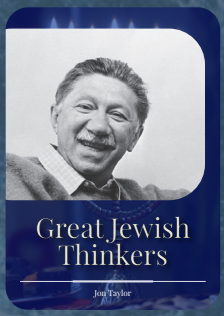
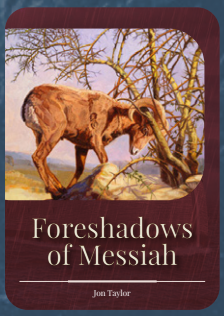


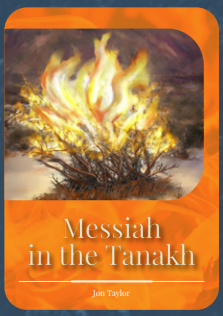
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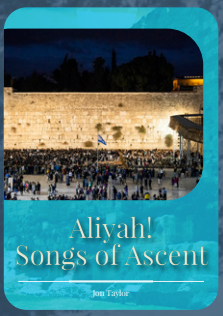
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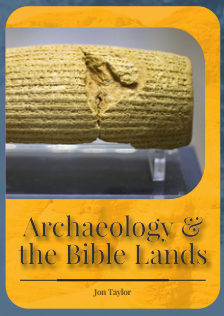
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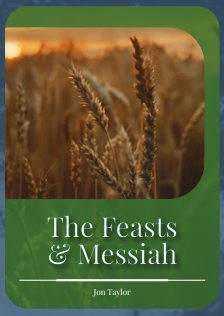


















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Archaeology & the Bible in the Louvre Museum, Ashmolean Museum and Petrie Museum

The Louvre Museum and the Bible

The Louvre Museum is the largest museum in the world, attracting over eight million visitors annually. It is aesthetically as impressive as the scale and grandeur of its Parisian surroundings and to say that a visit is breath-taking is no exaggeration! However, despite its extensive repository of biblical artefacts, far less literature has been written concerning the Louvre and the Bible compared with the British Museum and the Bible.

Unlike the British Museum, there is scarce information relating to biblical references on the accompanying information boards, but if you know what to look for it is immensely worthwhile to visit. Some of the display boards are written in French and others are written in French and English. Many names of biblical rulers have a different name in French, but since some names are almost identical, by examining the length of their reign they are easily recognisable. Even a basic level of French proves helpful in ascertaining the meaning of some of the text, but Google Lens can be used for further clarity of translation.

If you are planning to visit the Louvre it is certainly advisable to prepare well in advance and to familiarise yourself with the floor plans, wings and galleries via their official website. It is worthwhile checking the weekly schedule of open rooms to determine which galleries can be seen on a particular day. Please note that the museum is closed on Tuesdays, and all other days of the week have a particular schedule of rooms, open and closed. Due to the far-reaching size of the Louvre and the vastness of the collection, ongoing maintenance is a given. Here then, is my report of my two visits. During those visits, I was able to view everything that I had planned to see, other than the items in the Roman galleries.

Egyptian Antiquities

In the Sully Wing on Level 1, there is a chronological display of the Egyptian exhibits. To optimise the value of a trip and to save on time, it is helpful to either orientate oneself with or bring an Egyptian King List detailing the reigns of the pharaohs in their respective dynasties. So commencing from the most ancient findings, here are the items of biblical interest:

Sesostris III

In the Twelfth Dynasty there are several artefacts relating to Sesostris III (Senusret III) who was most likely the pharaoh reigning whilst Joseph was prime minister in Egypt. In addition to the dates of his reign, he is easily distinguishable by his prominent ears. Some have conjectured that this feature signified being attentive to hear the needs of his subjects. A curator from the British Museum comments that the oversized ears and recognisable facial features identify this figure as Senusret III of which there are over a hundred known statues.[1]

At the Louvre, there is a statue of Sesostris III as a juvenile, a door lintel, and another statue of his torso and head from the Temple of Montu at Medamud, near, Luxor, Egypt. In addition, there are a few head portraits of assorted colours and stones as well as the distinctive black granite statues in varying conditions. There is also a diorite seated statue of the mother of Sesostris III who was the wife of Sesostris II.

Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut

The Eighteenth Dynasty is one of the most well-known Egyptian dynasties, since that relates to Akhenaten who was involved in the Amarna heresy and also Tutankhamun who – when his tomb was discovered just over a century ago – became a household name. Not surprisingly, there are artefacts in the Louvre relating to the above-mentioned. Of biblical interest however, there are several artefacts relating to Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut.

There is considerable controversy as to whether Tuthmosis III or Rameses II was the pharaoh of the Exodus depending on whether one favours the early or the late date for the Exodus. Those arguing for the late date, mention that the children of Israel were building store cities in Pithom and Raamses (Exodus 1:11) and some link the Hebrews with the Habiru who were enslaved and building grain cities. Nonetheless, it is far more likely that the Habiru was a generic term for a wider group of people rather than a single ethnic group such as the Hebrews.

The Biblical dates all favour the earlier date for the Exodus. 1 Kings 6:1 confirms that the fourth year of the reign of Solomon was the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel exited Egypt. Acts 13:20 tells us that there were judges for about four hundred and fifty years until Samuel the prophet. Judges 11:26 informs us that for three hundred years Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, Aroer and its villages and in all the cities of the River Aroer (east of the Dead Sea), which is in modern-day Jordan. This length of settlement during the Time of the Judges supports an earlier date for the Exodus.

Furthermore, the name Tuthmosis III appears to resemble that of Moses[2] and noticeably Tuthmosis I, Tuthmosis II, Tuthmosis III and Tuthmosis IV were all pharaohs in the Eighteenth Dynasty.[3] Ahmose I was the first pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty and Kamose was the last pharaoh of the Seventeenth Dynasty.[4] Rameses I and Rameses II occur in the 19th Dynasty and Rameses III through to Rameses XI are found in the Twentieth Dynasty.[5] With reference to the biblical timeline it is likely that Hatshepsut was Pharaoh's daughter who took pity on Amram and Jochebed's child and who named him 'Moses'.

If however, you do consider Rameses II to be the pharaoh of the Exodus, there is a huge obelisk pertaining to him, located at the Place de la Concorde, just a short walk from the Louvre. If you favour the early date as I do, then you can see Cleopatra's Needle by the River Thames in London which was actually made in Tuthmosis III's honour as was the Cleopatra's Needle in Central Park, New York.

In the Louvre, there are several statues and scarabs of Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut, plus a small sphinx of Tuthmosis III. Items relating to the Annals of Tuthmosis III with reference to his military campaigns can also be observed. Bas-reliefs of the temple in Elephantine in the reign of Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut may be viewed. Many artefacts in connection with Hatshepsut such as obelisks or stelas can be seen in museums across the world and her temple near the Valley of the Kings in Luxor is particularly spectacular, impressive both in magnitude and aesthetic quality.

