

Empires and Civilizations Video Collection

Ancient Civilizations: The Ottoman Empire

Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 1999

45 minutes, color

This video gives a brief history of the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire. The story begins with the Ottomans conquering smaller cities in the Byzantine Empire, and the eventual conquering of Byzantium's capital of Constantinople in 1453. The defeat of Byzantium by the Ottoman Empire was a process drawn out over many years. When the capital was captured by Sultan Mehmed, it horrified Christian Europe. The video shows many buildings and artifacts from the era when Constantinople was renamed Istanbul. After the establishment of Istanbul is discussed, the actual culture of the empire is examined. The rule of the sultan was an important aspect in Ottoman culture, as he was believed to have the divine right to rule. The video explains how the line of succession worked in the days of sultans. The Ottomans also had a complex social class system, which is briefly discussed. And of course the role of Islam in Ottoman society is covered, which included the use of Islamic law. Although the Ottomans were very religious Muslims, they were known for being very tolerant of other religions. Next, the video discusses the role of trade in society and the interaction with Western Europe. Finally, the causes of the empire's decline are examined, along with scenes of WWI and the fall of the empire. The very end of the video shows the establishment of the modern state of Turkey.

The Andalusian Epic: Islamic Spain

Films for the Humanities and Sciences

25 minutes, color

This video discusses the civilization created when the Arab empire expanded west into Spain. As in its other conquests, the Arabs were very tolerant of other peoples and their religions when they were present in Spain. Several cities in Spain are noted for their greatness during the years of Arab rule: Cordoba is noted for its wealth, and Toledo for its diversity and cultural coexistence. Jews who were persecuted in earlier years of Spanish history welcomed the Arabs as there was now a prominent yet healthy rivalry between Jews and Arabs. During this period, Arabic became a very popular language, a cultural language. The Spanish language gained vocabulary from Arabic which it previously had no concept of. Al-Andalus truly witnessed a cultural revolution. Secular learning was very popular, and even women began to have more rights and they could now go into public unveiled. This video shows footage of some of the marvels of Andalusia, and tells the Andalusians' rich history which lasted until the 15th century when the Catholics returned to rule. The video tells the story of when "The world spoke Arabic: The Golden Age of Arab Civilization."
