

Art History - Cultural Periods of the Western World
with Jasminka Ward Matievic

Some of the main lessons we teach speak to the core of the Waldorf curriculum. This is one of them.

In year nine and ten we take the children on a journey through the epochs, in which they have been immersed in the primary school. At that time we work in the feeling realm through storytelling and artistic activities.

Once the children reach the age of 14 their intellect is born and we start working more and more with these head forces.

The Art History Main Lessons are a good example of this process. Now we study the epochs in a historical context and look at them from an intellectual point of view.

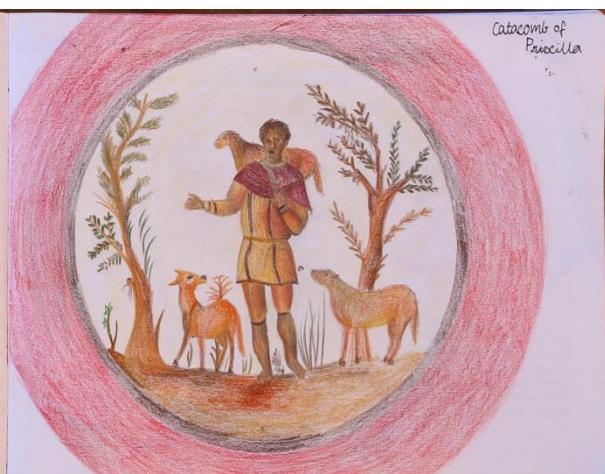
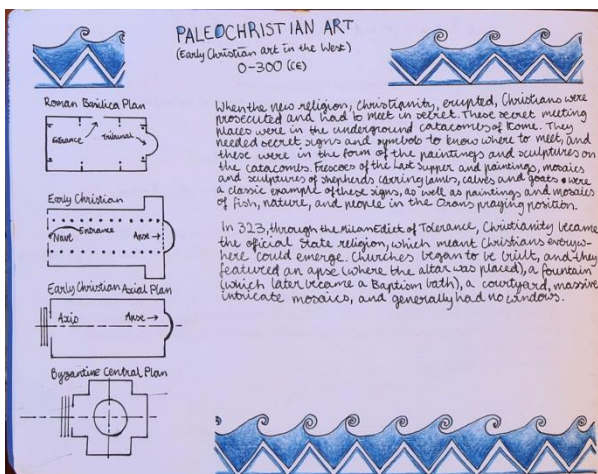
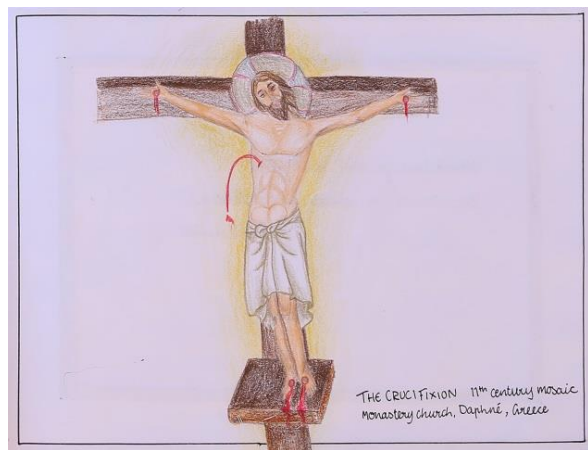
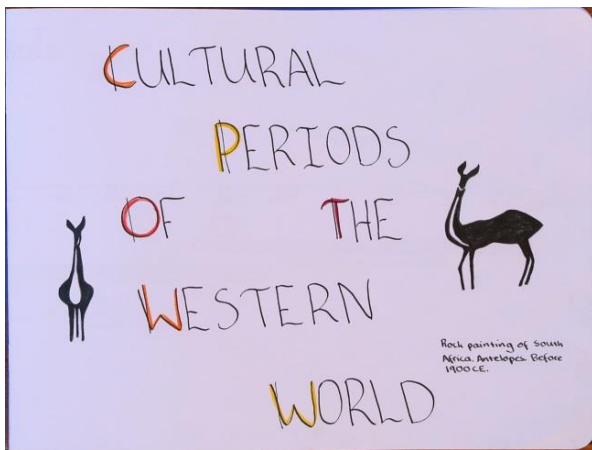




Photo: Courtesy of the Trustees in the Hall of the Augustan The Villa of the Papyri

Pompeii, Fresco, Mid 1st Century BCE

SOME REASONS FOR THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

- overextended bureaucracy
- barbarians became stronger
- upper classes uninterested in governing
- mercenary army, not loyal
- famine
- instability of government, emperors murdered
- migrations (Vandals, Visigoths, Ostrogoths)
- rise of Christianity

End of civilization is characterized by fear of war, years of invasion, year of plague and famine and peeling of hopelessness. Civilization requires material prosperity, confidence, belief in its philosophy and its moral precepts and laws.

