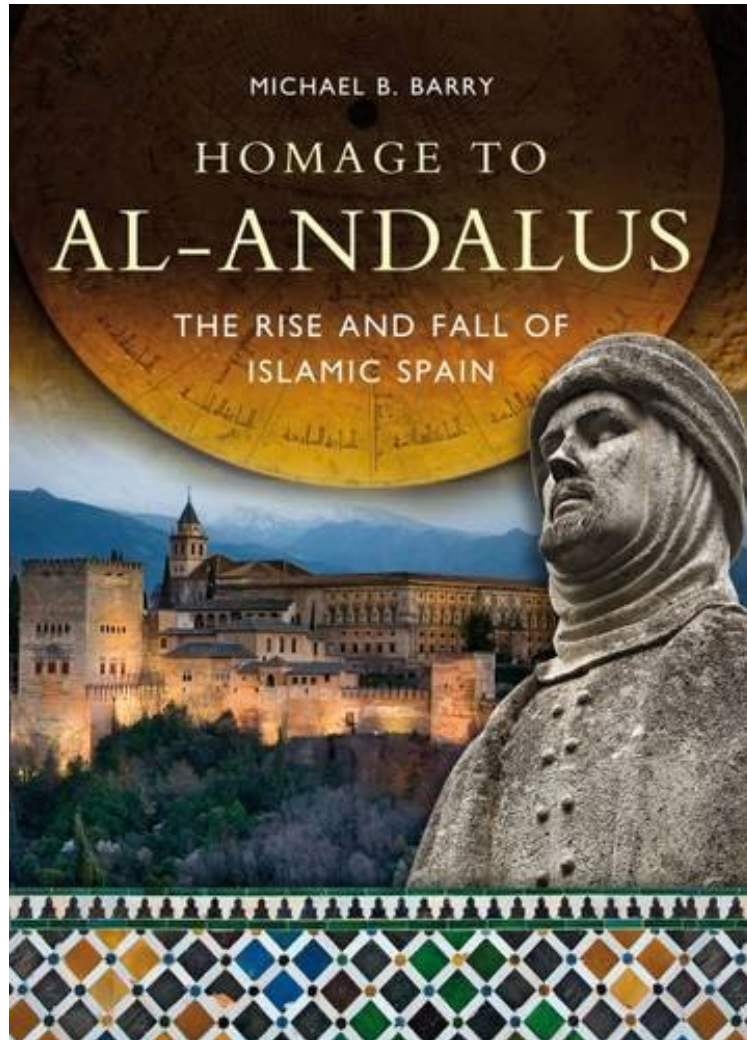


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Homage to Al-Andalus: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain

Michael B. Barry

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Michael B. Barry : Homage to Al-Andalus: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Homage to Al-Andalus: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The great book! It is so addictive that you can ...By Tomasz SciezorThe great book! It is so addictive that you can not get away from it. I have read a few books on this subject, but just this one allowed me to fully know the history of Muslim Andalusia.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very helpful to prepare for a visit to AndaluciaBy Donna M. StewartI read this book to prepare for my trip to southern Spain, to visit the key cities of Al-Andalus. The book really helped set the stage for the historic sites I visited, and enriched my experiences there. The book seemed to wander quite a bit in time and space, but circled back enough times for me to get the gist of the area's history.4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Excelent history of a

forgotten eraBy MSPPost-Roman, post-Visigothic Spain was an era of Knowledge, learning - but also of bloody power struggles. The rise of Toledo, the fall of Cordoba, the rise of Seville: this complex era is collected in a history by Michael Barry that is easily understood and a pleasure to read. Illustrations of various last remnants of the era are also included.It weakness: the names, the events are sometimes difficult to follow: a chart of all the rulers would be of immeasurable benefit. Also: a few more maps... Michael Barry knows every small hamlet in Spain, I don't, and I spent a lot of time with google maps!

The Iberian Peninsula was conquered by Islamic forces in 711 AD and this presence continued in this part of Europe for 900 years.This new book tells the intriguing story of al-Andalus: its splendour, tolerance and conflicts. Centuries of Islamic presence in Spain and Portugal left an indelible stamp, like the wonders of the Alhambra and the Great Mosque of Cordoba. The legacy also extends to the rich seam of learning, in science, medicine, literature and philosophy that was later transmitted to the rest of Europe. How did all this come about? In this fascinating new book Michael Barry tells the story of al-Andalus, its rise to splendour and sophistication and its decline. Richly illustrated with outstanding photographs, it shows the achievements of this extraordinary time. It is a book which is essential for those interested in history, for those who want to know this absorbing story and for those who wish to travel and discover the hidden Spain.

There is probably no more evocative image of the Arab world - or rather one that Europeans can most easily relate to - than the Alhambra. Yet its construction began when Arab influence in Spain had already begun to wane. In his marvellously illustrated book *Homage to Al-Andalus*, Michael Barry traces the story of the Arabs who first crossed the 14 miles of water that divide Spain from north Africa and who brought with them such a rich store of creativity. The Arabs were not the first group of people to settle in Spain for, as Barry points out, peninsulas are vulnerable places, so ahead of the Arabs were the Phoenicians, the Babylonians, the Romans, the Byzantines and the Vandals, though it was the stunningly designed and decorated architecture that has left Al-Andalus still a major showcase of artistic achievement. In 760, there was a switch in power from the Damascus-based Umayyad dynasty to the Abbasids who moved the Caliphate to Baghdad. This resulted in Abd Rahman, young scion of the defeated Umayyad dynasty, forced to flee Damascus and to spend five years travelling southwards through the Egyptian desert to north Africa until finally he reached Spain. For the next couple of hundred years, the Arabs were on a roll. Barry's book charts every battle, every skirmish, every assassination, all of which were to characterise the ensuing centuries so that you have to wonder where on earth they found the time to build their glorious mosques, palaces and castles. Roads they didn't need to build - the Romans had already seen to that. The answer lies partly in the fact that when a treaty between Christians and Muslims was agreed, it gave the parties 10 or 20 years of stability in which they could plan their extravaganzas. As Barry remarks, the fruit of peace was prosperity. It was the period after just such a treaty, signed in 1246 between the king of Castile and Leon, Fernando III and Ibn al-Ahmar, founder of Granada, that gave the latter a period of peace during which he started the construction of the Alhambra. And despite the richness of the architecture, this was not a hugely expensive undertaking. The materials used, writes Barry, were not expensive. The necessary inputs were imagination, inspiration and many skilled hands which were obviously available in abundance. Barry has clearly walked much of Al-Andalus and anyone planning a walking holiday through this part of Spain will find his book invaluable as a guide to some of the secret, forgotten places of Arab Spain. --Book of the Day, Irish TimesImpressive book. Required reading for anyone exploring Spain --Irish IndependentSuperbly researched...magnificent photographs. --Irish ExaminerAbout the AuthorWith an interest in historical heritage, author Michael Barry has written 'Across Deep Waters, Bridges of Ireland'. He also wrote the ground-breaking book on 'Light Rail, Through the Cities'. Other titles include 'Tales of the Permanent Way' and 'Victorian Dublin Revealed'. A regular visitor to Spain, Michael has developed a special affinity with the country. He is an accomplished photographer and in recent years he has traveled to Spain, Syria, Jordan and Morocco to take a large selection of photographs for this book.