The Great Sphinx of Tanis

The Great Sphinx of Tanis displays the head of a pharaoh and the body of a lion. This was carved from pink granite in the Thirteenth Dynasty though the pharaoh's name was erased. Erasing a pharaoh's name was not uncommon; the same occurred to those who were involved in the Amarna heresy (who worshipped the sun God Aten as opposed to polytheistic worship), and many reliefs relating to Hatshepsut have also similarly been defaced. The base and chest of the sphinx were inscribed with the names of Rameses II; the right shoulder has Merneptah inscribed and there is also an inscription on the left shoulder of Shishak I (first ruler of the Twenty Second Dynasty) mentioned in 1 Kings 11:40; 14:25; 2 Chronicles 12:1-12).

Tarharqa

A small black statue of Taharqa (Twenty Fifth Dynasty Kushite/Nubia) can be seen presenting the falcon god Hemen with a vase. There is brief reference to Tirhakah (Taharqa) in Scripture in 2 Kings 19:9 and Isaiah 37:9, where he aids Hezekiah against Sennacherib who was intent on taking Jerusalem (but unsuccessful). Interestingly, Taharqa is one of the more famous pharaohs and there are more pyramids in Northern Sudan than in Egypt, although they differ markedly in composition and stature. In the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, one can see Taharqa's colossal shrine together with a rock sculpture of him under the protection of Amun.

Apries (Hophra in the Bible)

A few items relating to Pharaoh Apries (Twenty Sixth Dynasty) include a bronze sphinx, a statue of his head which is partly damaged and another head statue, again partly damaged or defaced; it is uncertain whether the latter of the three pertains to Apries or to Amasis, who seized the throne during a revolt against Apries. Apries is Pharaoh Hophra in the Bible of which there is a single, yet important Scriptural reference: "Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those who seek his life, as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life.'" (Jeremiah 44:30) However Ezekiel 29:2 and Jeremiah 37:5-10 refer to Apries by his title of Pharaoh. Concerning Nebuchadnezzar, the Louvre Museum also contains artefacts relating to him, but I will revisit that later.

Mesopotamia, Assyria and Babylon

We now leave the Sully Wing on Level 1 and move to the Richelieu Wing on Level 0 to view artefacts from Mesopotamia, Assyria and Babylon.



The Code of Hammurabi

The Code of Hammurabi is recognisable as a prominent, approaching eight-foot-high stone and is one of the more well-known archaeological exhibits. In generic terms, this is the ancient Babylonian equivalent of the Torah and the Ten Commandments. As well as the black basalt stela of the Code of Hammurabi where Hammurabi is depicted as receiving laws from the sun god Shamash, there is a small sculpture of his head, plus fragments of the code written on tablets. Edwards and Anderson note some similarities between this Babylonian code and the Law of Moses with reference to responding to a goring ox (Exodus 21:28-36), but also marked differences, such as anyone caught looting at a fire was to be thrown into the fire and punishments for physicians not able to cure their patients![6]

Larsa King List

There is a chronological list of the Kings of Larsa and whilst there might be significant discrepancies concerning the details, they do serve a purpose regarding piecing together some of the rulers. Of greater importance is the Sumerian King List, also known as the Weld Blundell Prism, housed in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford which contains a King List before and after the Flood. Again there may be difficulties concerning the accuracy of the narratives and the extreme lengths of the reigns of the earlier rulers, though the point of interest is the commonality of numerous ancient accounts of a worldwide flood.

Mesopotamian Civilization

Various artefacts give us an insight into the ancient world around the time of Abraham. Mathematical and geometric tablets can be viewed, plus tablets showing the division and the conversion of fractions, creation accounts, astronomical horoscopes and the calendar of the Zodiac which bridges the gap between their time and civilization and ours.

Sargon's Palace



A particular highlight was viewing items that originated from Sargon's Palace in Khorsabad, Iraq, known in ancient times as Dur-Sharrukin meaning 'Fortress of Sargon'. The site was abandoned by Sennacherib, then much later on Khorsabad was built over its ruins. Originally Paul Emile Botta commenced excavations at the site of Nineveh, near Mosul (also in Iraq), but did not excavate sufficiently deep enough and instead turned his attention to Khorsabad. The findings at Khorsabad were so remarkable that Botta presupposed he had discovered Nineveh. However, Austen Henry Layard then discovered ancient Nineveh and brought many items from there to the British Museum. Both men made outstanding contributions to the field of biblical archaeology.

Sargon II is referred to just once in Isaiah 20:1: "In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it". Several lamassu (winged bulls with human heads) are strategically placed at door entrances in the Louvre, as they would be at Sargon's palace. These mythical creatures served the role as imposing guardians. The head was that of the King (in this case Sargon) giving the idea of a combination of deity and humanity. This is similar to the sphinx statues which contain the body of a lion and the head of a pharaoh. The bull typically depicted strength, the wings characterised speed and the head wisdom.

Some of the lamassu have five legs. One might guess that this is for stability for they are colossal weighty statues, some of which are 13 feet high and weigh several tonnes. Both Botta and Layard utilised marble cutters to reduce the vast weight before transporting their respective enormous statues. Joseph Bonomi wrote that the most challenging obstacle was the process of moving great blocks and it took six weeks to construct axle-trees to support the enormous load.[7] Layard mentioned that the ropes in his vicinity were not strong enough to bare the considerable weight and he used levers of wood and dug away the sun-dried bricks from behind the slabs before they were sawn.[8]

The Chicago Oriental Institute (recently renamed 'Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures') also houses some of these lamassu and the information board in the Louvre refers to them. The more likely reason for the five-legged phenomena, however, is the sense or impression of movement as one passes into a palace or a great columned hall. Fascinatingly on the A31 in Dorset, the five-legged stag stands atop the base of the Charborough Park Estate Gate owned by the Drax family, bridging the ancient world with our present time.

The room where the antiquities of Sargon's Palace are displayed is ample and uncrowded and there is a whole series of reliefs portraying a hero holding a lion in his arms and scenes of military campaigns, riding horses, archers and servants carrying a banquet, a seat and a vase. Assyrian protective spirits have an unusual otherworldly appearance and several reliefs portray the transportation of the cedars of Lebanon which immediately reminds us of the cedars of Lebanon being prepared for Solomon's temple (1 Kings 5:6). The display boards are useful here with diagrams of the excavation and layout of the palace in Khorsabad. Noticeably there is a relief of Sargon with an unnamed dignitary. There is a similar relief in the British Museum with Sargon and his son Sennacherib.

Nebuchadnezzar

In the walk-through areas behind the artefacts from Sargon's Palace, there are bricks inscribed with 'Nebuchadnezzar' from his North Palace in Babylon. There is also a beautiful, glazed representation of a lion. These items relate to the Nebuchadnezzar II of the Bible. The Nabonidus Cylinder is small but of biblical significance. Nabonidus was the father and co-regent of Belshazzar which helps us to understand why in Daniel 5:29, Daniel was appointed the third ruler in the kingdom and not second in command like Joseph, who was appointed as prime minister to Pharaoh (Genesis 41:40).



Neo-Hittite Sphinx

There is a neo-Hittite Sphinx which is of biblical relevance since the Hittites are mentioned in numerous places in Scripture. In Genesis 23:1-20, Abraham purchased a burial place for Sarah from Ephron the Hittite. The higher critics used to contend that the Hittites never existed, though there is extensive evidence for the Hittite people in our time.

