Philippe MATTMANN

Visit the Louvre
With the Bible

A Quick Visit ➤

www.louvrebible.org
This book is an invitation to a journey, both distant and near, between the shores of Babylon and the loops of the Seine.

Beneath our eyes lie two monumental architectures.

Firstly, that of the Louvre, the modern-day guardian of treasures and memories.

Secondly, standing majestic, that of the Bible, the book of books.

Between the two, there are thousands of passages guiding the visitor or the reader through time and buried places; from the Valley of the Kings to Shushan the Castle, from the Plains of Moab to the Gates of Persepolis, taking in the Palace of Khorsabad and the Ziggurat of Uruk along the way. And thousands of objects too: capitals, prisms, bas-reliefs, figurines and a multitude of other works, ranging from the grandiose to the everyday.

Once past the emotion of seeing the objects, what remains?

What do the steles and ostraca, tablets and cylinder seals have to tell us?

There is no shortage of artefacts, or indeed artefact. Do all these witnesses of the past speak the truth?

Can the text of the Bible be considered reliable?

Trained as a doctor, Philippe Mattmann is aware that an artefact can also be the product of distortion caused by scientific intervention. If time and the hand of man can disfigure an inscription, so too can historical and archaeological interpretation. Is it therefore possible to get to the truth?

Walking modestly in the footsteps of his illustrious colleague Luke the Evangelist, the author sets out to “establish a presentation of the facts”, then “having examined everything by going back to the source”, he presents the findings of his research.

The divine word and human memory suddenly merge.

For this journey is more than a guided tour or a simple catalogue, it is the result of rigorous and methodical investigation. It will allow you to span periods and centuries and encounter countries and peoples.

The web begins to unravel. Then history stretches out, and the astonishing face of Babylon appears, a little as if, suddenly, the Tigris and the Euphrates flowed into the Seine!

This is without doubt an original journey which offers a feast for the eyes and food for thought, and which allows you to discover the Louvre from a new perspective.
Visitor information

Address: Musée du Louvre 75 058 Paris Cedex 01    Tél : + 33 (0) 1 40 20 50 50

Getting to the Louvre
   By Métro : Palais-Royal-Musée du Louvre (lines 1 and 7)
   By Bus : Lines 21, 24, 27, 48, 67, 69, 72, 81

Information desks: + 33 (0) 1 01 40 20 53 17 and beneath the Pyramid

Disabled Visitors: + 33 (0) 1 40 20 59 90

Internet: http://www.louvre.fr/en

Opening hours: Open every day, except Tuesdays and some bank holidays from 9 am-6 pm and Wednesday and Friday evenings until 9:45 pm

Tickets are valid all day for permanent collections and temporary exhibitions. Full price: 10 euros

A weekly calendar of room openings is displayed at the entrance of the pyramid, at the information desks and on the museum’s website.

The Collection

The museum is made up of several departments which are colour coded. The current visitors’ guide describes mostly works that can be found in three of these: Near Eastern Antiquities, Egyptian Antiquities, and Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities.

Some works may be moved due to works or being loaned. By clicking onto Collection, then Databases, then Atlas Database then ‘recherche avancée’ with the inventory number one can find out whether a work is non exhibited (NE), non viewable now (NVA) or its new location.

A regular update is available on www.louvrebibble.org
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Did you know?

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► **Greek and Roman Antiquities**

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**Bibliography**
Did you know?

Did you know that . . .

- New Year’s Eve was celebrated on different dates by the Babylonians, the Egyptians and the Romans?
- The halos above the heads of icons come from sun worship?
- The Code of Hammurabi is probably not the forerunner of biblical laws?
- The symbolism of the virgin and child can also be found in non-Christian religions?
- Astrology and the zodiac come out of Babylon?
- Archeology often supports the Bible? ► Mari, Sargon, Darius
- The dragon was the symbol of Marduk the principal God of Babylon?
- The cross in its various forms, including the swastika, already existed before Jesus Christ?
- God’s name, written in ancient Hebrew can be found on a stele at the Louvre?
- The Bible already noted that the earth is spherical and suspended on nothing?
- Medical science in the Bible was far superior to that of the Egyptians?
- The belief in the immortality of the soul was created by a similar concept in Babylon?
- The transmission of the Bible text is remarkably reliable
- The symbol of the trinity can be found with the Babylonians and the Egyptians?
- Some of the artistic representations of the devil come from the god Pan?
- The traditional cross could also be a single stake?
- Three Caesars are mentioned by name in the Bible?
- Easter and Carnival originate from before Christianity?
- Christmas is linked with the worship of Mithra?
Quick Visit

Estimated visiting time: approx. 2 hours

1. Babel
2. Worshipper Larsa
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7. Svastika and cross
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9. Palace of Darius
10  Mesha Stele
11  Storm God Baal
12  Seated Scribe
13  Triade of Orsokon
14  Skeleton Cups
15  Pan
16  Torment of Marsyas
17  Titus
18  Constantine
The Louvre is one of the biggest museums in the world.

The Bible is part of mankind’s cultural heritage.

Discovering both of these aspects is a fascinating undertaking, but one that rapidly appears to be strewn with difficulties. What should you read? What should you see? What is the best approach to take? How can you find your bearings in this huge labyrinth of objects and ideas?

The concern is however to avoid imposing religious beliefs or opinions but rather to present the facts which bear witness to the truth of the Book par excellence.

‘Visit the Louvre with the Bible’ therefore offers to assist the visitor, the novice or the enlightened, by suggesting an itinerary marked out with close to two hundred pauses for reflection, from the most classical to the lesser known. The path follows the natural flow of the tour, moving from room to room. It starts with the remarkable Department of Near Eastern Antiquities, followed by the too often omitted Department of Egyptian Antiquities and finishes with the Department of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities.

In order to simplify the visit we have linked each work with a number in a box that can be found on the corresponding room on the floor plan. We have tried to make brief notes on each work before detailing its relationship with the Bible and indeed its interest to Christians. We have also highlighted references to other works on the same theme but found in other rooms of the museum or that are no longer exhibited.

For this journey is more than just a guided tour. It will allow you to span periods and centuries and encounter countries and peoples. With time, it became clear that a general subject heading could be found, hence the proposed sub-title, ‘From Ancient Babylon to Original Christianity’. With regard to these peoples of the past, everywhere the most surprising coincidences are found in rituals, popular feasts and traditions as well as in relationships with gods. These common aspects may find their biblical explanation in the dispersal of humankind from Babylon.

This is most certainly a new and original biblical journey that can help each and every one of us to question our trust in the Bible, and perhaps allow us to distinguish the extent to which historical reality surpasses legend owing to the omnipresent influence of this ancient civilisation. Or one that simply shares the pleasure of discovering the Louvre with the Bible in hand.

Enjoy your visit!

Philippe Mattmann

Paris December 2012

A regular update is available on www.louvrebibble.org
This quick visit follows the recommended tour of the museum and describes works found in three departments.

**Oriental Antiquities:** Head towards the Richelieu Wing.
Turn right and take the escalator up to the ground floor. Enter Room 1.

This Department is devoted to the ancient civilizations of the Near East up to 7000 years before Christ. These succeeded one another in Mesopotamia, in Iran and in the countries of the Levant – a huge territory that extends from the Mediterranean Sea to India.

