



THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CRYPT OF THE ÎLE DE LA CITÉ
VISITOR'S GUIDE



THE CHRONOLOGICAL FRIEZE

THE ROMAN EMPIRE
(1ST CENTURY BC - 5TH CENTURY AD)

Early 1st century BC,
Formation of the Île
de la Cité

Around 308
Construction
of the fortified wall

THE MIDDLE AGES
(5TH - 16TH CENTURY)

1163
The construction
of Notre-Dame de Paris
begins

THE MODERN AND
CONTEMPORARY ERA
(16TH - 21ST CENTURY)

1750
The Foundling Hospice
[Hospice des Enfants-
Trouvés] is built

19th century
Haussmann's
transformations

FROM LUTETIA TO PARIS,
THE HISTORY OF
THE ÎLE DE LA CITÉ

• The Gallo-Roman city of Lutetia is developed on the left bank during the reign of Emperor Augustus (27 BC). The site is frequented by the Gaulish tribe of the Parisii, the name of which appears on coins recovered from the river Seine. In the early 1st century, islands on the Seine were joined to form the current Île de la Cité.

• From the 3rd century through to the 5th century, Lutetia becomes a strategic site in the defence of the Roman Empire, under threat of the first Germanic invasions. The Île de la Cité, fortified in 308, becomes the active centre of the city while the left bank is partially abandoned.

• In the Middle Ages, the urban development of the Île de la Cité is organised around the cathedral, the construction of which commences in 1163: the Rue Neuve Notre-Dame is created, and houses and churches are built. The urban fabric becomes increasingly dense.

• In the 18th century, numerous mediaeval buildings are destroyed to improve circulation and provide sanitation on the Île de la Cité: the square is extended, Rue Neuve Notre-Dame widened, and an orphanage called the Hospice des Enfants-Trouvés [Foundling Hospice] is built.

• In the 19th century, Prefect Haussmann radically reorganised the urban fabric by demolishing a number of ancient monuments and alleys. A new hospital, the Hôtel-Dieu, is built on the cathedral square as are barracks which were to become the Police Prefecture. The configuration of the current square is the result of these major transformations.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CRYPT
AND THE HISTORY
OF THE ÎLE DE LA CITÉ



© Archives de Notre-Dame

The Crypt provides a unique overview of the urban and architectural development of the Île de la Cité, the historical heart of Paris. It was created in 1980 under the square in front of the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris, to display the archaeological remains discovered during excavations from 1965 to 1972. Visitors can step back in time here, discovering the various buildings constructed on the site over the years, from Antiquity up to the 20th century.

The “Gold of power, from Julius Caesar to Marianne” exhibition presents an exceptional selection of coins and excavated artefacts, the material testimony to the history of Paris and its development from Ancient times to the Third Republic.

From the Parisii, the founders of the Gaulish city, to Napoleon III, the initiator of today's capital city, major figures of power had their images and symbols engraved in metal, before being replaced by Marianne, the allegorical personification of the Republic.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CRYPT OF THE ÎLE DE LA CITÉ

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www.crypte.paris.fr
www.carnavalet.paris.fr

How to get there
Metro and RER: Cité or Saint-Michel (Line 4, RER B and C)
Bus: 21, 24, 27, 38, 47, 85 and 96
Vélib': 10 rue d'Arcole ; place Louis Lépine

Websites dedicated to the history and memory of the capital, the Archaeological Crypt of the Île de la Cité and the Catacombs of Paris are run by the Carnavalet Museum – History of Paris.



READING THE REMAINS

The tour of the Crypt does not follow a historical chronology but instead the order of the archaeological remains preserved in their original location, as discovered during excavations.

At each stage, an “observatory” dedicated to particular remains identifies the period concerned, from Antiquity up to the modern era, by means of an icon on the e-readers and touch-sensitive glass panels:

The profile of Emperor Julian for the Roman Empire (27 BC - 4th century AD).

A gargoyle on the Notre-Dame Cathedral for the Middle Ages (12th - 15th century).

A classical building façade for the modern era (15th - 18th century).



CHILDREN'S TOUR

Throughout the tour, little characters pop up, from panel to panel and from one display case to the next, to provide a tour for our younger visitors. They help them get right to the essence of the subject, and guide them in observing the remains and the archaeological artefacts exhibited.



