

CITIES OF LIGHT

THE RISE AND FALL OF ISLAMIC SPAIN



Unity Productions Foundation
www.upf.tv

Unity Productions Foundation (UPF) is a non-profit educational foundation working to promote peace and understanding through the media. UPF's first project was *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*, which aired nationally on PBS on December 18, 2002 and received positive reviews in most of the country's major newspapers. Its worldwide premiere occurred in November 2003 through the National Geographic International channel. The film was recently awarded a 2004 Cine Award for Best Professional Documentary in its category.

Unity Production's mission is to create documentaries and feature films that can contribute to ending the clash of civilizations.

Alexander Kronemer, Executive Producer

Alexander Kronemer is the co-founder of Unity Productions Foundation and Executive Producer for *Cities of Light*. He is a writer, lecturer and documentary producer focusing on religious diversity, Islam and cross-cultural understanding. He has a Master's Degree in Theological Studies from Harvard University, where his research concentrated on the philosophy of religion and comparative religion. In 1996, he was awarded a Joseph J. Malone Fellowship for Middle East and Islamic Studies, which funded him for a study tour of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

Mr. Kronemer has published essays in numerous newspapers and journals, including The Southern Quarterly, the Christian Science Monitor, the Los Angeles Times, the San Jose Mercury News, Beliefnet.com, and The Washington Post. His articles have been included in several book anthologies, including the September 11 memorial book, Up From the Ashes (2001) and Wilber Prize winner, Taking Back Islam (2002).

His work has been supported by numerous grants, including the World Economic Forum, the U.S. Institute of Peace, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Packard Foundation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the

Working for Peace through the Media



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A Non-Profit Tax-Exempt 501(c)3 Educational Foundation * EIN 770519274
Michael Wolfe and Alexander Kronemer, Executive Producers
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Montgomery County Commission on the Humanities, and a Halberstam Writing Fellowship.

As a lecturer, he has delivered talks on religious diversity and Islam for the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of State, the FBI, the World Affairs Council, the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations, at many universities including the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard, Cornell University, Yale University, Princeton University, and Penn State, and for numerous private corporations, including Nike, Aetna, and Walt Disney World.

He has appeared as a CNN commentator on several occasions, including during CNN's historic live coverage of the Hajj in 1998, which was broadcast to 400 million viewers. He has also been heard in many radio interviews, such as NPR and the Voice of America.

In 2000, Mr. Kronemer served a one-year appointment at the Bureau of Human Rights in the U.S. State Department focusing on the Middle East and Islam. During that year, Mr. Kronemer also served as a delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland.

He is the co-founder of Unity Productions Foundation, a non-profit corporation whose mission is to help bring peace through the media by creating better understanding of Islam and the world's other faiths and spiritual traditions. He was creator and co-producer of the popular PBS documentary Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet. The film received a national broadcast on PBS and subsequent international broadcasts on National Geographical International. It was awarded a Cine Special Jury Award for Best Professional Documentary in its category of People and Places. With Unity Productions, Kronemer continues to produce documentaries for PBS and other broadcasters in the U.S. and abroad.

Michael Wolfe, Executive Producer

Michael Wolfe is the co-founder of Unity Productions Foundation and Executive Producer for *Cities of Light*. The author of books of poetry, fiction, travel, and history, Wolfe's writing has appeared in many magazines and has been recognized by the Academy of American Poets, the National Endowment for the

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Arts, the California Arts Commission, and the American Travel Writers Association. He has read and lectured at Harvard, Georgetown, Stanford, SUNY Buffalo, Princeton, and many other universities. He has taught Writing and English at Phillips Exeter and Phillips Andover Academies, the California State Summer School for the Arts, and at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He holds a degree in Classics from Wesleyan University. For many years, he was the publisher of Tombouctou Books, Bolinas, California.

Michael Wolfe was a MacDowell Colony resident in poetry in 1968. He received an Amy Lowell Traveling Poets Scholarship in 1970, which was renewed for two further years. During this time he traveled and wrote in North and West Africa. His first books of poetry (*World Your Own, Threshold*), fiction, (*Invisible Weapons, Creative Arts Publishing*), and travel (*In Morocco, Sombre Reptiles*) derive from this period. In the 1980s, he returned to North Africa several more times. In 1990, he performed the pilgrimage to Mecca.

For fifteen years, Wolfe was sole publisher of Tombouctou Books, a small press enterprise located in Bolinas, CA that published works of poetry and avant garde prose, including *The Basketball Diaries* by Jim Carroll, two books of fiction by the Moroccan storyteller Mohammed Mrabet, and American fiction by Douglas Woolf, Lucia Berlin, Bobbie Louise Hawkins, Steve Emerson, and Paul Bowles's final collection of short stories, *Unwelcome Words*.