- Kenneth Clark

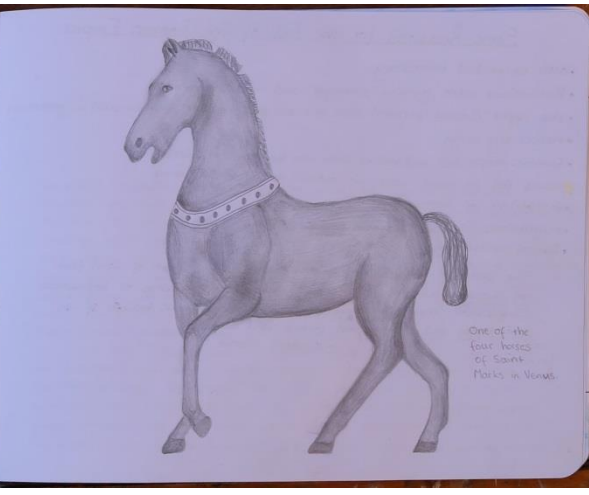
towns. Zebra crossings were also built in the form of stepping stones across the road. The Romans were rulers and regulators and regulated the width of all carts so their wheels would fit between the stepping stones.

Sculpture

Greek sculptures were extremely beautiful, idealistic and timeless. The Roman sculptures on the other hand were very realistic. The Romans did not shy away from depicting things just as they appeared in real life. This meant that the people look old and wrinkled in many of the Roman sculptures. The Romans were also very practical. The Trojan column for example depicts the whole story of the Trojan conquest carved into the column.

Painting

After the Vesuvius volcanic eruption 79CE many paintings were preserved to be dug up many years later. Beautiful paintings were found in the villas of Pompeii, some were even painted on whole walls. Romans also made lots of mosaics. They even used them as floors for their public baths. Another famous work of art is the four horses. These horses are over life size and were taken from Constantinople to Venus by the Venetians. These horses are made from a strange alloy similar to bronze that is still unknown. The four horses are placed on top of Saint Mark's in Venus with a mirroring set inside the building.



One of the four horses of Saint Mark's in Venice

BYZANTINE ART (Christian art of the east) 330-1453 CE

Pendentives

The introduction of the dome architectural plan was made possible by the pendentive - a curved triangle spanning between arches. While the Roman dome was able to hold domes only over small areas, the pendentive allowed the Byzantines to build domes over large areas, the most probably original plan of Hagia Sophia and Syrian architecture.

Constantine converted to Christianity and made it the state religion. He moved the capital to Byzantium and renamed it Constantinople. His desire to move the capital was strategic, it was in such a position that it had a large influx from the east, producing the spice trade. Constantinople became the center of the Christian world with the greatest market place and Constantine's head of the state army and church.

As Constantinople grew more affluent Rome went in the other direction. Rome became poorer and less protected. In 410 came the sack of Rome.

200 years later, a new emperor took over. His name was Justinian along with his wife Empress Theodora. Together they built a grand church called the Hagia Sophia. It's building was supported by pendentives and the large dome was made possible by the pendentive. Justinian and Theodora wanted to bring Christian art back to Europe. They made another capital called Constantinople. In particular, they built churches. One in particular was large but not very interesting on the outside but the inside was the opposite. It was glorious, majestic, monumental, a heaven on earth.

In 1453 the Ottomans came and conquered Constantinople. They turned Hagia Sophia into a mosque and painted over all the paintings.

632 was the start of Islam. In 745 people were painting icons. They were used for meditation, they became holy paintings that they would worship. A group of Christians started that wasn't right to worship a painting. They went around and destroyed all the icons. They were called "iconoclasts" which translates to "picture breaker". It's suspected they were started by Islam where you aren't allowed to show images of god. After that, there is a large spread of Byzantine art all over the West.



Justinian and Theodora, Mosaic, Ravenna

Byzantine Art (Christian Art of the East) 330-1453

Constantinople was strategically placed between the East and West. This means it had control over all the trading. There is a central church. Constantinople was built as the center of the Christian World. The Emperor was head of state, army and church. Rome became poorer as Constantinople became richer. It eventually led to the sack of Rome in 410.

200 years later Justinian and Theodora came. Now their wife ruled from 527-565. They built the Hagia Sophia in the years 532-537. They used buttresses which allowed it to open up with more windows.

This was a great change in church architecture.

In 1453 the Ottoman Conquered Constantinople. They turned the Hagia Sophia into a mosque. They built four towers called minarets which were used as calls to prayer. If Islam was seen as a god so they found over all the mosaics in the Hagia Sophia. These were removed and turned into a museum in 1932. Justinian and Theodora needed to bring the Empire together. Constantinople was too far away from Rome. They built a new city called Byzantium which was more centrally located.

They built churches and painting means made. Theodora and Justinian were depicted in their mosaics along with God. They used gold. Greek and Latin floor plans in their churches. They use all full of beautiful, glorious and majestic mosaics. They tried to create a vision of heaven on earth.

In 745 the Eastern church began a tradition of painting icons. They were used as help in meditating and seeing with their. Justinian would think as the painting of Jesus and was wanted in 632 was the beginning of Islam, one of the three religions to have holy icons.