Arslan Tash, Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) and Hazael

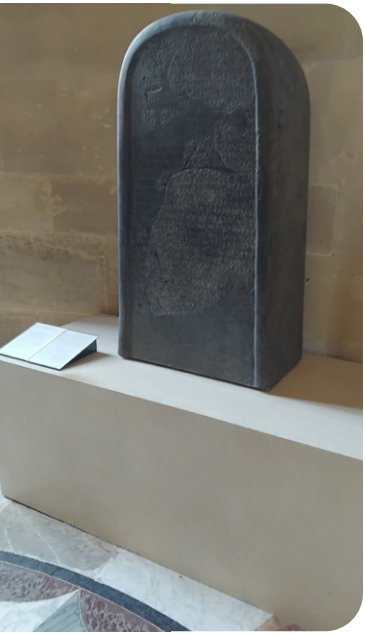
Several items from Arslan Tash (northern Syria) can be seen and some of the information boards relate those items to the reign of Tiglath Pileser III, including a headless god, guardian bulls at the temple of Ishtar and a storm god Baal brandishing a thunderbolt.

King Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser III asking him to save him from the king of Syria and the king of Israel who had come up against him (2 Kings 16:7). The Arslan Tash Ivories are shown in a large glass case and reference is made to Hazael. He is the biblical king mentioned in 2 Kings 8:7-15, who murdered Ben-Hadad King of Syria and then reigned in his place.

Ashurbanipal

Usually a prism of the campaigns of Ashurbanipal is viewable, although on my visit, this item appeared to be on loan. There are wall reliefs relating to Ashurbanipal's lion hunting which fits the background of Nahum 2:11-13 and 2 Kings 17:24-26. A more extensive display of that can be viewed in the British Museum. Ashurbanipal (referred to by his Aramaic name 'Osnapper' or similar in many Bible translations) is mentioned in Ezra 4:10 as the ruler who took nations and settled them in Samaria. Ezra 4:8-6:18 was originally written in Aramaic which explains the use of the Aramaic name.

Further reliefs of Tiglath Pileser III's palace in Nimrud can be seen, although the display labels do not provide much information other than relating to the king himself, archers, warriors and royal servants.



The Moabite Stone (Mesha Stele)

One of the most important biblical artefacts exhibited in the Louvre Museum is the Moabite Stone also known as the Mesha Stela. It is fittingly and prominently displayed. The inscription by King Mesha of Moab (cf. 2 Kings 3:4-5) memorialises his revolt against Israel and rebuilding of several important towns. It also mentions King Omri of Israel (1 Kings 16:25) and provides an early reference to the Lord's name in the form of the Tetragrammaton and an almost certain record to King David. On close examination the cracks can be seen on the Moabite Stone. In 1868, during the time of the Ottoman Empire the Arabs constructed a fire and poured cold water over it, causing it to break into pieces with the intention of making it even more valuable, hence the stone was bought and pieced together.[9]

Iran, Levant and Arabia

Moving now to artefacts from Iran, Levant and Arabia, we leave the Richelieu Wing and remaining on Level 0 we re-enter the Sully Wing.

The Palace of Darius in Susa

The display from the Palace of Darius I in Susa is one of the most dramatic and intentionally well displayed biblical archaeological exhibits in the Louvre. In 1907, Ira Price writing for the University of Chicago Press Journal marvelled, “So admirable is its proportions, and so regal its appointments that the authorities of the Louvre have spared no pains to reproduce in one of the Persian rooms the characteristic features of this palace”. [10]



This is the Darius mentioned in Haggai 1:1 and Zechariah 1:1 in the Bible. The colouring and brilliance of the tiles is vivid and striking and there are scenes of archers and winged lions, reminding us of the book of Daniel and the lion with eagles' wings (Joseph Bonomi made mention of the same in his classic work);[11] also bulls on columns like a double-headed knights from a chess set. There is a stepped stairway parapet with lotus flowers, a frieze of lions, and two sphinxes under a winged disc. That most likely pertains to the Zoroastrian symbol relating to Ahura Mazda; similarly in the British Museum the faravahar emblem can be seen in relation to Darius.

Darius commenced the construction of the palace at Susa and his son Xerxes completed it. Xerxes is the King Ahasuerus of the book of Esther and is also referenced by the classical writers such as Herodotus. It was his army that fought the Spartans at the battle of Thermopylae. There is also an interesting coin collection, some of which include Darius and Xerxes as archers, probably trying to give the impression of heroic strength and ability to lead and protect the people. There is a 121kg lion weight which surely reminds us of Belshazzar's feast when he was numbered, found wanting and his kingdom was divided (Daniel 5:25-30). There are other tablets relating to both Darius and Xerxes.



There is a silver bowl that resembles closely those housed in the British Museum and its display board mentions Artaxerxes. The similar bowls in the British Museum reference Artaxerxes, Xerxes and Darius inside the rim of the bowl! It is likely that this artefact might have been another of his bowls. Nehemiah was the cup bearer to Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2:1), so it is possible that he may have drunk from those vessels.

The Stela of Shaluf

A pink granite fragment of a stela commemorating the opening of a canal is known as The Stela of Shaluf. The display board informs us that King Darius oversaw the completion of this project linking the River Nile and the Red Sea, but also adds that it began under Pharaoh Necho II. Necho II is the pharaoh who tried to avoid war with Josiah and wanted to fight against Carchemish; he sent messengers to cause Josiah to reconsider, but tragically Josiah went to war, disguised himself so that he might fight him and was shot by the archers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him (2 Chronicles 35:20-27).

Rome

During my two visits I was not able to see the Roman Antiquities located in Denon Wing Level 0 because of ongoing maintenance work. However, there are three Roman Emperors mentioned in the Bible by name, Augustus Caesar, Tiberius Caesar and Claudius Caesar (Luke 2:1; 3:1; Acts 11:28; 18:2). The unnamed fourth emperor can be identified as Nero due to the historical timeline of Paul's missionary Journeys and when Paul sought to appeal to Caesar (Acts 25-26; 28:19). In the Louvre there are statues of Augustus Caesar and Tiberius Caesar, a marble portrait of Claudius Caesar and a youthful statue of Nero, plus a bust sculpture of him.

It was Augustus Caesar who gave the decree for all the world to be registered and that was why Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem. Tiberius Caesar was reigning whilst Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea. There was a great famine throughout the world in the days of Claudius Caesar and Claudius also expelled the Jewish people from Rome. Nero was notoriously cruel, antisemitic, blamed the fire in Rome on the Christians and was highly unpredictable. Classical literature also provides much background information on these characters.

There are marble statues in the Louvre of Emperor Vespasian, who entrusted his son Emperor Titus to lay siege and to then destroy the Temple in Jerusalem AD70. Several of the emperors had their names used to replace the names of the months of the year. July and August are still named after Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar even to this day. Today, Israel is fulfilling prophecy and is re-established whilst the great world empires have risen and fallen. Also, the Lord knows the end from the beginning and His reign is from everlasting to everlasting. The Lord Jesus left from the Mount of Olives and He is coming again and will return there to rule and to reign. Are you trusting in the God who owns history and will you be ready when Messiah returns?