**Tower of Babel** RF 2427. Richelieu 2nd room 13.
**Writing’s birth** Richelieu room 1a showcase 3

“So brick served as stone for them, but **bitumen** served as mortar for them.” (Genesis 11:3). The first occurrence of this word in the Bible is within the context of the building of the Tower of Babel in the plain of Shinar, in Mesopotamia, the ‘land between rivers.’

“That is why it was called Babel (confusion) because YHWH confused the language of the whole world. YHWH scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth.” - Genesis 11:9 (New Simplified Bible, YHWH Version). Moses derives the word “Babel” from the verbal root balal, meaning ‘to muddy or confuse’, thus giving this term the sense of ‘Confusion’. The locals claimed that Bab meant ‘Gate’ and ilou ‘God’, which gives Babilou, ‘God’s Gate’. These two meanings associate Babylon with its religion. The oldest textual reference mentioning Babylon goes back to the archaic Sumerian dynasty period; around 2500 BC, the governor of a place called Bar-bar, in ancient Akkadian, described himself as the builder of the god Marduk’s temple.

“Nim´rod made the start in becoming a mighty one in the earth.” (Genesis 10:8,9). This short phrase concerning Nimrod is very significant, as he became a ‘mighty hunter opposing God (verse 9), by rebelling against his sovereignty. There are those who believe that Marduk, a major Babylonian god, was perhaps a deified Nimrod. Babylon, a marvelous but cursed city, was nothing more than a heap of ruins. And it would therefore be easy to forget the heritage subsequent civilisations were to benefit from.
However, with regard to peoples of the past, everywhere the most disconcerting coincidences are revealed in rituals, ceremonies and traditions as well as in the relationships between gods. All of these peoples have been able to draw their religious concepts from a common source. These aspects are common to mythology the world over, whether in terms of fundamental belief in the immortality of the soul, the cult of the sun or mother-goddesses, in the concept of a Trinitarian god or in facts relating to creation or to a flood that destroyed wrong-doers, all can find a biblical explanation in the dispersal of humankind from Babylon, each cultural group having distorted or embellished their original heritage. But the past sheds light on the present too.

We hope that this thematic trail will help the reader to discern the influence of this ancient civilisation on his or her own beliefs, pastimes, and on popular holidays and customs. And also to share the pleasure of discovering ‘Visit the Louvre, with the Bible’. This is the dual purpose of this visitors’ guide.

► Head for room 3

**Worshipper of Larsa** AO 15704 Richelieu room 3 showcase 1

This bronze statuette shows a figure kneeling in the attitude of prayer. The face and hands have been covered in gold leaf. On one side of the base there is an animal figure, on the other a cuneiform inscription. The front features a small bowl, serving as a libation receptacle. The worshipper is without doubt King Hammurabi. He is on bended knee before the divinity, one hand in front of his mouth.

Job apparently alludes to this practice. He speaks of the danger of letting an object of worship, such as the sun or the moon, seduce one’s heart to the point of making a gesture of worship. "If my hand proceeded to kiss my mouth, I should have denied the [true] God above.” (Job 31:27,28). Hosea 13:2 and 1 Kings 19:18 also give an account of persons who offer kisses to idols. Thus God declares to Eli that he will spare seven thousand men "all the knees that have not bent down to Ba’al, and every mouth that has not kissed him."
Among Hebrews, there was no particular attitude of prayer. All the attitudes adopted were extremely respectful. Standing or on bended knee, palms were sometimes held aloft towards the heavens or hands were raised (1 Kings 8:22). It should be noted that although 'lifting the right hand' before the divinity was an attitude of prayer in the Assyro-Babylonian world, this biblical custom is associated with an oath. God speaks of himself as making this gesture symbolically. - Isaiah 62:8.

Solomon kneeled when he prayed for the nation at the inauguration of the temple (1 Kings 8:54). Jesus Christ himself ‘bowed his knees and began to pray' (Luke 22:41). Nowhere in the Christian Greek Scriptures is support given to facial expressions or other bodily attitudes which denote sanctimoniousness and false devotion. Neither do they prescribe any posture such as joining palms or putting hands together; one may do so in silence. Jesus condemned the ostentation of those who said long prayers. - Luke 20:47.

It should finally be noted that in Babylon, in an extension to the act of worship, believers often placed smiling effigy figurines on benches. For André Parrot, “The statue, like a candle in Catholicism today, was really a substitute for the believer.” 47 It was very fitting that the psalmist addressed this exhortation to his Israelite brothers "Come let us worship, and just pander our knees and faces to YHWH, our creator!" - Psalm 95:6. See also,

**The Golden Worshipper**  Sb 2758  Richelieu room 10 showcase 8

This statuette from Susa shows a figure in the attitude of prayer, the right hand lifted, and a goat under the left arm. The tenon beneath the base allowed it to be held upright by pushing it into a support.

In Susa as in Mesopotamia, the supreme act of piety consisted of bringing divinities an offering, and then preserving the eternal memory of this act by depositing a figurine of the believer himself. 48 Conversely, the Bible stresses the personal commitment of the one who offers a sacrifice, for example by laying a hand on the head of the animal (Leviticus 3:12). Hosea 14:2 asks God to be offered 'the young bulls of our lips'. An active and continuous approach which is also that of Christians. “Through him [Jesus Christ] let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name.” - Hebrews 13:14

**Code of Hammurabi**  Sb 8  Richelieu room 3

This inscribed stele, made of black basalt, was erected by King Hammurabi of Babylon during the last years of his life, in 18th Century BC. A collection of sentences concerning exemplary cases of jurisprudence, it is predominantly a political testament and a monument to the glory of the sovereign, offering a model of wisdom and equity. Written in Akkadian and divided into three parts, the text contains a prologue and an epilogue framing a corpus of two hundred and eighty-two articles. 52 At the top of the stele, the sculpted scene depicts the King with his hand raised in front of his mouth, a traditional gesture of devotion, before the sun-god Shamash, identifiable by the flames bursting forth from his shoulders. This god of justice is holding out to the sovereign the ring and the rod, emblems of judgement and justice, symbols of authority. 53

An 'ancestor' of Mosaic Law? Many believe that Moses, when he wrote the Laws of Israel a century and half later, merely plagiarised the Code. 54 Some of the instructions, such as the law of retaliation ('an eye for an eye '), are indeed comparable to the principles set out by Moses. Is it however surprising that the conscience of a remarkable sovereign, like an innate sense of right and
wrong (Romans 2:14), led him to draw up a treaty on the practise of justice to "commit the country to truth and fair order"? There however exists in Law a higher spiritual dimension and perspective of worship.  

The Ten Commandments highlight the worship of the God of Israel, whereas the Code is particularly interested in secular issues and is satisfied with glorifying the King and serving its political interests. As it was 'holy and righteous and good' (Romans 7:12), the Law exercised a powerful influence over the life of Jews. It regulated their worship and provided for periods of weekly and annual rest, Sabbath and Jubilee, which promoted the economic stability of the nation and protected the rights of the individual.  

Even in those places where the two codes differ little in letter, they differ greatly in spirit. Theft and the concealment of stolen objects are punishable by death (laws 6, 22) while in Israel, punishment consists of compensating the victim (Exodus 22:1; Leviticus 6:1-5). Anyone housing a fugitive was sentenced to death (laws 15, 16, 19) while Mosaic Law prohibited returning a slave who had escaped back to their master. - Deuteronomy 23:15-16.