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10. THE ANCIENT BATHS

The tour ends with the exceptional remains of the ancient thermal baths of Lutetia dating from the 4th century. A large touchscreen provides a better understanding of how the building was organised and functioned, from its entrance on the left through a little courtyard to the hot room with a pool to the side. Underfloor heating was provided by a hypocaust system recognisable from its little pillars and its boiler visible at the end of the tour.

In parallel, the exhibition looks at the various archaeological excavation campaigns carried out on the square in front of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris between 1965 and 1972. The display case contains a number of archaeological finds, including some for personal hygiene uses, such as an *auriscapulum*, the ancestor of the cotton bud.



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9. NAPOLEON III AND ARCHAEOLOGY

The various items in the display case come from the reign of Napoleon III. On the gold coins, you can compare the symbols used during the Empire and during the Republic proclaimed in 1870. We can see in particular how the image of the sovereign and the imperial symbols were replaced by the *Marianne*, the allegorical personification of the French Republic.

Opposite, on the footway, the observatory focuses on the early Parisian archaeology under Napoleon III and the major works at the origin of the first excavations. The archaeologists' tools are depicted on the icons: trowel, brush, surveying sight and grid.



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8. THE FOUNDLING HOSPICE

[HOSPICE DES ENFANTS-TROUVÉS]

This part of the remains includes a long partially preserved wall belonging to the former Foundling Hospice, the first Parisian orphanage built by the architect Boffrand in 1750, at the request of Louis XV.

The documents exhibited in the display case opposite these remains evoke the hospice's operation and activities. The coins placed alongside, minted during the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI and during the Revolution, illustrate the profound changes in the French political system.



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7. 17TH CENTURY SOVEREIGNS

Here, the exhibition presents the major reforms and developments of currencies in the 17th century. We can see the return of the king's image on the coins, allowing the wide diffusion of an easily identifiable official portrait. In 1640, Louis XIII's monetary reform gave rise to the famous Louis d'or, several examples bearing the images of Louis XIII and Louis XIV can be seen in the display case. At this time, mechanical minting became more common, which is evidenced by the more regular shape of the coins.



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6. THE CONSTRUCTION OF NOTRE-DAME

This was the location of Rue Neuve Notre-Dame, as indicated on the floor. This 6-metre wide road was built to facilitate access to the cathedral and also to showcase it by ending opposite the centre of its façade. The urban development of the Île de la Cité was organised around the cathedral, the construction of which started in 1163 at the instruction of Maurice de Sully, Bishop of Paris. With these three touchscreens, you can navigate through the heart of the cathedral site and see the four phases of construction of the monument.

The exhibition shows, in parallel, fragments of statues discovered during archaeological digs carried out on the Île de la Cité, some of which undoubtedly come from the cathedral. You can also see some silver coins, minted during the reign of Louis VII, bearing cross, alpha and omega motifs, Christian symbols, and lily motifs, an emblem of royalty.

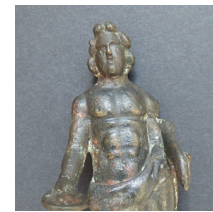


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5. A MEDIAEVAL CELLAR

With the two basement levels of the house at the sign of Saint Victor, we enter the Middle Ages. This house was built following the creation of the Rue Neuve Notre-Dame in the 12th century.

From these remains, utensils such as wooden spoons and little toys (dice, counters, spinning tops made of wood and bone), which were particularly popular in the Middle Ages, give us an insight into daily life. Royal coins herald the return of gold into coinage and the creation of a new monetary system, an instrument of propaganda and legitimisation of royal authority.



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3. LUTETIA IN THE HIGH EMPIRE

The *Pax romana*, a period of peace and prosperity, held sway in the Roman Empire from the 1st to the 2nd century AD under the Antonine Dynasty, the Antonines being Roman emperors who ruled the Empire from 96 AD to 192 AD. Various items in the display case testify to the beliefs held in this period, including a statuette of the god Lares, the divine protector of the household and family.

On the wall, a reconstruction of Lutetia in the 2nd century shows the main monuments, such as the Cluny thermal baths, the Forum and the Arenas of Lutetia, of which several (stone) lapidary items are exhibited here.



