

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Cultural Directorate

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Commentary on the lantern-slide series entitled

THE CULTURAL UNITY OF EUROPEANS

S L I D E

L E G E N D

Credit Titles

1. Map:
The classical East and the Mediterranean World (areas of civilisation)
As early as the 4th millennium B.C., Egypt, Sumer, then Babylonia, laid the foundations of what was to become our civilisation and our culture (mathematics, script, law, architecture).
2. Crete: Low relief of Bull (Palace of Knossos)
First through Crete (up to 1400 B.C.), then through Greece (Homer, Hesiod: 8th century B.C.) and, lastly, through Imperial Rome (100 B.C. to 450)
3. Greece: Tholus of Delphi
the constituents of civilisation, which originated in the Near East, are conveyed to the whole of the Mediterranean basin, the cradle of future European culture.
4. Imperial Rome: The Coliseum (seen from the Palatine Hill)
culture.
5. Map:
The Empire of Alexander
It was under the reign of Alexander the Great (in the 4th century B.C.) that the first expansion in the opposite direction, that of the Hellenic civilisation formed on the Continent of the West, towards the East, took place. A disciple of Aristotle, he mounted the throne of Little Macedonia in 336 B.C.; he first brought the Greeks under his rule, then took possession of Tyre and entered Egypt where he founded Alexandria. Victorious against the Persians, he took possession of one Near Eastern capital after another: Babylonia, Susa,
6. Aristotle (National Roman Museum, Rome)
7. Alexander in combat with Darius (Mosaic, Naples Museum).

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8. Greco-Buddhistic art. Buddha upright, Gandhara. (Central Museum, Lahore).

Persepolis. He showed interest in institutions and customs, respect for faiths and founded "Alexandrias" everywhere which became centres radiating Greek civilisation.

He extended his Empire as far as the Indus. Greek art was to influence Buddhistic art as far away as China.

But Alexander died in Babylonia at the age of 33, before having been able to turn back towards Europe and form a universal empire joining the East to the West.

9. Statuettes of Gods

- (1) A cat of the Goddess Bastet
- (2) The Goddess Bastet, woman's body with head of cat, Saitic era
- (3) Isis, Ptolemaic era
- (4) "Venus of Courtrai" (Mariemont Museum)

Religious beliefs underwent a similar evolution. First the Greeks were fascinated by the forms taken by religion in the Near East (Egypt, Mesopotamia). But very soon they attributed a new - very much more human - significance to it. After reaching the West, the Eastern Gods soon divested themselves of their past shapes (monsters with animal form), except as a reflection of certain episodes of their lives: the metamorphosis of Zeus into a bull for the rape of Europa, daughter of the King of Tyre, for example. The classical Greek Gods assumed human forms. The Greeks discovered the divine dignity of man.

10. F. di Girgio (1439-1502) L'Enlèvement d'Europe (Louvre Museum)

11. Map:

Rome at its zenith

12. The Porta Nigra at Trier.

In the second century of our era, the Roman Empire, which had absorbed Greek culture, achieved its broadest dimensions. From Augustus to Hadrian, Romanisation spread within the "limes", a defensive system for protecting the frontiers.

The "Pax Romana" permitted great economic expansion.

13. Statue of Marcus-Aurelius in the Capitol square in Rome

Symbol of the civilising power of Rome: the equestrian statue of the Emperor Marcus-Aurelius (who reigned from 161 to 180) in the Capitol square in Rome. His arms are spread, depicting the legislator who brings order and peace. The square was designed by Michelangelo, in the 16th century, on this sacred hill of ancient Rome which dominates the Forum and on which the temple of Jupiter stood.

14. The Capitol of Washington

Capitol was adopted as the name of the seat of the authority by many towns, ancient (Toulouse) and modern (Washington), which thus showed that they were attached to their Roman heritage.

15. Map:

Europe after the invasions by Teutons and Slavs

But ever more difficult times followed for Rome whose decline and fall were hastened by the great invasions: Teutons, Vandals, Huns. Byzantium alone resisted and survived all the attacks. Up to the 15th century it was to be the direct heir of the Roman Empire.

16. Byzantium: The Empress Theodora (mosaic of the church of San Vitale of Ravenna, 6th century)

The Western part of the Roman Empire fell into ruins. Rome, which had one million inhabitants under the Caesars, numbered only a few hundred before the advent of Belisarius in the 6th century. Europe was divided into barbaric kingdoms: the Frankish, Lombardic, Avar and Arabic Kingdoms in the West; the Bulgarian Kingdom in the East. Beyond: Byzantium and Islam.

17. Facsimile of a page of the Gospel copied for Charlemagne by Godescale (781)

In the 8th century, Charlemagne founded the first European Empire embracing the peoples of the centre of the continent, from Saxony to Spain, and from Rome to the North Sea.

Under his reign, a renewal of Roman and Byzantine culture took place in our countries.