Questions are sometimes treated in significantly different ways. Although the Ten Commandments condemn murder, other Law texts differentiate between the wilful murderer and the unintentional murderer. Surprisingly, the Code does not speak of wilful murder, and it remains vague as to the punishment dealt out  

If a pregnant woman aborted in the wake of blows she had received, the punishment, execution or payment of a sum of money, varied according to the social class of the aggressor. (laws 209, 214). The Law says: "But if a fatal accident should occur, then you must give soul for soul." (Exodus 21:13). A literal analysis of this text shows that the word translated by 'damage' in some versions does indeed mean 'fatal accident', and that it relates equally to the mother and the unborn child. While French legislation does not yet grant the foetus the status of a person, human life is precious in the eyes of God, even during the early stages of its development. - Psalm 139:16 

The Code also provided for punishment through solidarity. One of the articles is worded as follows: “If the owner's son dies, then the builder's son shall be put to death”. The Law says the contrary: “Fathers should not be put to death on account of children, and children should not be put to death
on account of fathers. Each one should be put to death for his own sin.” (Deuteronomy 24:16). Each of the articles is arranged in the casuistic form: "If a man does this or that, then...". As the Code only covers specific and limited cases, it appears to be a legal guide intended to assist the judges in settling matters by providing precedents or by amending previous decisions. It does not therefore seek to establish principles or laws. This constitutes a crucial difference in relation to the Commandments, described as apodictic, because they are categorical and absolute; prohibitions or imperatives that are very brief and comprehensive in themselves which do not require explanation.

Note finally the last of the Ten Words: “You must not desire”. This Commandment is unique in the history of law. It touches the root cause of crime, but its observance depends mainly on the person himself. Moreover, while the Code willingly reflects a spirit of revenge, the Law says: “You must not hate your brother in your heart […] you must love your fellow as yourself.” (Leviticus 19:17,18). This divine law shall forever influence Christian thinking. And for Christians, “All Scripture is inspired of God (Lit. Théopneustos, blown by God), and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness.” - 2 Timothy 3:16.

**Vase of the Goddess Ishtar**  AO 17000  Richelieu room 3 showcase 5 b (4)

This large ritual vase is decorated with the image of Ishtar. She is depicted surrounded by birds, fish, a bull and a tortoise, all related to the symbolism of fertility. Wearing a horned tiara, an emblem of divinity, she has a set of wings, a sign of her astral dimension, identifying her with the planet Venus. Arms open wide, she displays her nudity. Ishtar, or Inanna for the Sumerians, is both a goddess of war and the divine incarnation of love, mistress of sexuality and fertility. Ishtar, or Inanna for the Sumerians, is both a goddess of war and the divine incarnation of love, mistress of sexuality and fertility.

Worshippers of Ishtar called her the Blessed Virgin, and prayed to her to intercede with the angry gods. From Babylon, the cult of the Mother and Child spread to the ends of the earth. The symbolism of the Virgin and Child, very present in Egypt and in religions as opposed as Catholicism and Buddhism, could be explained by this common origin.

This Babylonian prototype is the source of later mother-goddess worship. Fundamental and omnipresent throughout the history of man, it is one of the major themes central to the origin of religions and civilisations.
Divinatory Livers    AO 19829    Richelieu room 3 showcase 8

These models form part of a collection of 32 clay livers found in the Palace of Mari. Considered the main seat of vitality and emotions, the liver used to be examined to predict omens. In Babylonia, astrology played a part in official worship as one of the two main ways used by priests to find out the will of the gods, the other method being to examine the liver of an animal offered in sacrifice. Numerous liver models have been discovered, the most ancient in Babylon. They bear augurs and cuneiform texts used by the ‘priest-magicians’ belonging to the Court of Babylon at the time of Daniel (Daniel 1:20; 2:2). A miniature representation of the sky, a divinatory liver was thus divided into zones signifying the ‘day’ and the ‘night’, and its edge into 16 sections bearing the divinities of the sky. Assyrian priests were called baru, which meant ‘examiner’ or ‘he who sees’.

It was only after seeking divination that Nebuchadnezzar decided to attack Jerusalem. “He has shaken the arrows. He has asked by means of the teraphim; he has looked into the liver. In his right hand the divination proved to be for Jerusalem.” (Ezekiel 21:21, 22) This Chaldean practice certainly influenced Etruscan augural science. Some liver models originating from Mesopotamia resemble a liver specimen in bronze discovered in Italy. It is divided into sections, with each one designated, in Etruscan, the name of a patron god.

All forms of spiritualism are condemned in the Bible (Deuteronomy 18:9-12) and nowhere is it spoken of in favourable terms. The Greek word used for spiritualism, pharmakia, originally signified the resort to drugs and magical formulas which accompanied the appeal to occult forces. It is not therefore a question of ‘spiritual practice’ but of a ‘work of the flesh’, the practice of which is at odds with Christian worship. (Galatians 5:19-21). The final book of the Bible reminds us that Babylon the Great led all nations astray with its ‘spiritistics practices’. - Revelation 18:23; 21:8, note.

See also :

**Magic Formula and Treatment**    AO 7682, room 3 showcase 15 (19) and

**Model of a Sheep’s Intestines**    AO 6033    Richelieu room 3 showcase 15 (22)

Extispicy, or the examination of the entrails of a sacrificed animal, was the most common divinatory technique. The tablet shows the convolutions of a sacrificed sheep for divinatory consultation. The custom of making predictions through interpreting the liver of sheep or the flight of birds is purely Chaldean.
Go via room 2 towards the Khorsabad courtyard.

**Sargon II and a dignitary**  AO 19873    Richelieu room 4

The Assyrian king, mentioned in Isaiah 20:1, was released from the shadows of history and made historically famous with the discovery of the ruins of the Khorsabad palace. Long considered as imaginary by eminent biblical scholars, Sargon II is now one of most famous kings of Assyria. He is here portrayed holding a stick next to a dignitary standing on his right, probably the crown prince Sennacherib.

The Assyrians mention their relations with the Israelites in their various texts. But the main purpose of the inscriptions on the monuments was not to provide a continuous history of the kingdom, as they rarely had a chronological order. The king’s vanity often forced him to take liberties with
historical accuracy. The royal annals also juggled with facts and figures for his own desire. This is the case of the sargonic documents. As you can see, the 'disinformation' is not a new technique. Even the lists of eponyms or limmu, who only enumerate names, sometimes accompanied by a mention of a military campaign, are unreliable. 27,28

On the contrary, the honesty of writers of the Bible and their sincere desire to report the truth increases our trust in 'the word of God' (1 Thessalonians 2:13). The most reliable indications of synchronism between Assyria and Israel-Judah remain those of the biblical narrative.

Head for room 7 on the right by going through the rotunda.

