lady's *miqna'a* in place

**izar:** a large draped veil or wrap for women or men

**jubba:** the main body garment for both sexes

**khil'a:** 'robes of honor' – heavily brocaded robes, with tiraz, given as gifts from the amir or caliph to his courtiers

**khimar:** a gauze face veil for women

**lifafa:** the lowest layer of a woman's head veil

**litham:** veil for the lower half of the face, worn by Almoravid men

**mi'zar:** a long, narrow cloth from which turbans were wrapped

**miqna'a:** a woman's veil, covering the hair, and ends hanging down to the chest

**qalansuwa:** a Baghdadi headwear fashion of a conical hat

**qamis:** a long chemise (probably of white) for both sexes out of cotton or linen

**sarawil:** pants, apparently ankle-length

**shaya:** a short tunic with narrow sleeves and body, and wide skirt which is a holdover from Visigothic times (the name is originally from Latin, *sagum*)

**taj/tijan (pl):** diadems worn by women

**tiraz:** richly brocaded or embroidered fabric, a monopoly by the ruling power (amir, caliph or malik)

**tubban:** pants which ended at the knee

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## Drawings: Women's Face Veils

The following pictures show one way in which an upper class Moorish lady's veils may have been arranged. The first figure shows the lifafa tied over the hair. In the second picture, a miqn'a has been draped over the head, under the chin, then brought back over the head. The lifafa helps anchor it in place. The 'isaba, in turn (figure 3) serves to hold the miqn'a in place. Figure 4 shows the face veil in place with the ensemble; it probably would have actually been put on before the miqn'a, and affixed to the lifafa behind the head by means of a pin.



## The Shaya

While this picture does not look “Moorish” to most people, it is in fact one of the better documented outfits from the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. This man wears the shaya, with a hooded burnous. His head is bare, and his face clean shaven.





## Moorish Lady

Below is a lady who may be of a lower social class, or perhaps belongs to a Berber tribe. She wears a long jubba, which is heavily embroidered. Over her head scarf (lifafa), she wears a draped miqn'a, and over it all she wears her 'izar.



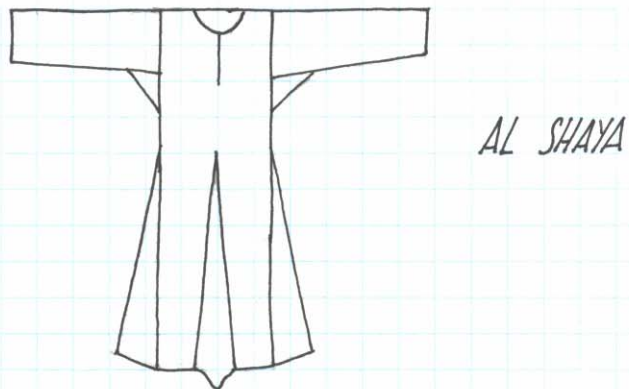
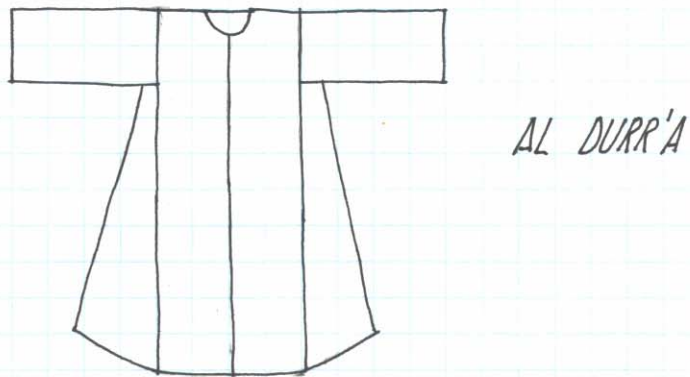
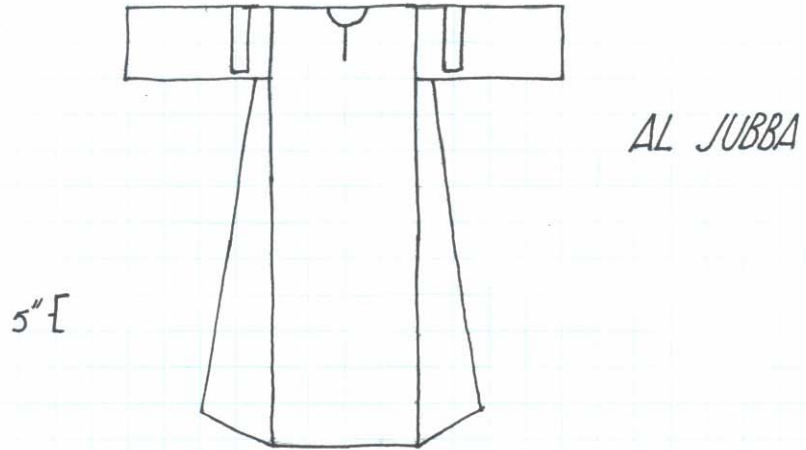
## Courtly Gentleman

The last drawing is of a courtly gentleman. He wears a turban and a silk jubba with tiraz. (Where the tail of the turban would normally be worn hanging straight down the back, in this picture it is drawn hanging over his shoulder to indicate the length.) His slippers peek out from beneath his robes.



Tunic Schematics:

The following diagrams show relative proportions for the different styles of tunic.  
NOTE: The dimensions for the durr'a are completely hypothetical, as I have found no pictorial representations of this garment, only text descriptions.



Directions for the Jubba:

With all due apologies to those who cannot read my handwriting!

- Cut & finish neckline as desired.  
 - Sew sleeves to main body panel, matching center of sleeves with center of body panel.  
 \* leave about an inch ~~of~~ of the sleeve free at each end of seam.  
 - Sew top (narrow part) of side gore to the free part of the sleeve.  
 \* Make sure the bias of the side gore is up against the straight of the main body panel.  
 - Sew the side gore to the main body panel, starting with the free part of the sleeve ~~and~~ going to the hem.  
 - Sew the undersides of the sleeves together.  
 - Sew the straight grain of the side gores together.  
 - Hem sleeves & hem at desired length.

(I find it works well to have the top of the gore half as wide as the bottom - e.g. the top is 3" & the bottom is 6".)

$\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance left

GOOD LUCK!