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2. Editors John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, The Bible Knowledge Commentary An Exposition of the Scriptures by the Dallas Theological Faculty Old Testament (Victor, 1989; USA), p110
3. Teagan Wolter, List of Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt https://www.britannica.com/topic/list-of-pharaohs-of-ancient-Egypt
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6. Brian Edwards & Clive Anderson, Through the British Museum with the Bible 5th Edition (Day One, 2015; Leominster), p80
7. Joseph Bonomi, Nineveh and its Remains: The Discoveries of Botta and Layard Applied to the Elucidation of Holy Writ (Elibron Classics, 2005; London), Replica edition of the edition published in 1852, p23
8. Austen Henry Layard, Nineveh and its Remains (Pantianos Classics, 1848), p84
9. The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor Merrill C. Tunney (Zondervan, 1963; London), p550
10. Ira Maurice Price, Monuments in the Louvre Museum Illustrative of Biblical History (The University of Chicago Press, December 1907), Volume 30, No.6, pp.402+429-437
11. Bonomi, pii (preface)

Archaeology & the Bible in the Louvre Museum, Ashmolean Museum and Petrie Museum

The Ashmolean Museum and the Bible

The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford is the oldest public museum in the UK and houses some outstanding exhibits relating to biblical archaeology. In 2025, it welcomed over one million visitors for the first time since it was re-opened in 2009. Admission is free and there are various Park and Ride services for easy access to the city. From Seacourt Park and Ride, you can either catch the bus or enjoy a 1.6 mile walk to the Ashmolean. Conveniently, most of the items specifically relating to the Scriptures are mainly on the Ground Floor or the Lower Floor. In particular, it is worth paying special attention to the artefacts in Rooms 19 and 23. Room 19 is also an excellent place to start your visit and is located near to the reception desk.

Often people marvel at the antiquity, scale and diversity of objects that are viewable and how they were acquired for the museum. Opposite the reception desk there is a large carved slab of an Assyrian protective spirit presented to Oxford University by Austen Henry Layard. That was one of a pair guarding a doorway into the royal throne room at the Northwest Palace at Nimrud. The carved slab contains a cuneiform inscription mentioning the achievements of King Ashurnasirpal II. Although he is not mentioned in the Bible, he would have been concurrent with King Ahab (874-853BC) who has been confirmed archaeologically.[1] Layard also discovered a vast number of artefacts and many of those confirm the historicity of Bible characters.

Room 19

Room 19 is on the Ground Floor and easily located upon entering the museum. On entering room 19, to the left of a visual display there is information about how artefacts were collected, including a very little amount regarding Leonard Woolley and T.E. Lawrence who excavated for the British Museum in Syria between 1911 and 1914. They purchased items from locals for the Ashmolean and from private collectors. There is also an information board regarding Gertrude Bell who was appointed Iraq's Honorary Director of Antiquities and wrote the Kingdom's first antiquities laws.

There is a mention of Kathleen Kenyon who was sponsored by Oxford University in the 1950s and carried out excavations in Jericho, but it would have been interesting and certainly useful if there were more detail about her methods employed in Jericho and the findings of those before and after her. Interestingly, this is similar to the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology – Kenyon is mentioned, though there is little detail concerning later findings of the excavation of Jericho, which is of important biblical significance.

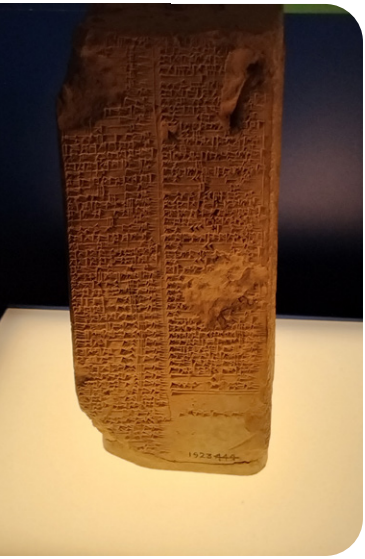
An information board highlights some of the questionable means undertaken to obtain artefacts and considers the matters of ownership and repatriation. On the other hand, it is undoubtedly a good thing that these artefacts have been preserved. In the case of the Moabite Stone, a few Arabs attempted to generate more money from the stone by smashing it into a few pieces with the aim of selling those parts for a greater profit. More positively and as recently as 2023, there have been joint projects between Iraq and France, the United States and Italy to excavate and restore parts of various palaces and gates at Nineveh.[2]

A display board contains a sketch of a lamassu (colossal creatures that have a bearded human-head with wings and the body of either a bull or a lion).[3] It is shown as it is about to be transported from Nimrud in 1847, with teams of men bearing the weight on ropes. Layard discovered lamassus which were placed guarding the palace of Sargon II (Isaiah 20:1). For some items Layard also employed marble cutters and had these huge sculptures shipped to the British Museum.[4] A section of the Southwest Palace at Nineveh where Sennacherib resided was previously kept for many years at Canford School in Dorset, but has been reunited with the other parts of the wall.

The following paragraphs detail items that can be found in Room 19.

Small Replica of Moabite Stone

In the same display as the above items, there is a small replica of the Moabite Stone. The information board includes the fact that there is an early mention of Israel and that these early discoveries generated huge interest in the Bible. However, the information board omits this further interesting information: that the text of the stone mentions King Omri of Israel (1 Kings 16:25), King Mesha of Moab (2 Kings 3:4-5), a reference to the Tetragrammaton, and an almost certain reference to King David. (Please see the paragraph on The Moabite Stone in the previous article on 'The Louvre and the Bible' for more detail on this.)



The Sumerian King List

In the case behind the above-mentioned Moabite Stone replica, one can view the Sumerian King List (also known as the Weld-Blundell Prism). Whilst the Sumerian King List does not reference biblical characters, there is some degree of agreement between this and the chronology of Genesis 5 and the Genesis Flood. Firstly, the longevity of the kings is far longer than even the first patriarchs, who themselves had lifespans that greatly exceed our own. Secondly, the King List is divided between those before a great flood and those after a great flood. When one considers the Gilgamesh Epic and Atrahasis Epic, although some details vary enormously, there are other striking similarities between these and the Genesis Flood account.

Wayne and Price note a number of similarities and differences between the Gilgamesh Epic and the biblical flood account. However, a few of the similarities include a ship being built (Genesis 6:14; cf. Lines 26, 28), use of bitumen (Genesis 6:14; cf. Lines 54, 66-67), family and animals being put on the ship (Genesis 7:1-10; cf. Line 85, Genesis 7:8-9; cf. Lines 84, 86), waters covering the mountains (Genesis 7:20-22; cf. Lines 132, 139), birds being sent out (Genesis 8:6-12; cf. Line 16), an altar used in sacrifice (Genesis 8:20-22; cf. Line 164) and the boat resting on the mountain (Genesis 8:4; cf. Lines 145-152).[5]

Near to the Sumerian King List there are two small mathematical tablets, one with a multiplication table and the other a calculation for the area of a triangle. These items challenge the presuppositions of some concerning the prominence of writing, and demonstrate the advanced abilities of those from earliest civilizations. To calculate the area of a triangle, a base of 60 is used rather than 10. This reminds me of my old Bible lecturer who drew attention to the Babylonians using a sexagesimal system, citing Daniel 3:1 in support: “Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.” Also, bear in mind seconds, minutes and hours and the degrees used for geometry, all originate from the Babylonian system.