**Geometric and Animal Decorated Bowl**  Sb 3153  Suse  Richelieu room 7 showcase (14)

The cross in its various forms appears very early on in many cultures. Note here the presence of the swastika, or equilateral cross with arms bent at right angles. The significance of this symbol is religious rather than political. For the archaeologist Childe, ‘The swastika and the cross, common on stamps and plaques, were religious or magical symbols as in Babylonia and Elam in the earliest prehistoric period’. 29

The right-facing swastika originally represented the path of the sun before becoming, according to its Sanskrit meaning, a symbol ‘of good omen’. It is also the emblem of the seventh saint for followers of Jainism. Hitler, an altar boy at the time, would have seen it for the first time in the Benedictine abbey 30 of Lambach in Austria. Swastikas appeared in the composition of mosaic designs in the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Notice the **Swastika** on the following works,

- **Fibula with plaque** (obverse)  Br 1882  Sully 1st room 32 shcase M 2
- **Cover for cup with pedestal**  CA 1822  Sully 1st room 40 shc18
- **Pendants**  Bj 2404  Denon  Rdc Etrurie room 19shcase 3
- **Oenochoe**  AM 778  Sully room 40 shcase 8 ; 700 BCE  Crete

In Babylon, ⊕ crosses symbolised the sun-god. We also find the same emblem without the circle surrounding it and with four equal arms intersecting at right angles. It was venerated as the ‘sun wheel’. The god Tammuz was represented with a headband covered in crosses. 31

The use of the cross as a religious symbol in the time before Christianity can be considered as practically universal. It is found almost everywhere, in China, Africa and America. This symbol is even found in Scandinavia in cave engravings dating back to the Bronze Age. 32 The Christian
symbol of the crucifixion, it was worshipped in Mexico long before the Roman Catholics were to arrive. 33, 34

In Ancient Israel, the infidel Jews mourned the death of the Babylonian god Tammuz, behaviour described as ‘detestable things’. (Ezekiel 8:13, 14). The cross was the symbol of this god, who has also been identified with Nimrod, the founder of Babel. The religious influence of ancient Babylon therefore spread to numerous peoples and nations, much further and with more strength and persistence than its political power.

Throughout the centuries, approximately 400 sorts of cross have come to light. The Ankh cross was the Egyptian symbol of life, representing eternity. Greek crosses have arms that are equal in length, intersecting in the middle. The Patriarchal cross has two arms (see Saint Bruno inv 8036), the Papal cross has three. The Chi Rho (XP) is identified with the monogram of Christ. The form of the ‘cross’, two right-angled arms in the shape of a mystic Tau, has its origins in Ancient Chaldea. 35

► Head for room 10 back through the rotunda.

Ceremony Known as ‘Sit Shamshi’  Sb 2743  Sully room 10 showcase 13

This bronze slab represents a centre of worship comparable to those the Canaanites used. The term Sit Shamshi or ‘rising sun’ refers to the worship made to the sun-god Shamash. Next to the kneeling priests are steles, basins and a sacred grove. 36 Evidence of Semitic worship is found around these Mesopotamian ziggurats. Two people are kneeling and facing each other. One is holding his hands out for the other to pour water on for ablutions. Behind the person in the back is a large jar for the reserve of water, and trees with no branches reminiscent of Asherim, sacred poles.

During the Period of the Judges, the Israelite apostates “went serving the Ba´als and the sacred poles” (Judges 3:7, NWT note). Asherah was the Canaanite goddess of fertility (2 Kings 13:6 note). Israel and Judah took no notice of the divine formal prohibition on erecting sacred columns (Deuteronomy 16:21). They placed them over “every high hill and beneath every luxuriant tree” according to a common expression.

These objects of worship were associated with highly immoral sexual orgies, which indicate the mention of ‘shrine prostitutes’. - 1 Kings 14:23.

Capital of a Column  AOD 1  Sully room 12 a

This capital comes from one of the audience hall (Apadana) columns of the Palace of Darius I. The column it crowned was more than 20 metres high. Note here the fluted shaft, the floral decorations,
the upper edge or ‘fanlight’ and the busts of bulls upon which rested the cedarwood ceiling. Susa, or Shushan, the capital of ancient Elam and administrative centre of the Persian Empire, was located between Babylon and Persepolis. It was the stage of one of the Prophet Daniel’s visions, and “the ram possessing the two horns [which stands for] the kings of Me´di·a and Persia”. - Daniel 8:2-3.

This is where the events reported in the Book of Esther took place. Some have raised doubts over the authenticity of the account 10 while at the same time remarking that ‘the setting of the scene is accurate and striking in terms of local colour’.

It is said that “there is no event described in the Old Testament whose structural surroundings can be so vividly and accurately restored from actual excavations as ‘Shushan the Palace’”.

Discoveries made by French archaeologists have confirmed the accuracy of the writer’s details concerning the administration of the Persian kingdom and the construction of the palace.

The Bible confirms the greatness of the empire; it calls Xerxes I, the successor of Darius, ‘the A·has·u·e´rus who was ruling as king from In´di·a to E·thi-o´pi·a, [over] a hundred and twenty-seven jurisdictional districts.’ (Esther 1:1). ‘Shushan the castle,’ was also the place where Nehemiah served his cup-bearer duties under the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus. In 455 BCE, this king authorised the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem 38.

Bible scholars have put forward the hypothesis that ‘from the going forth of the word to restore Jerusalem’ started the countdown of 70 prophetic weeks which resulted in the appearance of the Messiah. - Nehemiah 2:3-8; Daniel 9:25.

See also : (Visit the Louvre with the Bible / Near Eastern Antiquities)
Frieze of Archers  AOD 487-8, Sb 3321  Sully room 12 b

This frieze of archers, in polychrome glazed brick, would have decorated the facades of the royal palace of Darius I in Susa. How strange to think that Nehemiah very probably saw the frescoes on display here. The setting most definitely takes its inspiration from the Processional Way of Babylon. The technique used is however different; Babylonian craftsmen used bricks made of non-siliceous clay paste, as is the case here. In the foundation charter of the palace of Darius 1, we read: “The men who wrought the baked brick, those were Babylonians. At Susa a very excellent work was ordered, a very excellent work was brought to completion”. 39

Persian archers, who shot with their bows at cheek height, were the most skilful in the world. According to Herodotus 40, the Persians ‘taught their children, from the age of five to the age of twenty, just three things: how to ride a horse, shoot an arrow and tell the truth.’ Horsemen knew how to shoot backwards. Persian strategy rested heavily on the mobility and freedom of movement of their archers who thus let arrows rain down on the enemy.

► Retrace your steps to room 10 and enter Room D on the left.

Mesha Stele  AO 5066  Sully Levant room D.  800 BCE

The victory stele of Mesha king of Israel gives us one of the largest direct testimony on the world of the Bible. The written mention of Israel is the oldest known occurrence. Are also mentioned many biblical places which confirm the authenticity of their existing. We may quote Ataroth and Nebo (Numbers 32:34,38), Dibon (Joshua 13:9), Beth-diblathaim (Jeremiah 48:22,24). The Moabites, the descendants of Lot, nephew of Abraham, were related to the Israelites, which explains the similarity in the language of the two peoples. 68

In 1868 an Alsatian missionary, F. Klein discovered an old inscription at Dhinân, ancient Dibon, capital of the kingdom of Moab. A stamping of it was made at the initiative of Clermont-Ganneau, before the stone was broken by the Bedouins. With thirty-four lines, this is "the most important discovery ever made in the field of Eastern epigraphy," according to Ernest Renan. 69

The text does not follow a chronological order. In order to glorify the king and his actions during his reign, it highlights King Mesha’s own personal version of his revolt against Israel (2 Kings 1:1, 3:4-5). It also reads: "I am Mesha, king of Moab, Dibonite. I made this high place for Chemosh, [...] because it made me triumph over all my opponents. Omri was king of Israel and he oppressed Moab
for many days […]. From there I took the sacred vessels (?) of Yahweh, and I dragged them before Chemosh " 70

The divine name appears here in ancient characters, in the form of four letters or Tetragrammaton, towards the right end of the 18th line. The personal name of God, הוהי, transliterated YHWH, is recorded for the first time in Genesis 2:4. This verb in the imperfect tense of the causative form means 'he becomes'. It means the God who, by current action, makes Himself The One who fulfills His promises, the One who always carries out his purposes. - Exodus 3:14.

