



Welcome to each and every one of you in Paris

The official program does not include a sightseeing tour of the city of Paris, but a very nice surprise awaits you tomorrow evening!

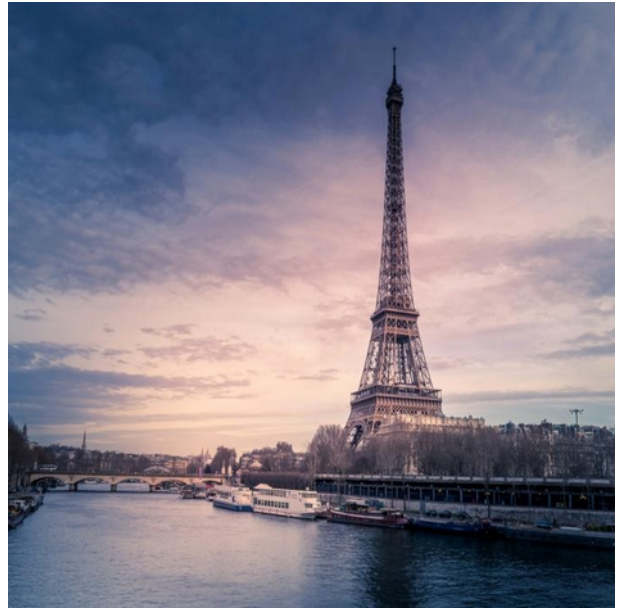
However, we felt it only right to present you with a look at Paris, the capital of France, where we'll be staying for the next few days. By doing so, we hope that the Fraternity can live among us .

- Some of you are undoubtedly coming to Paris for the first time ... If this is your case, would you please raise your hand?... Thank you.
- When you registered on the conference website, on the home page there were 4 photos of 4 symbolic Paris monuments.

SLIDE 2



The Louvre Pyramid



The Eiffel Tower



The Arc de Triomphe

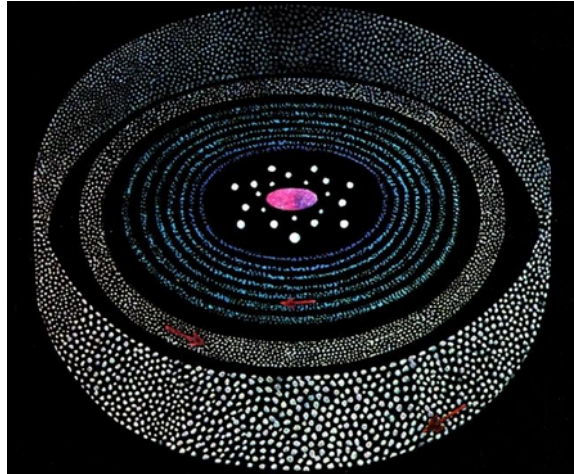


Notre Dame

- Please take a minute for yourself to more consciously perceive what images-representations you had of this city before you came or returned? Since your arrival, what are your first perceptions of Paris, a city of so many contrasts and extremes?

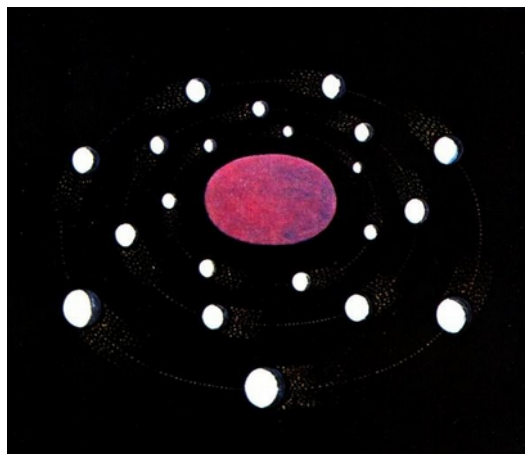
SLIDE 3

- To recontextualize and perhaps relativize this Parisian experience, by navigating between different scales: what do I live, think, feel when I read, in *The Urantia Book*, the descriptions about :
 - o notions of space and time,
 - o descriptions of Havona, known as "*the haven of evolutionary spirits*".