The Assyrian Empire – Royal Seal Impression

Although the Royal Seal Impression does not reference a particular biblical character it does contribute to our understanding of Assyria and the book of Nahum. This clay seal impression from Nimrud depicts an Assyrian king stabbing a retreating lion with his sword. The Assyrian nobility was notorious for lion hunts which were cruelly stage managed. This is further demonstrated in the numerous murals illustrating the same in the British Museum. In Julian Reade's British Museum publication 'Assyrian Sculpture,' a whole chapter is assigned to the hunts of Ashurbanipal.[6]

The Assyrians were often a violent and arrogant people and the rulers took perverse delight in slaying lions, in effect to lionise themselves. Nonetheless, in a way reminiscent of how the Lord afflicted the Egyptians with ten plagues that linked with their deities (i.e. sun worship was punished with darkness, the Nile River that was worshipped was turned to blood), the lion-like leaders of Assyria would be judged by the Lord in Nahum 2:11-13:

"Where is the dwelling of the lions,
And the feeding place of the young lions,
Where the lion walked, the lioness and lion's cub,
And no one made them afraid?
The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs,
Killed for his lionesses,
Filled his caves with prey,
And his dens with flesh.
'Behold, I am against you,' says the Lord of hosts, 'I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more.'"

Royal Jar Handles

These royal jar handles date back to around 700BC, which is significant because that was during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah. King Hezekiah is listed as one of the 53 characters in the Tanakh (Old Testament) attested by archaeology in the Biblical Archaeological Review.[7] Discoveries relating specifically to Hezekiah include Hezekiah's royal seal, Hezekiah's tunnel and Sennacherib's prism. Since a large quantity of pottery items have been excavated from Judah, this illuminates our understanding of the administration.[8]

The Hebrew inscription transliterated lmlk, is an abbreviated form of 'lemech' and means 'belonging to the king.'[9] The stamps on the four handles refer to four cities, Sokoh, Ziph, Hebron and unknown Mmsht which provides some indication of the royal territory.[10] The jars were most likely used to collect taxes in the form of oil and wine from royal vineyards.[11]

Dead Sea Scroll Jar

I was not able to locate the Dead Sea Scroll jar at the Ashmolean. I may have just missed it through my own error, or it may be the case that permission is required to view it. Nonetheless, it is definitely worth visiting 'The Shrine of the Book' at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, where the Dead Sea Scrolls are kept and preserved. It is probably difficult to overstate the importance of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in biblical archaeology.

The Jasper Seal – 'Belonging to Hannah'

This seal was discovered in Lachish, which was an important city in ancient Judah. Sennacherib successfully defeated Lachish, but not Jerusalem. The siege of Lachish is graphically depicted in a series of reliefs in the British Museum. The inscription of the seal, 'belonging to Hannah' is noticeable, since it is the earliest reference to the name Hannah from outside the Scriptures and although many Hebrew seals have been found that belonged to men, few that belonged to women have been discovered. The winged sphinx shown on the Jasper Seal demonstrates the influence of Egyptian culture on the ancient Hebrews, also involving trade.[12]

Stone Shekels

Shekels are referred to in Scripture frequently. The earliest mention is in Genesis 23:15-20, when Abraham insisted on paying Ephron the Hittite 400 shekels of silver so that he could bury Sarah in the field of Machpelah. An infamous reference is that of Joseph who was betrayed by his brothers and sold to the Ishmaelites for 20 shekels of silver (Genesis 37:28). Similarly, Joseph was a type of Jesus who was betrayed by Judas for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15).

A shekel is a monetary unit but also refers to a weight, hence the early use of stone shekels. It is somewhat remarkable that Israel has retained the shekel to this day and it is noteworthy that Ezekiel spoke of a time still future in the Messianic Kingdom when the shekel would be used (Ezekiel 45:12). When placed with other artefacts mentioned, these stone shekels show the accuracy and historical reliability of the biblical record. Since these stone shekels originate from around the time of the Babylonian conquest of Judah, this helps us to piece together significant findings relating to that era.

Passover Potsherd

Clay potsherds were an economical means of sending brief communications when compared with papyrus. This potsherd is a letter written in Aramaic and is one of the earliest known references to Pesach (Passover). It is dated to 475BC and located to a then thriving Jewish community in Elephantine, Egypt. The significance of this artefact to the biblical record is both the use of Aramaic and the reference to the Passover at this time.

While the vast majority of the Tanakh (Old Testament) was written in Hebrew, there are a couple of verses (Genesis 31:47 and Jeremiah 10:11) and some longer portions (Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; and Daniel 2:4-7:28) written in Aramaic. It is notable that Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in 458BC and the book of Ezra would have been written within the next couple of decades.

Ezra 6:19-20 records that the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. The Passover commenced in Exodus 12 as the children of Israel were delivered from Pharoah in Egypt. There are 49 references to the Passover in the Tanakh and there are also 27 occurrences of the same in the Brit Hadasha (New Testament). 1 Corinthians 5:7 speaks of Messiah, our Passover, sacrificed for us.

Babylon

On the other side of the room there are artefacts relating to Babylon and Persia.

Brick of Nebuchadnezzar II and Cylinder

The brick of Nebuchadnezzar written in cuneiform boldly states, "Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who provides for Esagila and Ezida, the oldest son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon am I." The cylinder positioned next to the brick records the building of temples in Babylon and Marad by king Nebuchadnezzar. Like Hezekiah and Sennacherib, they are also listed in the Biblical Archaeological Review's list of biblical characters confirmed by archaeology and there are more exhibits and information concerning Nebuchadnezzar to be found in the British Museum. This boasting is consistent with the Scriptures before Nebuchadnezzar's fall and other artefacts found in the British Museum. Later, Daniel 4:34-37 describes the transformation in his life and how after his humiliation he praised God.

Narrow Clay Cylinder

In the same glass case, the narrow cylinder can be viewed. The information board explains that it was discovered in Sippar, north of Babylon and it describes the restoration of the sun-god's temple after a search for its remains by King Nabonidus. King Nabonidus is of importance to the Bible student and there is also a Nabonidus cylinder to be seen in the British Museum and in the Louvre. Edwards and Anderson observe that until 1854, the only known reference to king Belshazzar was found in Daniel 5:1 and that it is now known that he was the son of King Nabonidus and co-regent in Babylon.[13] This also importantly explains why Belshazzar made Daniel the third ruler in the kingdom (Daniel 5:29).

Room 23 – King Tarharqa

Perhaps surprisingly, there are more pyramids in northern Sudan than in Egypt. Room 23 is dominated by the colossal shrine for Tarharqa (690-664) and Nubia which is particularly impressive. Tarharqa resided in the Cushite Dynasty (25th Dynasty of the list of Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt) which consisted of five Cushite rulers[14] and he is the most famous of that period. Other smaller objects relating to him can be seen at the Ashmolean Museum, as well as the British Museum and the Louvre. He is referred to in the parallel accounts of 2 Kings 19:9 and Isaiah 37:9 as making his way to aid Hezekiah against Sennacherib before Sennacherib approached Jerusalem.