This sacred name appears almost 7000 times in the Hebrew text. 71, 79 Most versions replace the Tetragrammaton with titles such as 'Lord' or 'Eternal'. 72, 73 One of the reasons often suggested comes from an old Jewish tradition and a scruple, or even a superstitious fear to utter the 'ineffable name' in its true form in order not to violate the Third Commandment (Exodus 20:7) 74. Besides the fact that this is a poor and wrong understanding of the Law, the risk resides in the depletion of the reading of the Bible, by not seeing the proper name of God anymore, because it is hidden behind a loan word. 75

The original pronunciation of God's name is unknown, for the same can be said of the name 'Jesus', since the ancient Hebrew was written without vowels. The Masoretes invented a system of vowel-dots to indicate the exact pronunciation of words. 76 In a complete copy of the world’s oldest Hebrew Scriptures, the Leningrad Codex which goes back to 1008, the Tetragrammaton is vocalized as Yehwah, Yehwih and Yehowah. 77 Some commentators have suggested, without certainty, the spelling "Yahweh" (Holman Christian Standard Bible) or 'Yahwé' (Jerusalem 2000, Osty, and The Bible of Peoples). Many Hebrew scholars believe that this pronunciation is the most likely. 'Jehovah' (Crampon 1905, King James Version, NWT) is the best known translation and one of the most widespread. 78

How important is the use of the personal name of God to a believer? The model prayer that Jesus Christ gave begins this way: 'Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified." - Matthew 6:9.

Stele of the Storm God Baal    AO 15775   Sully Levant   room B

This relief is one of the most remarkable representations of Baal Hadad, ‘Rider of the Clouds’ and ‘Lord of the Earth’. Facing right, the storm god is brandishing a club with which he is smashing the clouds; lightning accompanies the storm showers which fertilise the countryside. The supreme divinity of this pantheon of over 200 gods and goddesses was El, personified as an old, white-
bearded wise man, and willingly distant from humankind unlike Baal. For the Canaanites, only Baal could preserve them from drought and death, incarnated by the god Mot.

It appears that Ugaritic religion shared many similarities with that of the neighbouring Canaanites. The texts from Ras Shamra bear witness to the damaging effects of this cult of divinities, the accent being placed on war, sacred prostitution and sex, with the social degradation that goes with it. From that moment on, the laws given to ancient Israel, which notably condemned magic and astrology\(^90\), bestiality (Leviticus 18:23) and ritual cutting (1 Kings 18:26; Leviticus 19:28), acted as a shield against the base acts of the cult of Baal.

On several occasions, the biblical text mentions “the Baals and images of Ashtoreth” that the Israelites used after having abandoned Yahweh (1 Samuel 12:10). This general name applied to the divinities of the Canaanite pantheon, the iconography and onomastics into which there is currently better insight.\(^91\) The text of Judges 10:6 confirms the accuracy of the geographical information: “They began to serve the Ba’als and the Ash’to-reth images and the gods of Syria and the gods of Si’don and the gods of Mo’ab and the gods of the sons of Am’mon and the gods of the Phi-lis’tines.” The term *hab-Baal* is applied to these false gods. The expression *hab-Bealim* (the Baals) refers to various local divinities considered to be ‘owners’ or ‘lords’. The word appears just once in the Greek Scriptures where it is preceded by the feminine article (Romans 11:4). Commenting on this usage, John Newton says that, “In the licentious cult of this androgynous god, the men wore female dress, while the women dressed as men and brandished weapons”.\(^92\) On several occasions, the Bible establishes a link between the heavenly bodies and the worship of Baal. - 2 Kings 17:16

The Hebrews learnt about the worship of Baal through Canaanite farmers. (Judges 2:11) At the start of the rainy season, Baal’s return to life to regain the throne and to unite with his paredra was famous due to the immoral fertility rituals, characterised by sexual orgies that knew no limit. This spiritual battle with the hearts of the Israelites at stake lasted centuries, from the arrival on the plains of Moab to the deportation to Babylon. On one side lay superstitious fear and sexual rituals and, on the other, faith and fidelity towards the true God. This was a conflict which serves as an example
and warning to Christians. - 1 Corinthians 10:11. Similarities have been noted between the texts of Ras Shamra and the Bible. However, this connection is purely literary and not spiritual. In Ugarit, we are far from the moral and ethical heights reached in the Bible. See also:

Sitting deity AO 3992 Levant room C showcase 3
A deity’s head AO 10831 Levant room C
Baal Brandishing Lightning AO 11598 Levant room B showcase 8
Stele of Til-Barsip AO 11505 Richelieu Mésopotamie room 6
Stele Representing the Storm God Adad AO 13092 Richelieu Mésopotamie room 6

These deities with their tiaras decked with horns, inheritors of Mesopotamian iconography are represented either in the round or in bas relief.

The visit of the Department of Near Eastern Antiquities ends here.

Exit Room A and go down the stairs. Regain the Department of Egyptian Antiquities by crossing the Louvre’s medieval rooms or head for the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities via room 17 Caryatides.

► Egyptian Antiquities: Head towards the Sully Wing.

Cross the Medieval Louvre rooms to reach the Crypt of the Sphinx located in the Mezzanine.

Created by Jean-François Champollion, this department highlights Ancient Egyptian art in a double circuit; a chronological circuit from its beginnings to Cleopatra and a thematic circuit emphasizing certain aspects of Egyptian civilization.

Great Sphinx with the features of King Amenemhat II A 23 Sully room 1

This Great Sphinx, a monstrous being with its lion’s body and king’s head was found in Tanis, the Greek name of Soan, mentioned in Numbers 13:22. The name of Pharaoh Shishak 1 (Shishak) appears on the left shoulder. The king of Egypt is mentioned seven times in the Bible. It is to him that Jeroboam fled to escape the wrath of King Solomon. - 1 Kings 11:40. ¹

Etchings on the wall of an Egyptian temple Karnak (No ² in Jeremiah 46:25) lists many cities conquered by Shishak Judean. Only the Bible recounts the invasion (1 Kings 14:25-28). The
document also refers to the "field of Abraham." This is the earliest mention of the patriarch in the Egyptian texts. ³ The Bible mentions over 700 times in Egypt and its inhabitants. It is generally known by the name Mizraim (Genesis 50:11, NWT note). This suggests that the descendants of this son of Ham were predominant in this region, also known in some psalms the "land of Ham." As for the name of Pharaoh it is the Bible who first made us aware of him. ⁴

**Mastaba, Chapel of the tomb of Akhethotep**  E 10958  Sully room 4

This construction, "Mastaba" or bench in Arabic, surmounted the richest tombs of the era of the great pyramids. Inside a chapel decorated family and welcomed visitors who came to pray for the soul of the deceased. Note also outside on the right sculpture shaped table set for dinner so that the dead be nourished forever. A dominant feature of Egyptian religion was to strive to ensure the comfort and happiness of souls in the afterlife. This worship which also consisted of honoring deceased ancestors seems contrary to the teaching of Scripture. "For the living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." - Ecclesiastes 9:5.