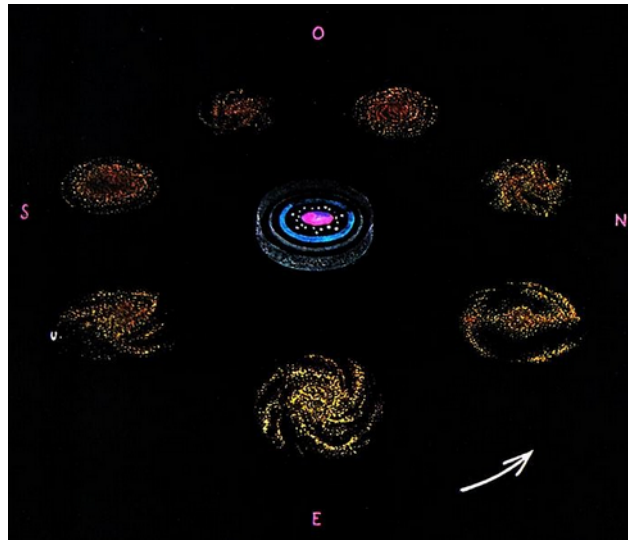


- o descriptions of Paradise Island,

This so-called *Stationary Island of Paradise*, which is at the center of the universe of universes... and which is also the geographical center of infinity and the dwelling place of the Universal Father, the Eternal Son and the Infinite Spirit...



- o descriptions of the Grand Universe



O and of course those of Dalamatia, the City of the Planetary Prince?

In fascicule 66, we learn that this "world center of culture" "was located in the Persian Gulf region of the time and in modern-day Mesopotamia".

What a mystery...

xXx

SLIDE 4

And now back to Paris... what is the influence today of this other world center of culture...?



At the time of Emperor Julius Caesar in the 1st century BC, this Roman city was called Lutetia. For the peoples of antiquity, and especially for the Greeks and then the Romans, founding a new city was not just a human decision. In particular, to build a Metropolis, literally a mother city. Precise locations with a favorable geography and the "forces" present there called upon human communities to settle there. This predisposed them to develop certain aspects of humanity, such as a cardinal virtue associated with a tutelary divinity. Architecture is the language of power, and temples evolve.

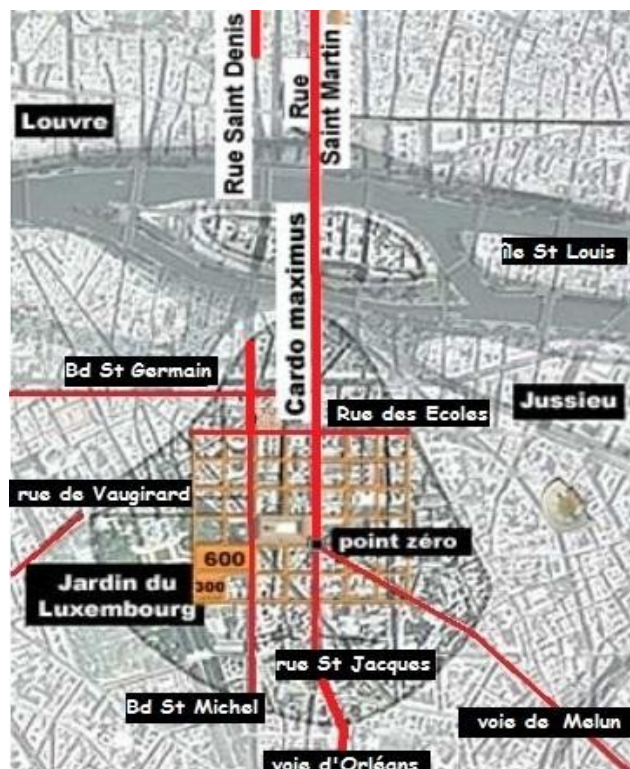
SLIDE 5

Major axes defined the orientation of the city, the main one being the *Cardo maximus* in Roman times.

It was the north-south axis structuring the city. *Cardo* is Latin for "pivot" or "Also used in terms of geographical orientation to designate the north-south axis around which the celestial vault seems to pivot. Heaven's mirror on Earth.

The *cardo* was one of the main thoroughfares at the heart of the city's economic and social life. At the crossroads of a city's *cardo* and *decumanus* (east-west axis) was the Roman forum.

Note that in the expression "cardinal points", the adjective "cardinal" comes etymologically from the word *cardo*, always with this notion of pivot.



Plan D. Busson et V. Charianne. Cliché IGN Photothèque Nationale - 1999.

A metropolis was likely to beget other daughter cities. In other words, metropolises spread ideas that contributed to the evolution of mankind. Greek, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Persian, Indian, Chinese, Mayan, etc., a number of veritable metropolises spread across the surface of the Earth were born.