Wolfe's first works on Islam were a pair of books from Grove Press on the pilgrimage to Mecca: *The Hadj* (1993), a first-person travel account, and *One Thousand Roads to Mecca* (1997), an anthology of 10 centuries of travelers writing about the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. Shortly after September 11, 2001, he edited a collection of essays by American Muslims called *Taking Back Islam: American Muslims Reclaim Their Faith* (Rodale Press). *Taking Back Islam* won the 2003 annual Wilbur Award for 'Best Book of the year on a Religious Theme.' He is currently working on a novel and translating a group of epitaphs from the Greek Anthology. He recently completed a fourth volume of poetry, entitled *Digging Up Russia*.

In April 1997, Wolfe hosted a televised account of the Hajj from Mecca for Ted Koppel's "Nightline" on ABC. The program was nominated for Peabody, Emmy,

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George Polk, and National Press Club Awards. It won the annual Media Award from the Muslim Public Affairs Council. In February 2003, Wolfe worked with CNN-International television news reporter Zain Verjee to produce a new half-hour documentary on the Hajj. Wolfe has been featured on hundreds of regional and national radio talk shows. He writes an occasional column for Beliefnet, a Web journal of the world's religions.

In 1999, Wolfe helped found an educational media foundation focused on promoting peace through the media, Unity Productions Foundation. In 2002, UPF produced its first full-length film, called *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*, a two-hour television documentary on the life and times of the Prophet Muhammad. The film, which Wolfe co-created, co-produced, and co-executive edited, received a national broadcast on PBS and subsequent international broadcasts on National Geographical International. It was awarded a Cine Special Jury Award for Best Professional Documentary in its category of People and Places. With Unity Productions, Wolfe continues to produce documentaries for PBS and other broadcasters in the U.S. and abroad.

Robert Gardner, Producer/Director

Over a career that spans thirty years, documentary film producer, director and writer Robert Gardner has been nominated for an *Academy Award*, won three *National Emmy Awards*, four regional *Emmys*, a *duPont Columbia* award, from Columbia University for excellence in broadcast journalism, *American Association for the Advancement of Science; Science Journalism Award for Television* and a variety of special awards. His production company, Gardner Films, has produced for commercial and public television in the United States and internationally for seventeen years. He is a member of the Director's Guild and the Writer's Guild of America, and has lectured on non-fiction television at Johns Hopkins University, Goucher College, The American Film Institute, The American University, and Wesleyan University.

Gardner's best work explores the way ordinary people react to extraordinary events—the triumph of personal courage in the face of war or poverty, the emergence of human values in times of crisis and change. His historical documentaries feature extensive period re-enactments and complex location

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production, utilizing robotic jib work, Steadicam and extreme slow-motion. High production values are a hallmark.

Gardner's most recently broadcast films include *The Barbarians*, a four-hour World Premiere, Marquee Special Series for The History Channel about the Barbarian invasions of Europe. Supported by an extensive promotional effort (four-page advertising supplement in the New York Times, full page ads in Time Magazine, Washington Post, LA Times, USA Today, ESPN magazine, live radio promotions in 16 markets and three-dimensional billboards in Times Square and Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles) the series produced the second highest ratings in the history of The History Channel.

Gardner has also recently aired a number of films on PBS, including a one-hour documentary biography of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel, narrated by Academy Award-winner William Hurt; and *Arab and Jew: Return to the Promised Land*, a one-hour PBS documentary about the ongoing conflict between the Israeli's and the Palestinians, with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, David K. Shipler. In 2002, PBS also aired Gardner's three-hour documentary film series called *Islam, Empire of Faith*. The series was shot on film in Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Syria, Spain, Turkey and Iran.

Other credits include two one-hour episodes of the Discovery Channel's top-rated forensic science series *The New Detectives*, two one-hour episodes of *The FBI Files*, also on the Discovery Channel, as well as an episode of the PBS premier science series NOVA, produced on location in Antarctica.

Other work includes two one-hour episodes of Time Life Television's documentary series *Lost Civilizations*, produced for NBC's entertainment division and broadcast on NBC in June, 1995. The two episodes were *Egypt; Quest for Immortality* and *Mesopotamia; Return to Eden* were shot on location in Egypt, Iraq, Israel and Bahrain. The series won a Prime Time Emmy in 1996, represented by *Egypt; Quest for Immortality*.

Gardner Films has also worked in Bolivia, Ethiopia, Egypt and Israel and France on a variety of assignments for *National Geographic Television*.

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