**The goddess Maat carrying the ankh**  E 185  Room 7 showcase 9

The alleged evidence of life resembles the letter "T" surmounted witha handle and oval evokes the union of male reproductive organs and female. Long before the advent of Christianity the Egyptian cross was regarded as sacred. ⁶ The ankh is a rare pattern, inspired by Coptic Pharaonic art. An examination of the Coptic tombstones in V and IX century suggests that the Egyptians influenced the use of the cross by Christians. ⁷ The monuments and tombs are often decorated with the ankh. The Egyptian priests held the cross-shaped 'Crux Ansata' and representing their quality of priests of the Sun god. ⁵

![Hâpy](image1)
![King Apries](image2)
![Goddess Maat](image3)

**Zodiac of Dendera**  D 38  room 12 bis

In Egyptian mythology, Nout is the goddess personifying the sky.⁹ It is commonly represented in the guise of a woman’s body elongated above the earth. It sometimes takes the appearance of a gigantic cow. On his belly are attached the stars. Note here the women wearing the sky. This view contrasts sharply with the simple imaginary but the Bible accurately states: "He is stretching out the north over the empty place, hanging the earth upon nothing."- Job 26:7.

Astrology had a big place in the art of divination from the second millennium BC when the Babylonian priests established the zodiac. This term comes from a Greek word that means circle of
animals. The signs do not correspond to the constellations, which earned them their original name. The cult of the stars was particularly dominant in Babylon.  

The servants of God took a strong stand against the cult of the stars. They shared the view of the Scriptures, seeing them as mere material bodies that do not dominate man but rather serve as lighting and benchmarks. The faithful King Joshua "put out of business the foreign-god priests [...], those making sacrificial smoke to Baʿal, to the sun and to the moon and to the constellations of the zodiac." (2 Kings 23:5). This expression comes from the Hebrew word *mazzaloth*, plural, which appears only once in the Bible. It should be noted that the signs of the zodiac were introduced in the cathedrals of Christendom, and in Paris can be seen on the portal and left around Mary in the huge central rose of Notre-Dame de Paris and Burgundy the facade of the Basilica of Vezelay. Historians of art have long recognized the influence.  

Go down into the crypt.

**Funerary Papyrus Sérimen**  E 17400  Sully room 13 showcase 11

Very poor in text, this papyrus is decorated with representations from the book of the dead. Note down the soul of the deceased, in the form of a bird that flies over his mummy watched over by the goddesses. This "soul" carries the upper part of a hooked cross, because to the Egyptians, death was a break in life. Like the Babylonians, they believed in the immortality of the soul. These images also evoke scenes of "doomsday" of the central porch of Notre Dame.

Climb the stairs towards pharaonic Egypt

**The “Seated Scribe”**  E 3023  Room 22

This famous polychrome sculpture is the symbol of a society where reading and writing were considered the foundation of wisdom and the art of governing. The scribe is writing here under dictation on a roll of papyrus, his concentrated face lit up by crystal eyes inlaid in copper rings. Particular attention has been paid to the bone structure of his face and the corpulence of his stomach; this feature signifying the high-ranking administrative position of this figure.  

The history of Egypt was written by scribes, initiated by priests who did not hesitate to remove from their chronicles anything that might displease their pharaohs and their gods. This undoubtedly explains why the events mentioned in Exodus chapter 12 to 14 are not recorded in the Egyptian annals. This was not to be the first time in history that the truth had been distorted through
propaganda. Conversely, the sincerity and honesty of the writers of the Bible, including Moses, are proof of the authenticity of the holy text. For Jesus Christ, “your word is truth.” - John 17:17

See also,

**Jar containing the Dead Sea Scrolls**  
AO 20147 (non exhibited)

In 1947 a young Bedouin discovered in the caves of Qumran several terracotta jars. One of them is in the Louvre. These containers contained fragments of more than 200 rolls and extracts all the books of Hebrew Scriptures, except the book of Esther. One of these very well preserved leather rolls contains among others the prophecy of Isaiah. It is about a thousand years earlier than the oldest known manuscript of the Masoretic text existing. The comparison reveals that copies the Bible have not undergone major changes. These variants are negligible, and pertain to spelling or grammar differences and not to doctrine. This suggesting that the Jewish scribes were extremely careful in their transmission and faithful.

**The convent of Sainte - Catherine**  
inv 3689 Sully 2nd room 71

This painting is a souvenir of a journey painted by the artist in 1830. The monastery has no door. It is accessed in a basket hoisted through a high window. It is in this monastery nestled at the foot of Jebel Musa, identified at Mount Sinai that the fourth century biblical manuscript known today as the Codex Sinaiticus was discovered. It is one of the oldest known complete copies of Greek Scriptures.

► Go to Room 25

**Triad of Osorkon II**  
E 6204  Room 29

This pendant is one of the rare pieces of goldwork in our possession today. The Egyptian worshipped triads of divinities. The best known is shown here. It is composed of the god Osiris, sat on a pillar inscribed with the name Osorkon II. The god is flanked by two figures: on his left, his sister and wife, Isis, divine symbol of Motherhood; on his right, their son Horus.
The Egyptian pantheon patently displays the stamp of Babylonian heritage. The relationship between Osiris and Isis and their respective characteristics correspond surprisingly closely with those of the Babylonian divinities, Tammuz and Ishtar.

“The Old Testament tells us nothing, implicitly or explicitly, about a Triune god [...] There is no proof that any of the sacred authors even suspected the existence of a Trinity in God.”

“The Platonic trinity was itself merely a rearrangement of older trinities dating back to earlier peoples. This Greek philosopher's [Plato 4th Century BC] conception of the Divine Trinity can be found in all the ancient religions.”

It is also interesting to note that ‘the word Trinity does not feature in the New Testament [...]. This doctrine took shape progressively, over several centuries and through many a controversy.’ The cult of the Mother and Child was widespread in Egypt. It was often the mother goddess Isis wearing the crown of the Queen of Heaven and holding the child Horus on her lap. This image is not unlike that of the Virgin and Child of Christendom.

The distinction between priests and lay people is a characteristic feature of Babylonian religion. Priests of Osiris were distinguished by the tonsure on their heads. We understand better the order given to the Jewish priests not to make shave their heads bold (Leviticus 21:5). The use of the tonsure in Church was abolished in 1972. It is a ritual similar in Buddhism. There seem to be existing coincidences between the Catholic Church which are most disconcerting. According to the Egyptologist Desroches Noblecourt Ch, 'probably the successors of St. Peter did borrow the old Egyptian ritual'. In fact, many of the characteristics of different religions, Christian or otherwise, can find their explanation in a common Babylonian origin.

► Go to Room 74 then turn right for Room 33.