On the advice of Alcuin Charlemagne founded and multiplied schools throughout Western Europe which became cultural centres. A special illumination technique enhanced the beauty of manuscripts. The one which you can see represents Christ seated, making the ritual gesture of blessing with his right hand. His left hand holds the holy book of scriptures. The beardless face with the wide open eyes under heavy brows is Armenian or Syrian in type. It exudes the nobility and dignity which entirely befit a royal book. The writing becomes clear and neat and gives birth to characters from which our letters derive ("Caroline minuscule").

18. Map:

Trade routes in
the Middle Ages

They crossed the whole of Europe in every direction: land routes or waterways, they not only constituted the network indispensable to economic life but also show the manner in which culture spreads: from a local centre to a regional centre, from there to another centre, across the whole of the European area. The frontiers of our present States did not as yet exist. European culture was born of a free exchange of men, ideas and works..

19. View:

Les Anges musiciens
by Memling

The evolution of music illustrates the collectively European character of our culture. Already in the early Christian centuries Hebraic chanting was used for the liturgy sung in Greek, then rendered in Latin.

Ambrosian and, later, Gregorian chant were the result of this influence. The prototype of Christian music is a choir of angels whose human voices try to imitate harmony and polyphony.

20. Minnesang (1300-1330)
Heidelberg University
Library

21. 14th Century Music:
The Concert (Tapestry,
Museum)

22. Venice

23. Mozart (1756-1791)
with his father and
sister (water-colour
by Carmontelle, 1764
Carnavalet Museum).

24. Wagner (1813-1883)

In the 12th century Southern France saw the birth of the song of the Troubadour, due to the influence of the Arabs of Andalusia. This secular music spread to the Germanic provinces (Minnesang). In the 14th century schools of sacred music developed around Paris and in Northern Italy which made use of popular and secular themes. The Italian schools sent their artists in the direction of Flanders along the trade routes leading there from Italy. A great Flemish school of music (Guillaume Dufay), (Josquin des Prés) was continued in the "Burgundian" school (Roland de Lassus). Then the Flemish and Burgundian masters were called to Italy, to England, to Spain. It was subsequently in Venice that inspiration was sought by German composers, predecessors of Bach who, himself, was to be strongly influenced by the Italian master Vivaldi. The different epochs thus influenced each other throughout the centuries. From the close of the 18th century onwards, the Germanic regions (Austria above all with Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, subsequently Germany with Schumann, Wagner, Brahms) became the main centres. In the 19th century it was to Germany that the great Russian musicians came to be initiated before themselves playing their part in the evolution of

25. Russian Ballet of Diaghilev (water-colour by Leon Bakst, 1910, Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs).

Western music (Mussorgski in the 19th century, Stravinski and the Russian Ballet of Diaghilev at the beginning of the 20th century).

26. F. Giotto (1266-1336) St. Francis feeding birds.

27. Masaccio (1401-1428) Crucifixion.

28. R. van der Weyden (1400-1464) Annunciation (Louvre Museum)

29. J. Fouquet (1425-1477) La Vierge et l'Enfant (Louvre Museum)

The evolution of painting, in its broad outlines, followed a similar European course: Byzantine painting, Latinised by Giotto and the Italian painters of the Quattrocento, standing out, from 1400 onwards against the common background of the Italian School, with Masaccio, one of the founders of religious painting of the end of the Middle Ages; the Flemish School with Van Eyck and van der Weyden, the French School with Fouquet and the German School with Conrad Witz.

30. C. Witz (1400-1477) Miraculous draught of fishes (Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva)

Formerly Greek statues had laid stress on the ideal man, man in the aspect of a god. The Renaissance laid emphasis on individual man, with his individual face and psychology. The birth of the individual portrait is characteristic of European art which thus distinguishes itself from the art of Eastern and ancient civilisations.

31. P. Pourbus (1523-1584) Portrait of a Deputy Mayor of Bruges (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Brussels)

There is constant interplay between all these schools, and the "nation of a painter" means primarily the style of his school, whose frontiers never correspond to those of our present-day nations.

32. P.P. Rubens (1577-1640) Rape of the daughters of Leucippus (Louvre Museum)

From the 16th century onwards we have the Flemish School from Pourbus to Breughels and Rubens; the Italian School (Bellini, Mantegna, Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, Tiepolo); the German School (Dürer, Grünewald and Holbein); the Spanish School (El Greco); the French School (Clouet, Poussin and Claude le Lorrain). From these the English and Portuguese branches derive.

33. L. da Vinci (1425-1519) La belle Ferronière (Louvre Museum)

34. H. Holbein the younger (1497-1543) Erasmus writing (Kunstmuseum, Basle).

35. El Greco (1545-1614)
Crucifixion
(Louvre Museum)
36. F. Clouet (1516-1572)
Portrait of François
the First (Musée Condé,
Chantilly)
37. D. Teniers (1582-1649)
Picture Gallery of the
Archduke Leopold
(Musée des Beaux-Arts,
Brussels)

One of the common creations of European culture is the isolated painting (easel painting). Ancient and Eastern art only knew Frescoes and mural decoration in connexion with a temple or palace. In Europe, immediately following the Renaissance, the work of art becomes divorced from holy places and is more and more frequently a transportable object for the pleasure of private individuals. Paintings and later Museums make it possible to gather together works of different eras and regions.