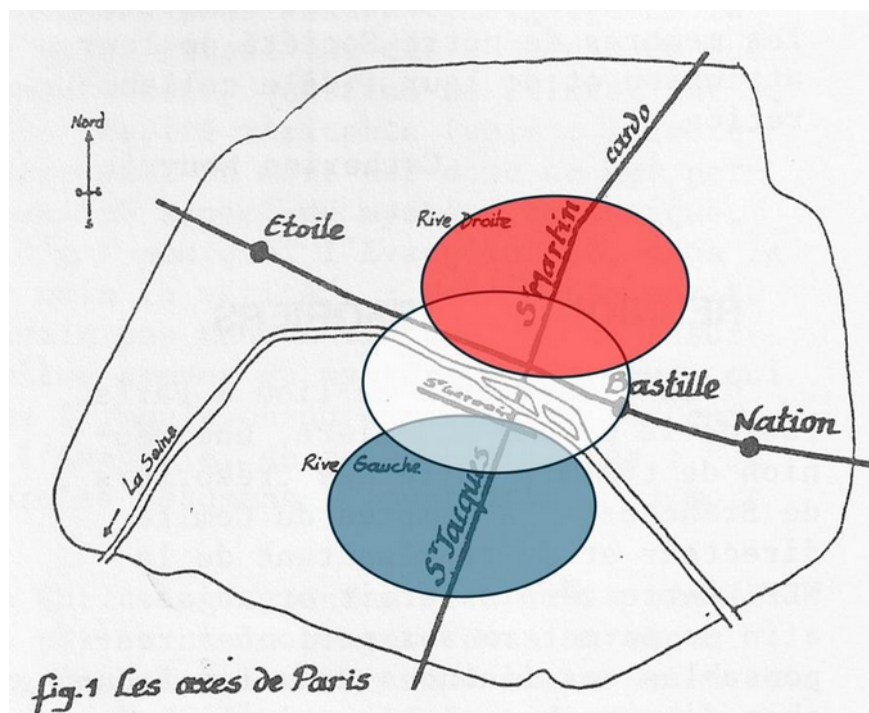
I'm a historian and sociologist by training, and of course I'm very interested in the third part of the History of Urantia, and in particular fascicles 68 to 72 on the evolution of governments. So, as I become more and more interested in the history of Paris, a question arises: if the city of Paris is indeed a metropolis, what is its evolutionary guiding idea and how does it embody it as it evolves?

Paris might have been named after the famous hero Paris, lover of Helen, in the Trojan War, but Paris became Paris above all because the Gallic people, the Parisii, lived at its center. In a strategic location, they were able to control the crossing of the great river Seine. Clovis, the first king of the Franks, baptized at the end of the 5th century, made Paris the center of his kingdom, which he placed under the holy protection of St. Michael the Archangel.

SLIDE 6

Two thousand years of existence attest to the spatial tripartition of Paris: Right Bank - Ile de la Cité with the course of the Seine - and Left Bank.

And what's astonishing is how, since its foundation, this topographical tripartition has reflected, with astonishing precision, the three functional domains of all human society: the economic sphere on the right bank, the legal-political sphere in the center and the cultural-spiritual sphere on the left bank.



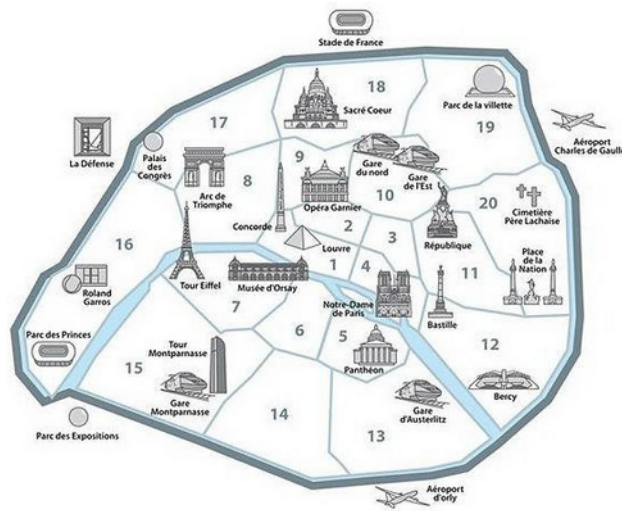
A fertile metropolis, Paris rose from the marshes to nurture scientific, societal and cultural innovations that have had a worldwide impact... for example :