There is a rock sculpture of Tarharqa nestled underneath Amun, a ram-headed god, symbolising protection from it. Amun was combined with Ra to become Amun-Re[15] and was considered the chief of the gods of the Egyptian pantheon. Hence the sculptures make a bold and emphatic statement concerning the extent of Taharqa's power. A similar sculpture can be seen in the British Museum. Behind the granite sculpture in the Ashmolean Museum one can view the west wall of the Tarharqa shrine. Here Amun-Re is depicted anthropomorphically with a human body and ram's head seated on the throne. The information board explains that Tarharqa is standing before him and offering a loaf, a necklace, a pectoral and a figure of Ma'at to him. Behind that throne, there are three standing goddesses.

The display boards for this shrine are really helpful and provide mini diagrams relating to the respective walls to identify and convey the meaning that I am merely recording here. On the north wall of the shrine, the god Ptah-Nun-Wer actually embraces Tarharqa. On the other side, Tarharqa stands before Sekhmet and Nefertum-Horakhty. Symbols representing life, stability and power are extended towards him. On the east wall of the shrine, King Taharqa offers a white loaf to his father Amun-Re. Behind the throne Mut, Khonsu and Montu are standing. Finally on the south side of the shrine, there is a granite statue of Tarharqa in an enclave. He is holding a crook and a flail denoting authority and kingship.

There is also a display case of many of Tarharqa's objects from the Sanam Temple which he built, many of which relate to various gods including Amun-Re. In another display case relating to the Kingdom of Kush, there is a sandstone block from the hypostyle hall of Temple T at Kawa, that Taharqa completed.

In a display case entitled 'New Kingdom Nubia', most of the objects originate from a sanctuary dedicated to the goddess Hathor, built at Faras by Queen Hatshepsut. Hatshepsut is one of the most famous Egyptian rulers and other objects relating to her can be seen at the British Museum and the Louvre, in addition to her mortuary temple in the Valley of the Kings. She may well have been the daughter of Pharaoh who took pity on Moses and raised him in Exodus 2.

On the back wall of Room 23, there is a sandstone stela of Nero as an Egyptian King making an offering to the god Min. Nero is the unnamed Caesar of Acts 25-26 and Acts 28:19. Roman emperors dressed in Egyptian attire are not an unusual phenomenon. During the Roman Period, Egypt became part of the Roman Empire and Roman Emperors would assume the title of Pharaoh. Similar stelas can be viewed in Room 4 in the British Museum of the emperors Tiberius (Luke 3:1) and Domitian, again dressed in Egyptian attire and making offerings to respective gods. In Room 52 of the British Museum, King Darius I (Zechariah 1:1) is performing a similar role during the 27th Dynasty of Egypt under Persian rule.

Room 25 – Amarna Revolution

There is a piece on the Amarna Revolution noting that when Amenhotep IV became king of Egypt, he worshipped the sun as 'Aten' and subsequently changed his name to Akhenaten, to resemble that. Unlike his predecessors he refused to worship other gods which strongly broke with previous religious and political tradition.

There is also an Egyptian King List in room 4 in the British Museum and noticeably the cartouches of four pharaohs were erased. This was done deliberately since Amenhotep IV, Tutankhamun and the other two similarly broke precedent and were involved in the 'Amarna Heresy' and went from polytheism to worshipping the sun god Aten, although Tutankhamun later re-established polytheism.[16] Edwards & Anderson note that for that reason we should not expect Egyptian records to include the Ten plagues or the loss of the charioteers crossing the Red Sea.[17]

Room 26

An information sign labelled, 'Oracular Judgement of Seth', which is more formally known as the Dakhla Stela, lists oracles from the god Seth to settle a land dispute involving a priest named Nesubast. That stela is dated to the fifth year of the reign of Sheshonq I (c. 940BC), who was the first King of the Libyan (22nd Dynasty). Sheshonq I is the biblical Shishak (1 Kings 11:40; 14:25; 2 Chronicles 12:2-9) and he was a contemporary of Solomon, Jeroboam and Rehoboam.

Solomon began to build the temple in Jerusalem in the fourth year of his reign which was four hundred and eighty years after the Exodus (1 Kings 6:1). In 1 Kings 11:40, Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam (because he had rebelled against Solomon), so he arose and fled to Egypt, to Shishak, King of Egypt and was there until the death of Solomon. Later in 1 Kings 14:25, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak King of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. 1 Kings 14:26 explains that Shishak took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the King's house.

The Bible is exceptional among ancient literature since it records both the military losses and embarrassing details concerning Israel and Judah, not just victories, unlike other empires and nations that often omit losses or humiliating defeats from their records. An example of that is the defacing of pharaohs by subsequent pharaohs visible on sculptures in museums and monuments today. Many items relating to Queen Hatshepsut's monuments were defaced by Tuthmosis III.

Room 6 - Decipherment

If you descend to the lower floor in room 6 there are some useful information boards which explain how ancient languages were deciphered, in particular cuneiform. The photograph of the Behistun relief and inscription together with accompanying text is somewhat akin to a Persian equivalent of the Rosetta Stone which was commissioned by Darius I (Haggai 1:1; Zechariah 1:1) and was written in Old Persian, Elamite and Akkadian. Henry Rawlinson was instrumental in deciphering the text and he placed himself at notable risk by perching himself precariously on a high reaching ladder, studying and recording the text whilst resting against the daunting and dramatic cliff face! More currently there is a display board which explains how multispectral imaging shines distinct types of light onto an object to make the text clearer and comprehensible.

Room 7 – Vespasian Gold Coin minted in Judea



Room 7 contains a coin collection. In the section relating to Rome, there are three rows of coins in the glass display case. It is the top row consisting of five coins that is of biblical interest. The first coin relates to the restoration of the temple of Concordia in Rome by the Emperor Tiberius. The second coin depicts Nero in court. The writing on that coin is clear and 'Caesar' is easily visible. The third coin is Nero's triumphal arch over the Parthians.

The fourth coin displays Vespasian's suppression of the Jewish revolt, showing a woman mourning under a palm tree. 'Iudaea' which is 'Judea' written in Latin is quickly recognisable on that coin. Sadly, the fall of the temple in Jerusalem was foretold in Luke 21:5-6, but there is still a sure and certain hope, because Messiah shall come and His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives and all nations will keep the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:4-21) and will worship the King.

The fifth coin depicts Domitian as the chief priest sacrificing at the inauguration of a new age. Domitian was probably the emperor when John was exiled to Patmos.

Room 7 – Romans in Britain

Finally, closer to home, there is a glass case with an exhibit entitled, 'Romans in Britain.' Of those coins the ones of most biblical and Jewish interest are that of Claudius Caesar and Hadrian. Claudius Caesar invaded Britain in AD43 and his temple is buried to this day under Colchester Castle. Claudius Caesar is referenced in the Bible in Acts 11:28 and Acts 18:2. Also, consider the network of Roman roads, hillforts and unearthed coin hoards even from Nero's reign (AD54-68) that we are familiar with nowadays, and that Hadrian's Wall, stretching some 73 miles serving the northern frontier, remains today.

