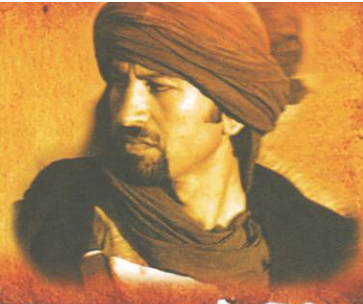


CITIES OF LIGHT

THE RISE AND FALL OF ISLAMIC SPAIN



CITIES OF LIGHT: THE RISE AND FALL OF ISLAMIC SPAIN SYNOPSIS

Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain, scheduled to air on PBS Wednesday, August 22, 2007 at 9 p.m. ET (Check local listings) takes viewers on an epic journey back into one of the most fascinating and important periods of world history. It tells a story of vital importance for our contemporary world about the triumphs and shortcomings, achievements and ultimate failures of a centuries-long period when Muslims, Christians and Jews inhabited the same far corner of Western Europe and built a society that lit the Dark Ages.

The lemon tree, the water wheel and Aristotle's lost philosophy all arrived in Europe through Islamic Spain, as did algebra and the beginnings of modern medicine, science and poetry. Here were the very roots of the European Renaissance.

All this was the legacy of a diverse society that managed to create a culture of light in a time of general darkness and ignorance in Europe. *Cities of Light* shows how it was possible for Muslims, Christians and Jews to co-exist and thrive together—and yet how fragile that union can be when religious extremism begins to rise. The glories of Islamic Spain are beautifully rendered, but the film does not flinch when vividly portraying the violence and horror that ultimately engulfed it—violence that seems similar to what we witness today.

The world is at a crossroads. Exploring the vibrant history of Islamic Spain could not be more important as we confront the profound political, strategic, and ethical challenges that will determine issues of war and peace for generations to come.

The history of Islamic Spain demonstrates that when religious diversity is accommodated within a social and political system, problems and tensions may still exist, but society is able to successfully manage them, generally to the

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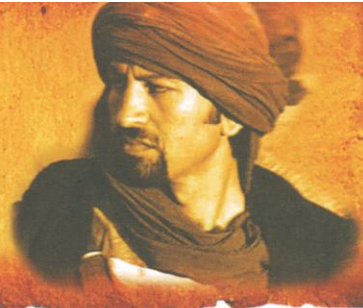
Michael Wolfe and Alexander Kronemer, Executive Producers

P.O. Box 650458 * Potomac Falls * Virginia * 20165-0458

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CITIES OF LIGHT

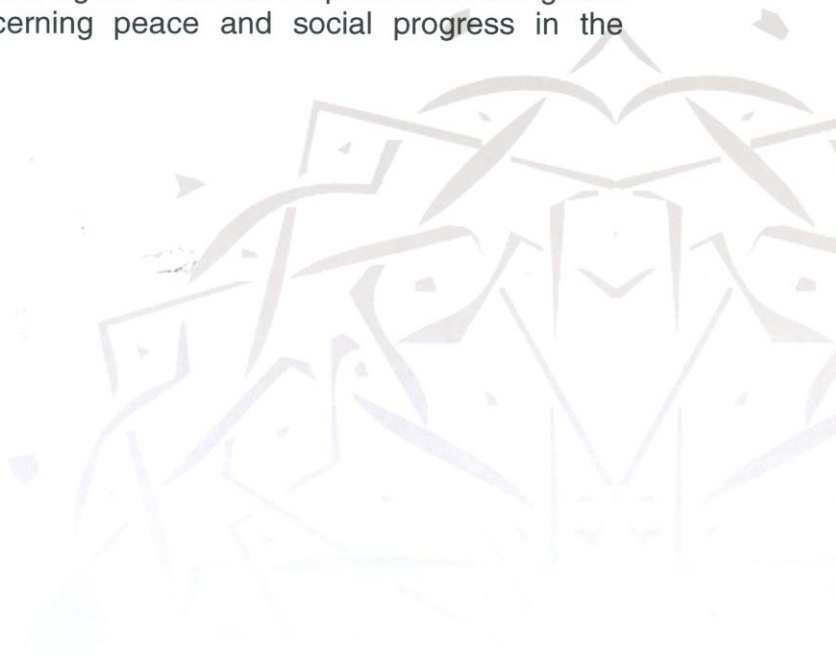
THE RISE AND FALL OF ISLAMIC SPAIN



benefit of all. But when a power system or religious movement rejects complexity and insists on a single cultural and religiously-centered point of view, then society is likely to come to grief with everyone losing something.

The history of Islamic Spain delivers this message with unprecedented power because it is a common history shared by both the Muslim East and the European West.

Supported by a diverse group of scholars, this film was co-produced by Unity Productions Foundation (*Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*), a nonprofit corporation dedicated to increasing cultural understanding through the media, and by the award-winning film director Rob Gardner (*Islam: Empire of Faith; Arab and Jew: Return to the Promised Land; The Barbarians*). The film makes an important contribution to our understanding of history and world events—what once occurred and what might happen again—and will help advance the global discussion already underway concerning peace and social progress in the twenty-first century.



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