38. Picasso (1881)
Still-life
(Musée d'Art Moderne,
Paris)

In the late 19th and early 20th century, European painting begins to leave natural and human themes behind and becomes the expression of the relationship between colours and forms. Pure painting with the cubism of Picasso, down to the abstract painting of the present day. The so-called Paris School, cosmopolitan because of the varying origins of its masters, exercises a determinant influence on the evolution of all contemporary art.

This evolution of pictorial art moreover, takes place, at every period, simultaneously in all our countries. It is never the nationality of artists which counts but their style, their school.

39. A Concert in the 18th Century
Engraving by Duclos

The concert is a fairly modern European creation: it dates from the 18th century. In the Middle Ages music accompanied worship or folk dances and songs. Now it is executed in a secular milieu for the pleasure of cultured society.

The orchestra, the choir are typically European creations: a number of separate instruments, a number of separate voices combine to produce harmony. We have unity in diversity. Each contributes his share, each plays his own note, but in a regulated whole.

40. The Gutenberg Bible

The invention of movable printing type in the 14th century made possible the rapid multiplication of books, which were previously copied by hand. The printed book, sold to all, greatly helped to spread culture more widely. First sacred texts, the Bible, then scientific works were printed. The reading of these great works led to the development of a critical spirit which was to give birth to philosophy and modern science.

41. Strasbourg Cathedral

Architecture, too, is a common creation of Europeans. The Gothic style, born in France (at first it was called opus francigenum or Frankish work) spread all over Europe, from Spain to Sweden, from Northern Italy to England. It was a bold modern style which was as revolutionary in the 13th century as the skyscrapers in the 20th.

42. The Baroque Style
The House of Rubens
at Antwerp

The Roman style of the 10th to 12th centuries, the Gothic style of the 12th to 15th centuries, were succeeded, in the 16th, by the revived classical style of Greece, then by the Baroque and Rococo (17th and 18th centuries). All these styles spread rapidly throughout most of our countries without ever being influenced by frontiers which, in any event, changed frequently and were of no importance culturally.

43. Map:

Tongues and Nations

The idea that a nation corresponds to a tongue, to a race and to a religion, to a more or less self-sufficient economic system, had no currency earlier than the 19th century.

In 20th century France, French is spoken everywhere but German is spoken in Alsace, Catalan, Provençal and Italian in the South, Breton and Flemish in the North. On the other hand, French is spoken in four other countries: Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Northern Italy (the Aosta valley and the Vaud valley of Piedmont).

In the same way, the German language does not define the German nation for it is spoken, apart from Germany, in Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Roumania and France, and several Slavonic languages are spoken in Germany.

44. European inventions

The Eiffel Tower
under construction
(Engraving by
de Fraipont, 1881)

Europe is pre-eminently the land of inventions. All that characterises the modern world was created in Europe: sky-scrapers (thanks to the techniques which enabled Eiffel to build the Eiffel Tower in Paris), the motor car, the airplane, the machine-tool, industrial and pharmaceutical chemistry, nuclear physics and all their industrial, medical, military, technical and cosmic applications.

45. CERN

The division of Europe into 24 small nations hampers scientific progress. But when a number of countries realise that it is in their interests to work together, spectacular results are achieved. Example: 12 countries of Europe

resolved in 1950 to set up a joint European atomic research laboratory - CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research). Result: the laboratory at Geneva where the world's biggest apparatus for research on atomic structure was built. The circle which you can see on the photograph measures 200 metres in diameter. By uniting, the peoples of Europe can make up the delay in scientific progress.

46. The main square of Sienna, called the Palio

This is one of the most famous squares of the Middle Ages: the Palio of Sienna. It is typical of our civilisation for the social life of Europeans developed around squares which formed the animated centres of villages, and later, of towns. The Greeks called such a square the agora; to the Romans it was the forum. Since the Middle Ages the church, the town hall, the school, cafés, the market, are grouped around the squares, that is to say the centres of social and communal life characteristic of Europe in all latitudes.

Out of the life of our municipal squares our Parliaments were born.

47. The Parliament
Ring of a Landsgemeinde
(Haus)

In the square of a small Swiss town the whole population assembles in a ring to discuss and vote the laws: this is direct democracy.

48. House of Commons
Unsigned engraving of
the 19th century

In England, there are two tiers of benches in the place of the circle: the majority sits on one side, the opposition on the other. Both have the same rights and the same type of seat.

On the Continent, most Parliaments are in the form of a hemicycle. At Strasbourg it

is also in a hemicycle that the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Community and the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe meet in turn.

Everywhere the idea and the form of the original square is to be found. The two English sides symbolise the right to opposition, the hemicycle the diversity of the parties. They are guarantees of free discussion.

49. Bruges

The culture and civilisation common to Europeans of which we have just recalled the broad outlines and certain stages must be explained and understood as soon as the child is of an age to interest itself in the world in which it is destined to live. That is why, each year, the celebration of European Schools' Day, founded at Bruges, the seat of the College of Europe, includes an essay competition for school-children of twelve countries on European subjects. Many prizes consisting of travel scholarships are awarded for the best essays, enabling the winners to go and see for themselves this Europe which is our common motherland.