

The series of documentaries “Beacons of Humanity”

“Beacons of Humanity” is a series of documentaries which explain the best contributions made by peoples from different cultures based on the best contributions of each one of them.

We have set about investigating and disseminating what we call 'humanist moments in history'- moments that are characterized for their rejection of violence, for opening up to other cultures and for love of knowledge and its progress beyond the established truths.

The events that are re-told here have been studied in relationship to their contemporary environment, as well as to the past and also their effect on the future.

This method enables us to see the progress of knowledge as a construction as a whole, which, in turn, helps us to understand that our present culture is the result of many different people's efforts throughout history in different parts of the world.

The first three documentaries of this series were produced in 2003-2005:

“ Toledo and Alexandria, beacons of humanity”

“The apparition of knowledge in the Court of Rudolph II”

“Frederick II, a bridge between East and West”



CIUDADANOS DEL MUNDO

The **Pangea Foundation** is an international, cultural, non-profit making organisation.

The Foundation -in taking the name “Pangea”- wants to stand out in one image the unity of all lands, this cultural ideal inspires the Foundation with hope for a future in which all nations will eventually form part of a human universal nation, without discrimination, without irritating distinctions and recognising the cultural differences of the different people that exist that can harmonise in a common ideal.

Today contact between the most diverse peoples is increasing and, thanks to the cultural impulse of the sciences, technology, arts and the economy, the Earth is starting to become a global entity, no longer just geographical, but now cultural. The **Foundation Pangea**, as a cultural organization, wants to contribute to the development of cultures, arts, and sciences, thereby encouraging a major and better understanding between people.

Citizens of the World was founded in 1988 with the merit of being a forward-looking project aimed at building a future world where the human being is the central value.

It aims to contribute to the improvement of life by challenging facing discrimination, fanaticism, exploitation and all forms of violence.

Through a cultural-educational project of communication it aims at giving access to the largest number of people towards expression and communication and the free circulation of the information as well as favouring the active, critical and constructive participation in social life.

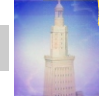
Citizens of the World maintains that “the right to information” does not just consist of the right to receive and process it, but it consists of the right and the possibility to produce and distribute it.

Citizens of the World produces, edits and distributes audiovisual productions and articles on education, science, the arts and technology.



TOLEDO ALEXANDRIA

beacons
of
humanity



“Toledo and Alexandria, beacons of humanity”, is the story of the spread of knowledge through a historical path.

The first part explains how Arabic culture, that had collected and widened the classical legacy, was passed on to the Christian western world as a result of the translations that were done in the border territories between both civilizations and in particular in Toledo during 12th and 13th centuries.

This would not have taken place without the spirit of tolerance that allowed joint work between scholars of the three cultures Arabic, Jewish and Christian.

The arrival of classical and Arabic knowledge in medieval Christian Europe had a profound influence and was the precursor of the Renaissance.

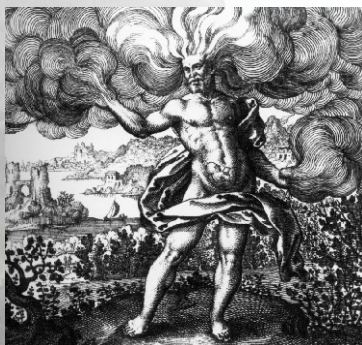
In the second part of this documentary, a jump backwards takes us to the times of the forebears of the knowledge collected and translated in Toledo.

This is how we reach The Alexandrian Library, founded by the successors of Alexander the Great. Thanks to the patronage of the Ptolomaic kings, this used to be a place where scholars could dedicated themselves wholly to study, surrounded by an extraordinary collection of all the books that were available in those times.

The library functioned for six centuries, beyond the Ptolomaic period, reaching levels of knowledge that in some cases would take 1500 years again to be reached.



The apparition of knowledge in the Court of Rudolph II



“The apparition of knowledge in the Court of Rudolph II” brings to light a historical event that has surprisingly been largely ignored by established historians.

Emperor Rudolph II (nephew of Phillip II of Spain) lived in Prague during the 16th century. This unusual emperor put territorial affairs and religious wars in a secondary place in order to dedicate himself to the development of science and the arts. It was under his lavish patronage that the largest concentration of knowledge in that epoch took place.

Figures such as Kepler, who were very often hiding from religions prosecution, were able to develop their work thanks to the support of the emperor. This video reveals the late renaissance expression of knowledge where religion, science and the arts became fused in the search for a fundamental understanding of the world and of life.

This was an atmosphere where ideas and knowledge were trying to develop and overcome the religious antagonisms that, in years to come, would bring extreme destruction to Europe.

Neither the train of thought nor the sensitivity nor the tolerant attitude of the Rudolphian era were to remain influential later on and during ensuing centuries his figure was repeatedly undervalued. Nevertheless, from the 20th century onwards, its cultural, artistic and spiritual values have been revived thanks to modern thinking.

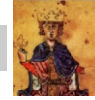


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Frederick II a bridge between East and West



Frederick II Hohenstaufen (1194-1250), inheritor of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire and the Normanic kingdom of Sicily, was brought up in the city of Palermo in a multicultural atmosphere par excellence.

Whilst consolidating his kingdom, he tackled a series of reforms creating a centralized state with a juridical body which was very advanced for its time.

Salerno's School became known as the European vanguard of medicine, collecting together Byzantine, Jewish and Arab medical knowledge

These and other advances that were to become a reference point for the following centuries, happened under the patronage and efforts of Frederick II.

But probably Frederick II most original characteristic was his ability to go beyond the cultural and religious barriers to create a relationship of cooperation with the Muslims.

This led to his strange Crusade and his bloodless conquest of Jerusalem. His attitude deepened the confrontation with the Pope in Rome, something he had already inherited from his predecessors. The lack of prejudice and the inquisitive character of the emperor is shown in his own work "*De arte Venandi cum avibus*"

as well as in his promotion of translations of the Classics and Arabic texts. This cultural acquisition in the Middle Ages from the area of Islam provoked a revision in the beliefs base of Christian Europe and a qualitative leap in the field of arts, science and literature.