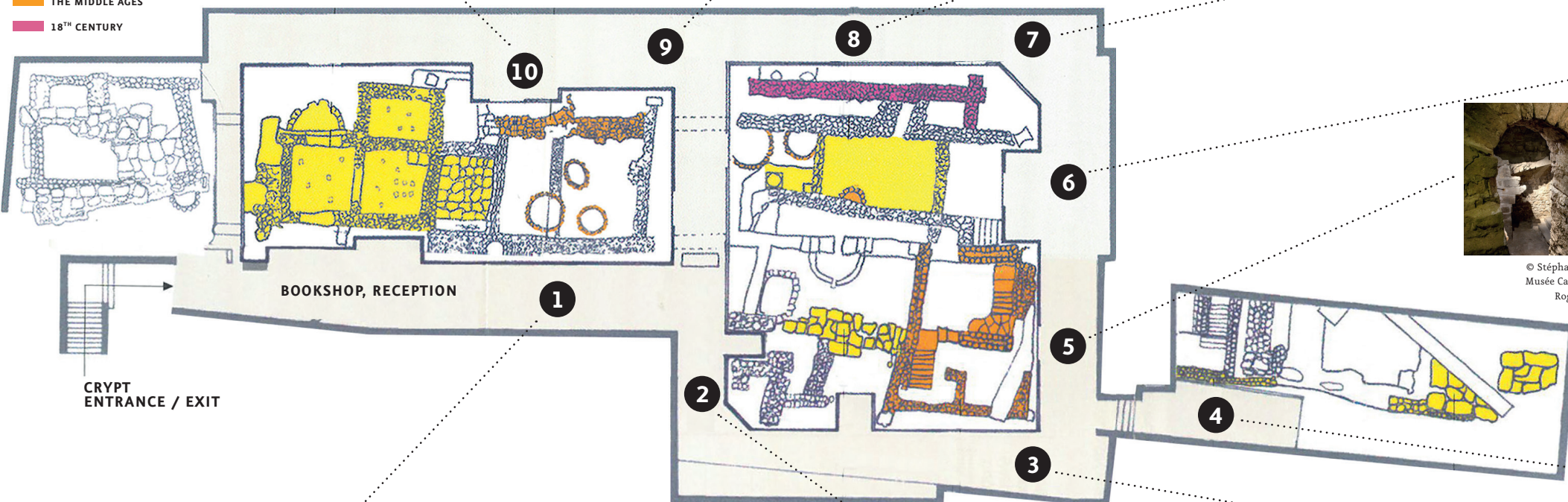
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4. THE ANCIENT PORT

This section of the quay is all that is left of the ancient port, built during the reign of Tiberius (42 BC). Its current location reveals that the Île de la Cité at that time covered a smaller area but that its riverbanks were more extensive than today. The traces of a storage depot and the many amphora discovered indicate a significant trading activity on the river. Background sound effects evoke the atmosphere of the port and its activity.

The archaeological finds presented in the display case date from this period of Roman occupation of the Île de la Cité. This model of the famous Pillar of the Boatmen (*Nautae*) shows, in its carvings, the mix of Roman and Gaulish cultural influences.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE
THE MIDDLE AGES
18TH CENTURY



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1. THE PARISII

The "*Gold of power*" exhibition opens with a presentation of gold coins, called "staters", and low-value bronze "pewter" coins. These coins testify to the political and economic importance, in the region, of the Gaulish Parisii tribe which lived along the Seine in the 3rd century BC. Following Caesar's conquest of Gaul in the 1st century BC, the Parisii lost their independence and the right to issue their own currency.



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2. THE FORTIFIED WALL

Imposing blocks of stone form the fortified wall, built in the 4th century BC all around the Île de la Cité, as a defence against invasion. These blocks were recovered from abandoned monuments, such as the Forum and the Arenas. The outline of this fortified enclosure is shown on the ground.

The display case contains artefacts from this period: terracotta beakers, coins, ornaments for clothing and an exceptional gold cruciform brooch, used to pin the ends of garments together, probably worn by an officer or a Roman dignitary. Above the display case, a block of stone from the fortified wall bears an engraved inscription: P.O.C.V. It is evidence of the prior use of the block.