J.-F de Troy’s four big paintings in the Hall (74) of the Seven Chimneys illustrate episodes in Esther’s life.
Skeleton Cups  Bj 1923-24 room 33 shcse 4

Archaeologists have unearthed more than a hundred silver artefacts from the ruins of the Roman villa of Boscoreale on the slopes of Vesuvius. This treasure, buried during the eruption of the volcano in 79 AD, hoarded a set of tableware embellished with mythological and floral repoussé decorations.

Like the incredible workmanship and astonishing sculptural quality of these cups, whose splendour combines with their macabre appearance, the pieces in this set are an exceptional illustration of Roman culture at the time of Augustus. The inscriptions refer to famous authors and Greek philosophers, depicted as skeletons. Short maxims entreat us to make the most of life. One says: “Enjoy life while you can, for tomorrow is uncertain.”

This Epicurean conception of life or faith was out of the question, as the quote by Paul the Apostle reminds us: “If the dead are not to be raised up, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die.” - 1 Corinthians 15:32. See also

**Portrait of the Philosopher Metrodoros** Back to Back with One of his Master Epicurus.
MR 478 Sully room 17 (Caryatids' Room)

Epicurus taught that the gods were not interested in humans and that pleasure is the one and only thing of value in life. The Bible emphasises an eternal future and not an ephemeral present. The fundamental motivation of Epicureanism and that of Christianity is totally different.

► Exit room 32, go downstairs to the ground floor for the rest of the Department of Ancient Rome. Turn left into Room 17 named ‘Caryatids’.

The Caryatid Room is named after the four armless female statues at the entrance that are used as columns to support a stage for musicians. Some ancient replicas here have a biblical theme. Some works may be moved due to works or being loaned.

**Pan**  Ma 266, MR 193  Caryatides room 17

The god Pan is depicted here seated on a rock with a crooked staff at his feet for trapping hares. This marble statue belongs to a series of ancient replicas showing Pan teaching the shepherd
Daphnis how to play the pipe. Originally the god of shepherds, Pan was also a musical divinity with one of his attributes being the syrinx, a reed pipe. God of fertility, this son of Hermes and a nymph was above all famous for his bestial and insatiable sexual appetite. His legendary ugliness meant that his advances were often shunned. The fear that he inspired is at the origin of the word panic. He is depicted as a hoofed man with goat horns.

According to Herodotus (II, 46), the cult of Pan began in Egypt where it was customary to worship goats. The expression ‘goat-shaped demons’ used in the Bible is possibly an allusion to this form of pagan worship (Leviticus 17:7; 2 Chronicles 11:15). According to some, this god’s half-man half-goat form and the Inferno, the work of the Italian poet Dante Alighieri, influenced the imagination of artists of the Middle Ages and the conception of a devil with horns and pointed tail. Such a representation risks raising doubts as to the existence of this spirit creature, whom the Bible repeatedly presents as an absolutely real person. The Scriptures give no physical description of the Devil, even if he is described as a ‘serpent’ or depicted with the features of a voracious ‘dragon’. - Revelation 12:9.

Another sculpture also shows Pan making advances towards Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Eros flutters above them batting his wings – exactly like the cupids seen today on Valentine's Day cards. The customs attached to the festival which bears the name of this Christian martyr comes from an ancient Roman orgiastic festival.

This was linked to the cult of Faunus, the god represented as half man, half goat. It was celebrated each year on 15 February and honoured Juno, the Roman goddess of women, and Pan, the god of nature. So as to give a ‘Christian’ meaning to this pagan festival, in 496 Pope Gelasius changed the Lupercalia festival of 15 February into Saint Valentine’s Day on the 14th. The sentimental significance of this ancient festival, however, has not been lost.

See also,

Pan and Syrinx RF 1949-21

The subject is drawn from Ovid’s Metamorphosis. The god Pan pursues the nymph Syrinx with who he is in love. To escape him, she takes refuge with her father who turns her into reed. Pan then made a pipe out of her branches.

Pan Ma 266 Pan and Syrinx RF 1979, CA 808 Sully 2e room 25
The silenius Marsyas dared to challenge the god Apollo to a musical contest. Defeated, he was condemned to be skinned alive. Suspended from the trunk of a pine, he awaits his terrible punishment. This statue illustrates the possible and perhaps the most correct translation of the terms used regarding the execution of Jesus. “If you are a son of God, come down off the torture stake.” (Matthew 27:40, or ‘cross’, New American Standard Bible, New Living Translation).

In Latin, a simple stake to which criminals were attached was called a crux simplex. In the writings of Livy, a Roman historian of the first century, crux referred to a straight pole. The Greek word stauros that we translate by ‘cross’ had the initial meaning of ‘pile’ (forming part of a palisade), ‘stake’ (already used by the Assyrians and Persians), or even ‘post’ from which the victim was suspended. The Apostles Peter and Paul used the word xulon to designate the piece of wood onto which Jesus was nailed. “Christ by purchase released us (…) becoming a curse instead of us, because it is written: “Accursed is every man hanged upon a stake.” (Galatians 3:13). In this quotation from the Book of Deuteronomy 21:23, the word ets originally meant a tree or wood. The Hebrews had no word to refer to the traditional cross. The word xulon (a in Aramaic) is found in the Septuagint in Ezra 6:11 where it refers to a single piece of wood on which the transgressor was to be attached.

Numerous translations of the New Testament have rendered the words of Peter (Acts 5:30) as follows: “The God of our forefathers raised up Jesus, whom you slew, hanging him upon a stake.” This word is translated as ‘on a tree’ in other versions (New Living Translation note c, King James Version, American Standard Version, 1901). There is nothing to confirm that the original terms designated the traditional cross, all the more so as this religious symbol was used by non-Christians long before Christ.

That said, the death of Jesus as a ‘ransom in exchange for many’ is a fundamental teaching of the Scriptures. - John 3:16; Matthew 20:28.

► Turn left towards room 10, or right to the Denon wing and room 22 onwards
The Emperor Augustus  Cp 6363

The first Emperor of Rome, referring to his real name Caius Julius Caesar Octavius, he was one of the three Caesars mentioned by name in the Bible. In 2 BCE, “a decree went forth from Caesar Augustus for all the inhabited earth to be registered (...) Of course, Joseph also went up from Galilee” (Luke 2:1-5). As a result, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, as predicted by the biblical prophecies (Daniel 11:20; Micah 5:2). Many believe that Jesus was born on 25 December. However, the Emperor of Rome would not have ordered the people, who were always quick to revolt, to travel in the middle of winter for a census. Everything points towards the belief that Jesus was born in early autumn. 86

The Emperor Tiberius  Ma 1255

Tiberius, the second Emperor of Rome, was the eldest son of Livia, the third wife of Augustus. This head of Tiberius is a portrait in the Imperium Majus style created in 13 AD when Augustus granted Tiberius powers equal to his own. Its austerity is due to its military character. On 17 September CE, a month after the death of Augustus, Tiberius authorised the Senate to appoint him Emperor. 62 This historical reference allows 29 CE to be considered the year when the Messiah first appeared.