If you tilt your head, 'Claudius Caesar' is readable on Claudius Caesar's coin. Emperor Hadrian sadly forbade circumcision, suppressed the second Jewish revolt and renamed Judea 'Syria Palestine'. On the other side of the same glass case there is a coin relating to Claudius' triumphal arch, with 'De Britiann' clearly marked on the arch in the centre of the coin. In short, the inescapable conclusion is that Roman history in England is evident and recognisable and the same applies to Roman history in the Bible during the same era.

Interestingly, on a display board at Upton Country Park, Poole, Dorset, there is mention of General Vespasian who would later become a Roman Emperor. He distinguished himself in the initial invasion of Britain by crossing the River Medway in Kent. The Roman fleet landed in Poole and Portland and quickly took Dorset.

Closing thoughts

All the above illustrates the historicity and the reliability of the Scriptures. Countless people have an interest in ancient history and archaeology; some specialise in Assyriology or Egyptology and even the Bible, yet still do not know God. The more we examine biblical archaeology the more assured we are of the accuracy of the Scriptures. The more we immerse ourselves in the Scriptures, the more we see our need of Messiah. It is vitally important to know, trust and follow the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is the One who is able to foretell events before they come to pass and the One who knows the end from the beginning. He is the One who knows and understands us, better than we know ourselves.

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4. Austen Henry Layard, Nineveh and its Remains (Pantianos Classics, First Published in 1948), p84
5. Randall Price with H. Wayne House, Zondervan Handbook of Biblical Archaeology (Zondervan Academic, 2017; Grand Rapids), p59
6. Julian Reade, Assyrian Sculpture (The British Museum Press, 2016; London), Chapter 7, pp72-79, The Hunts of Ashurbanipal
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8. Rebecca Abrams, The Jewish Journey 4000 years in 22 Objects from the Ashmolean Museum (Ashmolean Museum, 2017; Oxford), p41
9. Ibid, p41
10. Ibid, p41
11. Ibid, p42
12. Ibid, p33
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Archaeology & the Bible in the Louvre Museum, Ashmolean Museum and Petrie Museum

The Petrie Museum & the Bible

Flinders Petrie lived a somewhat rugged and spartan existence as he excavated in unbearably scorching conditions. Known as the 'The Father of Egyptology', he is also famous for being a pioneer of biblical archaeology. In 1883, The Egypt Exploration Fund sent him to excavate around 30 sites where he laboured for most winter seasons until 1926. His custom was to publish a report within a year of his findings.[1] Amelia Edwards was a patron of the Egypt Exploration Fund and appointed him to her chair of Egyptology at University College London.[2]

Just a ten-minute walk from the British Museum, the Petrie Museum is located in University College London, is easily accessible and admission is free. There are correlating items of biblical interest in both museums, which is useful for cross-referencing to shed light on particular characters by examining their possessions and documents preserved. If you are searching for a particular item, it is worth enquiring at the welcome desk.

Petrie first recognised how pottery could be useful in respect of dating historical objects and he undertook this discipline in a painstaking systematic and orderly manner. Unlike his predecessors, Petrie would not merely collect large, prominent or distinctive objects but would obtain as many items as possible from a dig. He would also carefully record exactly where they were positioned to enable him to build as complete picture as possible from the site. This is known as 'seriation' and there is a fantastic chronological display which so clearly illustrates, from one glass case to another, the various styles of pottery in their respective groupings.



Of the 80,000 artefacts collected, just one tenth are on display at the Petrie Museum. Charles River Editors wrote, "Thanks to all these efforts, modern Egyptologists have been able to learn an incredible amount about different periods through reading the surviving texts currently preserved in museums throughout the world and in the many temples and tombs in Egypt."[3] Hence, it is well-worth a trip for an hour or two to the Petrie Museum if you are able to access the centre of London.

Sesostris III (Senwosret III)

Sesostris III lived in the 12th Dynasty and he would have been the pharaoh ruling Egypt whilst Joseph was prime minister. In the Petrie Museum there is a fragment of an inscription of what appears to relate to Horus with a gold title, plus a stela of an overseer of boats from the reign of Sesostris III. Although there is a question mark concerning the identification of the former object, the essential point is that it relates to Sesostris III. That can also be cross-referenced with the British Museum since there are three dark statues of him in Room 4, in the large gallery. He is easily noticeable in the British Museum because of his prominent ears and in the same room there is a large head statute of him and a sphinx with its head removed!

Tuthmosis I, Tuthmosis II and Tuthmosis III

There are a few items relating to Tuthmosis I who was most likely the Pharaoh of Exodus 1:8-2:10 who ordered the Hebrew boy babies to be killed and was the father of the distinguished female Pharaoh Hatshepsut. He was also the father of Tuthmosis II via his secondary wife Mutnofret. Tuthmosis I items at the Petrie Museum include a fragment of a relief, a stela of Ka, the priest of Tuthmosis I, and from the temple of Set, a fragment of a limestone door handle.

Tuthmosis II was married to his half-sister Hatshepsut.[4] Tuthmosis II was probably the Pharaoh of Exodus 2:11-25, when Moses murdered the Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew before Moses fled to Midian. Tuthmosis III was the son of Tuthmosis II through his secondary wife Iset, or Isis. Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut had a co-regency, and when Hatshepsut died, Tuthmosis III tried to erase her memory by defacing objects pertaining to her. Behind a glass case with several artefacts relating to Tuthmosis II, one can view a Tuthmosis III Temple fragment made from red granite that contains a cartouche of Tuthmosis II. (A cartouche relates to an oval-shaped object and includes the inscribed name of a royal ruler).

To someone who holds to the early date for the Exodus, Tuthmosis III was almost certainly the Pharaoh of the Exodus. There are several items related to him including inscribed seals and scarabs, various temple fragments, a bronze axe with a cartouche of Tuthmosis III, an alabaster cylinder vase with a cartouche of Tuthmosis III and a sandstone grinder with a cartouche of Tuthmosis III.

In the British Museum there is a much larger figure of Tuthmosis III and looking at the items in both museums helps us to piece information together about him. Additionally, there are several items of interest relating to Tuthmosis III in the Louvre, a quotation from the Annals of Tuthmosis III in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, and in the Bournemouth Natural History Museum there is a bas relief relating to Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut. Cleopatra's Needle by the River Thames actually relates to Tuthmosis III (read the inscription next time you walk past there) and the Place de la Concorde in Paris was erected in honour of Rameses II – this is located less than a mile from the Louvre.

If you hold to the later date for the Exodus, there is a building inscription of a Ramesside Pharaoh, although it has not been established whether that pertains to Rameses I or Rameses II.