- Tradition has it that the Patron Saint of Paris was its first bishop in the 3rd century, Saint Denis l'Aéropagite, a direct disciple of Saint Paul, to whom Christian esotericism in Europe owes its knowledge of spiritual hierarchies. The ancient city of Lutetia had thus become for Christian thought what Athens was for philosophy in the ancient world.
- One of Europe's first universities, with its beginnings in the 9th century under Charlemagne
- Europe's first Academy of Modern Sciences in 1666
- Paris is known as the "City of Light" because it was here in 1665 that the first public lighting was created under Louis XIV, the famous Sun King dreaming of the Château de Versailles, with the creation of the first lantern establishment. Then, in 1844, Paris also saw the first trials of electric lighting in public spaces. Then, in 1881, Paris hosted the first International Electricity Exhibition. This event, supported by engineers and financiers, was to be a huge success.
- First 9-storey skyscraper in 1781
- First manned flight in a hydrogen balloon in 1783
- In 1875, the Paris Congress of the Association for the Measurement of Degrees in Europe decided to create an international geodetic rule for measuring bases. Thus, the metre, whose historical definition is linked to the measurement of the length of the Paris meridian in the 18th century, was chosen by the International of Geodesy Association as the international unit of length.
- First telephone booth in 1881
- Paris remains an influential capital in the world of art, fashion, etc...
- In 2024, ranked 12th out of 100 international science and technology clusters, this capital is positioned as a European leader in innovation according to the World Intellectual Property Organization.

SLIDE 7

Today, the surface area of the city of Paris and its 20 arrondissements covers 10,539 hectares and is home to 2.2 million people of all nationalities... if we take into account the greater Paris area and its suburbs, we're talking about 7 million people.

Its population density is around $20,000 \text{ inhabitants/km}^2$, making it the 7th most densely populated city in the world, ahead of Seoul.

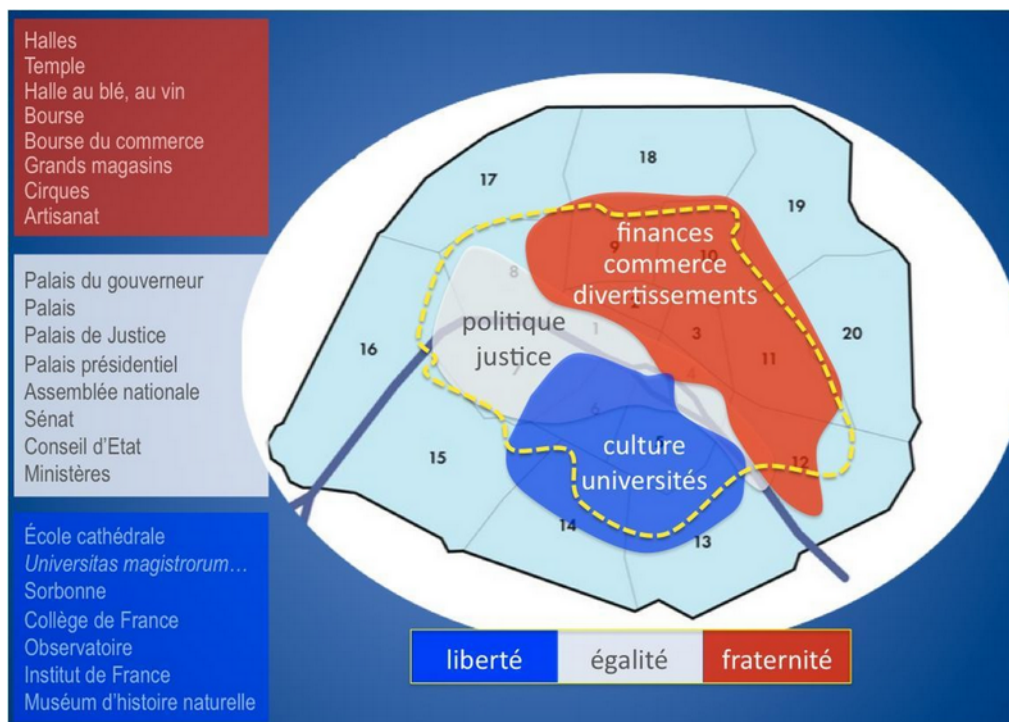


It's always a powerful experience to go into densely populated areas... where so many different human lives intersect, in so many different ways, from the richest to the poorest...