Titus  MND 2224

This reworked portrait of an effigy of the Emperor Nero (54-63 AD), following the damnatio memoriae (damnation of memory) to which he was subject, displays naturalism and sensitivity in its style. It bears witness to the Hellenistic influences felt in Flavian sculpture. The name of this Roman Emperor (79-81 CE), the eldest son of Vespasian, is closely linked to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the second Temple in 70 AD. To commemorate this victory, his brother Domitian had the Arch of Titus erected in Rome, a silent witness to the fulfilment of one of the most remarkable prophecies of Jesus Christ, pronounced forty years earlier. 72

“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near. Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains. (...) For there will be great necessity upon the land; and they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations.” (Luke 21:20-24). Cestius Gallus surrounded Jerusalem in 66 AD but lifted the siege when
the capture of the city was imminent.\textsuperscript{73} The strange turn of events enabled Christians who had paid heed to the words of Jesus pronounced thirty years earlier to flee the condemned city. ‘All the members of the Church of Jerusalem fled to a city located beyond the river Jordan, by the name of Pella.’ \textsuperscript{74}

The following prediction is an example of the accuracy of the prophecy: “your enemies will build around you a fortification with pointed stakes and will encircle you.” (Luke 19:43). The historian Josephus informs us “many despaired of taking the city with their usual engines of war”. \textsuperscript{75} The young General Titus decided that it “was necessary to surround the entire city with a wall if they wanted to combine speed with safety.” Building of this was complete in three days, at almost inconceivable speed for a construction that should have taken months. It was precisely ‘the fortification of pointed stakes’ Jesus had predicted!

One of the most striking declarations made by Jesus concerns the second Temple, an architectural masterpiece and the pride of the Roman Empire: “Not one stone will be left on top of another!” (Luke 19:44; 21:6). Contrary to the original intentions of Titus, the entire city and its temple were demolished with the exception of three towers and a section of the Western Wall. A genuine historical lesson in survival! And remarkable proof that the predictions of the Bible are not founded on human interpretations of circumstances or inclinations existing at the time they were issued and that ‘you are doing well in paying attention to it’. - 2 Peter 1:19

\textbf{Double-Sided Mithraic Relief} MND 1911 Denon room 25

Mithra, the Persian god of light, is shown on one side of the relief cutting the throat of a divine bull to make the universe fruitful. On the other side, he is depicted at a banquet with the sun, to which he is compared. The Mithra cult \textsuperscript{85} reveals the unmistakable influence of Babylonian conceptions; and if it be recalled what a degree of importance the mysteries connected with this cult acquired among the Romans, another link will be added connecting the ramifications of ancient culture with the civilization of the Euphrates Valley.\textsuperscript{84} This cult is closely associated with the origins of the festival of Christmas. \textsuperscript{85}

“The Savior - yes, the Messiah, the Lord - has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!” (Luke 2:11, \textit{New Living Translation}). All historians are in agreement in saying that the exact date of the birth of Jesus is unknown. The word ‘Christmas’ does not figure in the Bible. \textsuperscript{86}

This festival underwent the pagan influence of the Saturnalia, celebrated around the time of the winter solstice in honour of Saturn, god of agriculture, characterised by their famous drinking
sessions and the exchange of gifts. Furthermore, on 25 December 274, the Roman Emperor Aurelius proclaimed the sun-god Mithra the main protective god of the Empire.

By way of a compromise, it appeared logical to substitute a Christian purpose to 25 December. The festival of Mithra, *Natalis Invicti*, Triumphant Sun and ‘birthday’ of the Invincible One, he who gave life back to nature, was therefore gradually replaced by that of the birth of Christ, ‘Light of nations’ according to words of old Simeon. (Luke 2:32). The festival of Christmas therefore originated at a time when the cult of the sun was particularly strong in Rome. These details confirm that this festival draws its origins neither from the Scriptures nor from the traditions of the very first Christians.

**The Emperor Constant I?** Cp 6399 Denon room 29

The first Roman Emperor to govern in the name of Christ, Constantine the Great (306-337 AD), traced the path which led to the definitive victory of Christendom at the end of the fourth century with all the skill of a cunning politician. Constant was one of his sons. He reigned from 337 to 350 AD. In 312 AD, on the eve of a battle against Maxentius, his Italian rival, Constantine claimed to have received instructions in a dream to paint the first two letters of the name of Christ (XP in Greek) on his troops’ shields.

It was he who proposed the principle formula, ‘of the same substance as the Father’, expressing the relationship of Christ to God in the creed of the council. The foundations of the dogma of the Trinity, a term which appears nowhere in the Bible, were consequently put in place.

Constantine undoubtedly converted for reasons that were more political than religious. The family crimes that he committed indicate that he was completely impervious to the spiritual influence of Christianity. He was only baptised when he was on his deathbed. Eusebius said that “this gesture holds no great meaning as the day before he made a sacrifice to Zeus”.

After Constantine, Christendom was to admittedly become a force of cohesion in a world in dissolution, but above all a distorted form of primitive Christianity. Jesus and his Apostles had pronounced such a change of direction. - Matthew 13:36
School pupils wrote their lessons on hollowed-out, wax-coated wooden tablets. A channel was cut into the frame to hold their stylus when not in use. They had to follow the outline of letters and try to produce an exact copy. School pupils wrote their lessons on hollowed-out, wax-coated wooden tablets. A channel was cut into the frame to hold their stylus when not in use. They had to follow the outline of letters and try to produce an exact copy.

Peter the Apostle used this as an illustration to encourage Christians to closely follow the example of Christ: “In fact, to this [course] you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a **model** for you to follow his steps closely.” (1 Peter 2:21).

The Greek term 98 translated as model or example (NLT, NASB) is *hupogrammon* (NWT, note).

It appears just once in the Scriptures. It means writing down or “copy of writing, including all the letters of the alphabet and given to children to help them to learn how to write”.

The Apostle demonstrated with this example that the true Christian is someone who, like a pupil, follows the perfect example of his teacher, Jesus Christ.

‘Ultimately, Christianity can only possess and acquire a meaning by triggering the memory of Jesus, both in theory and in practice.’ 99

On one condition.

“If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31, 32).

With time, the original Christian congregation was transformed into a religious organisation which ‘would not have failed to surprise Jesus and even Saint Paul’. 100

Taking the place of the teachings of Christ is in fact a number of festivals and religious beliefs that are more often than not borrowed from ancient Babylon. 101
This dominant characteristic is also that of ‘Babylon the Great’. The final book of the Bible speaks of this name as a ‘mystery’. - Revelation 17:5

Clarifying this ‘religious secret’ is of the utmost important as the order is given to the people of God to: “Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins, (…) for by your spiritistic practice all the nations were misled.”(Revelation 18:4,23). The angel therefore proclaimed the urgency of leaving this symbolic ‘city’ due to its definitive destruction. - Revelation 18:4, 21.

According to the description given, ” the great city that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth.” (17:18), and it helps the ‘merchants’ to accumulate riches. It cannot therefore refer to a political or commercial system. Would this mysterious name not ultimately be one best suited to a global religious entity, to all those religions whose teachings and practices do not adhere to the model left by original Christianity?

“When we study the past, it is impossible not to cast an eye to the future.”

“The stones will cry out”, Jesus said one day. A language of stones certainly exists, but it is also appropriate to hear that of the witnesses we have quoted. They were the contemporaries of events that believers and agnostics alike cannot ignore, insomuch as they marked the history of humanity for evermore.

End of the visit.

See also:

- Visit the Louvre with the Bible, Near Eastern Antiquities
- Visit the Louvre with the Bible, Egyptian Antiquities
- Visit the Louvre with the Bible, Greek and Roman Antiquities
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