THE GROUP VISITS

Groups (with or without a lecture guide)

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 sandstone and touch-sensitive glass panels.

The profile of Emperor Julian for the Middle Ages (3rd - 4th century)

A gargoyle on the Notre-Dame Cathedral for the Middle Ages (8th - 11th century).

A classical building façade for the Modern and Contemporary Era (19th century).

CHILDREN’S TOUR

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 1965 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.

THE READING REMAINS

Opening times
Every day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., except for Mondays and some public holidays.
Tel.: +33 (0)1 44 59 58 58
www.crypte.paris.fr

Facilities and access
There are no sanitary or cloakrooms. The Archaeological Crypt is partially accessible to people with reduced mobility.

Filming and photography
Non-profit photographic and video shoots are permitted on the site for private use only.

Lecture tours and group visits

Individual visitors:
In the crypt, it is impossible to visit on one’s own.
www.crypte.paris.fr/tours-animations

Groups:
Group visits are possible without a lecture guide, but they must be booked in advance through the Cultural Activities Office of the Carnavalet Museum.
Tel.: +33 (0)1 44 59 58 58
www.crypte.paris.fr/activites

Telephone line open on Mondays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., and on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

How to get there
Bus: 21, 24, 27, 38, 47, 85 and 96
Metro and RER: Cité or Saint-Michel (Line 4, RER B and C)

www.carnavalet.paris.fr
www.crypte.paris.fr
Tel.: +33 (0)1 55 42 50 10

INFORMATION

ÎLE DE LA CITÉ

+33 (0)1 44 59 58 58
to 5 p.m. on Mondays from 2 p.m.

Information and bookings by e-mail:
Office of the Carnavalet Museum.
www.carnavalet.paris.fr

Group visits (with or without a lecture guide)

Groups:
Details available at reception or on the website:
www.crypte.paris.fr/activites

Filming and photography permitted on the site for private use only.
Non-flash photography without tripods is permitted on the site for private use only.

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The tour begins in the Middle Ages (3rd - 4th century) with the construction of Notre-Dame de Paris, 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.

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1. THE PARISII

The “Gold of power” exhibition opens with a presentation of gold coins, called “staters”, and preserved golden “paterae” 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.

2. THE FORTIFIED WALL

Impressive blocks of stone from the fortified wall, built in the 1st century BC, are around the Île de la Cité, as a defence against invasion. These blocks were recovered from abandoned monuments, such as the Forum and the Arènes. The outline of this fortified nucleus is shown on the ground. The display case contains artefacts from this period: terracotta beakers, coins, unearths for clothing and an exceptional gold crowns brooch, used to fix the ends of garments together, probably worn by an officer or Roman dignitary. Above the display case, a block of stone from the fortified wall bears an engraved inscription: P.D.C.V. is evidence of the priest use of the block.

3. LUTETIA IN THE HIGH EMPIRE

The Roman Empire, a period of peace and prosperity, held sway in the Roman Empire from the 1st to the 7th centuries. The Antonines, a period of peace, held sway in the Roman Empire from the 1st to the 7th centuries. The Antonines, led by Roman emperors who ruled the Empire from 14 to 180, are particularly popular in the Middle Ages, given 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.

4. THE FOUNDLING HOSPICE

(FONDS DES ENFANTS-TRAVES) This part of the remains include a long partially preserved wall belonging to the former Foundling Hospice, the first Parisian orphanage built by the architect Blondel in 1750, at the request of Louis XV. The documents exhibited in the display case opposite these remains evoke the hospital's operation and activity. The coins placed alongside, minted during the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI during the Revolution, illustrate the profound changes in the French political system.

5. A MEDIEVAL 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 Banque Nationale in the 13th century. From these remains, objects such as wooden spoons and little toys (doll, counter, spinning top 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.

6. THE CONSTRUCTION OF NOTRE-DAME

This was the location of Rue Neuve Notre-Dame, as indicated on the floor. This 4-metre wide road was built to facilitate access to the cathedral and also to showcase it by ending opposite the centre of its façade. When development of the Île de la Cité was organised around the cathedral, the construction of which started early on the instruction of Louis de Sully, Bishop of Paris. With four such touchstones, you can navigate through the heart of the cathedral 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 came from the cathedral. You can also see some silver coins, minted during the reign of Louis XIII, bearing cross, alpha and omega motifs, Christian symbols, and by motifs, an emblem of royalty.

7. 17TH CENTURY SOVEREIGNS

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

8. THE ANCIENT BATHS

The tour ends with the exceptional remains of the ancient thermal baths of Lutetia dating from the 1st century, which became model for the Roman emperors who ruled the Empire from the 1st to the 7th centuries. The display case presents an overview of the various occupations carried out on the Île de la Cité, some of which undoubtedly came from the cathedral. You can also see some silver coins, minted during the reign of Louis XII, bearing cross, alpha and omega motifs, Christian symbols, and by motifs, an emblem of royalty.

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 the Republic proclaimed in 1870. We can see in particular how the image of the sovereign and the imperial symbols were replaced by the bicorne, the allegorical personification of the French Republic.

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