How do I feel connected to all these lives? xxx

SLIDE 8

Let's continue and see how a dynamic tri-articulation takes shape as the guiding idea behind its development, underpinned by architectural coherence and unity. The characteristic style of Paris is the Haussmannian style, dating back to the reign of Emperor Napoleon III, who wanted to turn Paris into a modern capital from 1853 onwards.



SLIDE 9

France and Paris are also famous for the Revolution of 1789 and the writing of
"The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen:

Liberty - Equality - Fraternity.

And it was in Paris in 1948 that the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted

"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Liberty guiding the people by Delacroix 1830

The Urantia Book insists on the notion of progress and evolution... on the spiritual, cultural, economic, social, legal and material levels...

And we can observe that a just and healthy development can take place if humans are :

- free in their cultural, educational and spiritual choices,
- equal before the law
- fraternity and solidarity in the relational field of economy and management of common resources

The Urantia Book also insists on the great values of Truth - Beauty - Goodness. I see the following links:

Freedom/Beauty - Equality/Truth - Fraternity/Goodness

No Freedom without a social aesthetic... without moral Beauty No
Equality without a social foundation on Truth.
There can be no brotherhood without sincere kindness.

SLIDE 10

These great ideals are inscribed on every town hall in France.



But what is the reality?

What drifts can we observe when :

- freedom is not applied to cultural and spiritual life, but becomes the selfish law of the strongest in the economic sphere?
- equality is not applied to the legal sphere but becomes mass c o n t r o l in the cultural, educational and spiritual spheres?
- fraternity is not applied to the economic and social sphere, but becomes a game of cronyism and oligarchic influence in the legal legal sphere?

Today, in this complex world, and especially in France where spiritual, economic and social distress, injustice, inequality and violence are commonplace, affecting all generations and all walks of life, let's not forget that in this country, which since 1905 has established secularism as one of the central values of the Republic, movements like Urantia's must remain very discreet, or risk virulent sectarian attacks.

SLIDE 11

At a time when *"all of Urantia is waiting for the ennobling message of Michael to be proclaimed, free of dogmas and doctrines"* p. 1041, at a time when consciences are being struck and important symbols are being touched, what is our responsibility when we meet among readers of The Urantia Book for our international conference in a city like Paris?



"Paris, city of light... city of the Age of Enlightenment..."

Paris, where is your true light?



SLIDE 12

The motto of Paris "Fluctuat nec mergitur" is inseparable from the city's coat of arms, where it accompanies a boat... a symbol chosen by merchants in the Middle Ages... note that excavations beneath the choir of Notre Dame have uncovered an altar dedicated to Jupiter and raised by merchants even then...



This saying, which translates as *"It is battered by the waves, but does not sink"*, has become the expression of the resilience of the ship that is Paris over the centuries... Paris has known occupations, attacks, tyrannies, massacres, revolutions, rationing, confinements, oppressions... what will the future say?