Hatshepsut

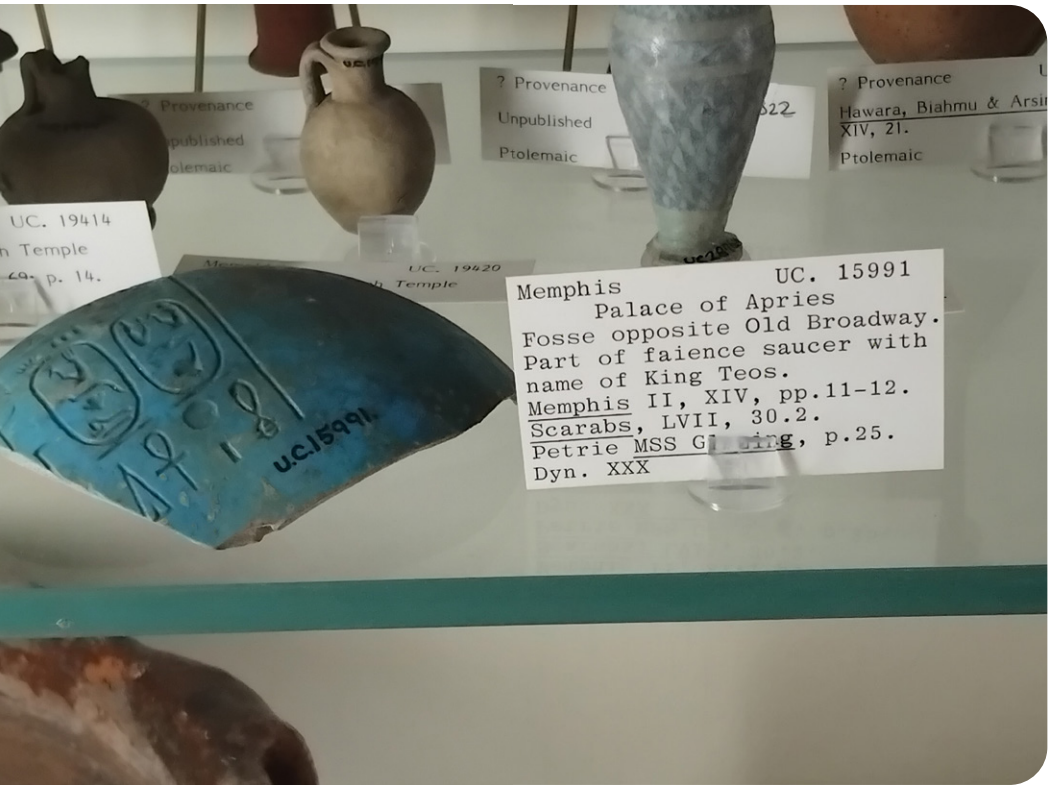
This is most likely pharaoh's daughter who took pity on Moses, both naming him 'Moses' and raising him. In the Petrie Museum there are some objects that definitely relate to her and others where it is highly likely she owned them, though there still remains a visible question mark on the caption next to the exhibit.

There is a bronze adze blade tied to a wooden handle with leather thongs, together with a cartouche of Hatshepsut and dedication to Amun on the handle. Amun is often associated with Tarharqa (2 Kings 19:9), and is frequently depicted as a ram with Tarharqa tucked beneath him, for instance in the British Museum in Room 4 and in the Ashmolean Museum in Room 23.

In addition, one can see a limestone trial relief of a lion's head which may or may not relate to Hatshepsut. Either way, it is possible to see Hatshepsut's obelisk in Room 65 in the British Museum and she has an impressive and magnificent temple on the west bank of Luxor, Egypt.

Pharaohs Mentioned by Name in the Bible

There are artefacts relating to three of the named pharaohs in the Bible in the Petrie Museum. From the Palace of Apries (this is Hophra mentioned in Jeremiah 44:30), there is part of a faience saucer (glazed ceramic) with the name of King Teos, plus a limestone fragment with a triple row of stars and another sign in relief. Secondly in a drawer underneath a glass case which contains numerous objects, there is a funerary figurine of Tarharqa (this is the Tirhakah referred to in 2 Kings 19:9 who comes to Hezekiah's aid against Sennacherib). Lastly, there is a rectangular limestone stela of Nakua-Hathor with a list of funerary offerings which is dated to the reign of Necho II. Necho II was the King of Egypt in 2 Chronicles 35:20-27, who tried to persuade Josiah not to oppose him since his desire was instead to fight against Carchemish.



Nero

Nero was a notorious ruler who blamed the Christians for the fire in Rome and many of those would have been Jewish believers. If one searches through the latter Egyptian dynasties, it is evident that after conquering Egyptian territory, the Persians, Greeks and then the Roman rulers assumed the titles of pharaohs in addition to leading their respective empires,[5] so it is not uncommon to find artefacts showing the mingling of these rulers with Egyptian cultural practices. Nero was the unnamed Caesar of Acts 25-26 and Acts 28:19.

So, there is a sandstone fragment with the upper part of a cartouche of Nero and a column of hieroglyphs. Again, a similar phenomenon can be seen in the British Museum and the Ashmolean Museum. In the British Museum, Tiberius is honouring an Egyptian deity and in the same glass case, Domitian is performing an identical action. In the Ashmolean Museum there is a sandstone stela of the Emperor Nero making an offering as an Egyptian King to the god Min in AD64.

Conclusion

The Petrie Museum is well worth a visit since it has a number of smaller artefacts that contribute to our understanding of biblical archaeology. The next line of enquiry is to compare those artefacts with findings displayed in other museums such as the British Museum, Ashmolean Museum and the Louvre which broadens our understanding further. This crucially illustrates the historical reliability of the Scriptures. The Scriptures point to God who is sovereign over history and who predicts events accurately before they occur. This means that we can trust in the God of the Bible in whom alone salvation is found. The Messiah has come and is coming again. Have you found shalom (peace) with God and will you be ready when He returns?

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British Museum Tour of the Bible

Group Size:
Ten minimum-Twenty maximum.

Cost:
No charge, though £45 to cover
my travel costs would be appreciated.

Tour Plan:
Commence 11am lower galleries,
1pm lunch, 2pm-3.30pm upper galleries.
Multiple choice quiz to take home at end of the day.

Travel:
Nearest Tube is Tottenham Court Rd Station.

Preparation:
Buy lunch at museum or bring your own.
Admission to British Museum is free
though they welcome donations.

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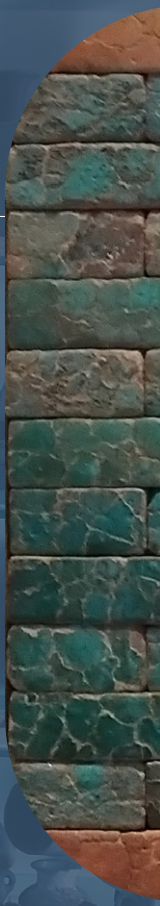
Archaeology & the Bible Lands

Jon Taylor

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Archaeology & the Bible in the Louvre Museum, Ashmolean Museum and Petrie Museum



The Louvre Museum, Ashmolean Museum and the Petrie Museum contain extensive collections of archaeological artefacts, many of which relate to the Bible. Frequently possessions or even palaces established by Bible characters are referred to in the exhibits, though rarely is the connection made between ancient history and biblical history. So how do famous anthropological accounts relate to the Flood? What is the significance of the Moabite Stone? How does the discovery of Sargon's Palace contribute to an understanding of Assyriology and the Scriptures? What objects can be seen that relate to Darius I and Xerxes I from the Bible? What can we learn about the Pharaoh who aided King Hezekiah against King Sennacherib? How much evidence is there for the Caesars mentioned in the New Testament and how have they left a lasting impression in England to this day?

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