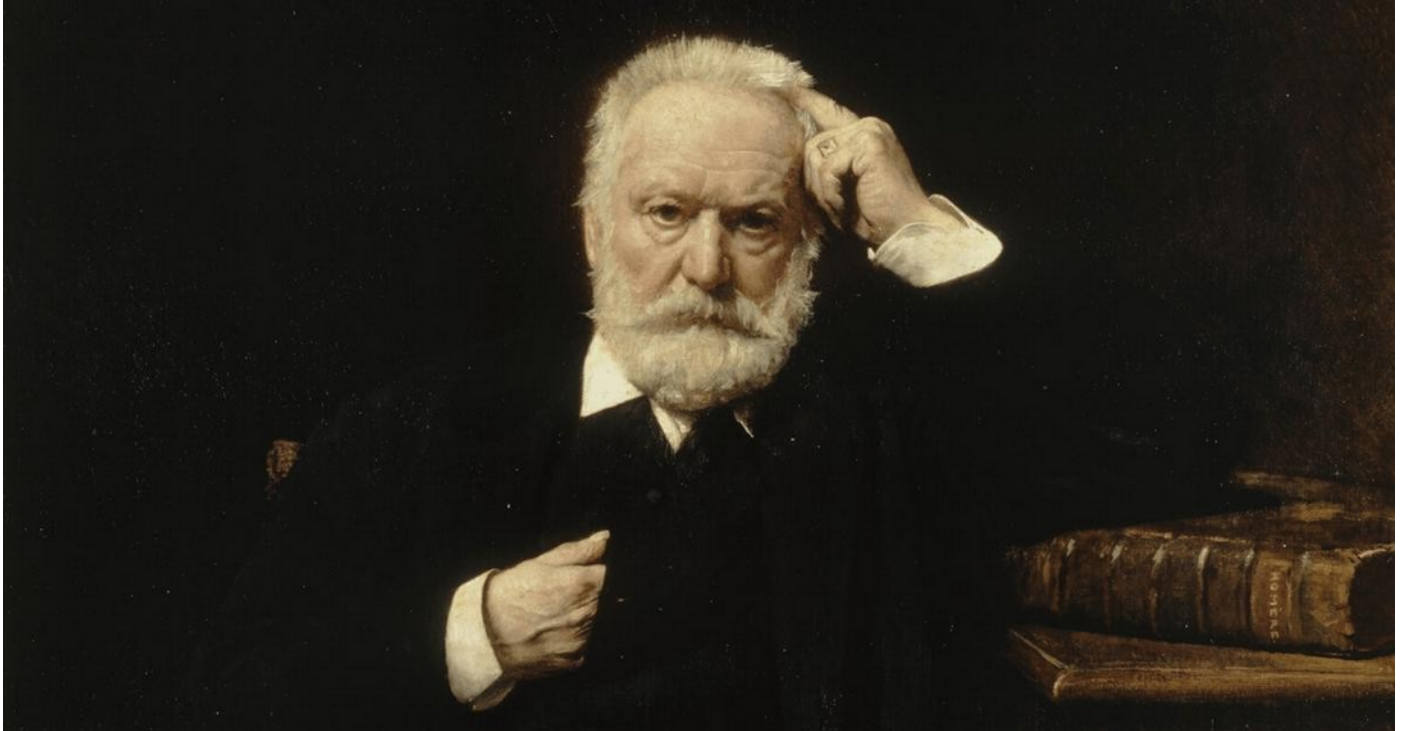
If "peace on Urantia will be brought about much more by international trade organizations than by all the sentimental sophistry of chimerical peace plans" p 787, and if Paris, turning its centralizing gesture and its appetites for power on its head, agrees to serve... then this mother city, embodying an important
The *"civilizing element"* still has an important role to play in awakening awareness and changing behavior and relationships within the great human family...

Ouvert is, in all sincerity, the bet...

SLIDE 13

I'd like to close with the words of one of France's greatest poets and writers, who was exiled at the end of the 19th century for daring to defend Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

This is an extract from "Proses philosophiques" by Victor Hugo, who died in Paris in 1885.



Portrait painted by Bonnat in 1879

Nothing is solitary, everything is united.

Man is in solidarity with the planet, the planet is in solidarity with the sun, the sun is in solidarity with the star, the star is in solidarity with the nebula, the nebula, the stellar group, is in solidarity with infinity. Remove a term from this formula, the polynomial becomes disorganized, the equation falters, creation no longer makes sense in the cosmos and democracy no longer makes sense on earth. So, solidarity of everything with everything, and of everyone with everything. Human solidarity is the invincible corollary of universal solidarity. The democratic bond is of the same nature as the solar ray.

And, as the true lives on one point only on condition that it lives on all, for man to be in solidarity with man, he must be in solidarity with the infinite.

SLIDE 14



In the joy of being at your service for a meaningful encounter.

I'd like to extend my warmest thanks for the confidence and openness of the delegation organizing this meeting, and I'd also like to give a special mention to my friend Olivier Coutris, author of the book "Paris, une idée devenue Métropole", which inspired these reflections.

Thank you.

xXx

SLIDE 15

Transition to the artistic closing of the evening with the next screening of *Boléro* by Ravel.

Maurice Ravel was a French composer born in 1875 and died in Paris in 1937. He entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1889.

Maurice Ravel's *Boléro* is ballet music for orchestra in C major, composed in 1928 and premiered on November 22 of the same year at the Opéra Garnier by its dedicatee, the Russian dancer Ida Rubinstein.

This singular work, which Ravel said he considered a simple study in orchestration, enjoyed worldwide success within a few months, making it his most famous work and, even today, one of the most frequently performed pieces of art music in the world.

The *Boléro* is one of the last works written by Maurice Ravel before the brain damage that condemned him to silence from 1933 onwards.

Garnier Opera

