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“From the Smallest Fragment”: The Archaeology of the Doré Bible

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Abstract:

In Gustave Doré’s Bible illustrations (first published in late 1865 in France), viewers witnessed the fragments of archaeological excavations circulating in museums, photographs, and publications, now rendered whole and placed within the familiar context of the Bible. The article argues that through its accumulation and reconstruction of archaeological fragments, the Doré Bible represents the various ways in which the biblical past operated in nineteenth-century France.

"From the Smallest Fragment": The Archaeology of the Doré Bible

by Sarah C. Schaefer

Unlike many nineteenth-century artists, Gustave Doré (1832–83) was not tempted by the lure of the Orient—at least not enough to travel there himself. Some sources suggest he was even hostile to the idea of doing so. An article from an 1866 issue of the British periodical *Gentleman's Magazine* discusses Doré's conversations with the French publishing firm Hachette, which was hoping to recruit Doré to produce a set of Bible illustrations. The company, however, required the artist to travel to the Holy Land in order to produce "on the spot" studies of the scenes he would create, as David Roberts had famously done thirty years earlier: "To this view," states the article, "M. Doré was entirely opposed—preferring to trust entirely to his own artistic conceptions." The author goes on to suggest that Doré's pictures were rooted in "tradition, religious sentiment, and a reminiscence of various representations of the scenes," rather than "the solid realisms of actual nature."^[1]

In the early 1860s, when Doré agreed to produce a set of Bible illustrations for the Catholic publisher Alfred Mame et fils, there was no travel requirement attached to the deal. Doré spent at least four years working in his Paris studio on the approximately 250 images.^[2] Nonetheless, one of the most commented-upon elements of the Doré Bible illustrations was their correspondence to the reality of the biblical settings. The theologian and critic Emile Le Camus wrote in the Catholic periodical *Le Contemporain* that Doré, "taking everything he could from the most recent discoveries regarding the architecture, customs and mores of the Assyrians, Jews and Egyptians, gave his scenes a local color that will make them eternally true."^[3] Another critic, Victor Fournel, argued that, whereas earlier biblical illustrators focused too much on feeling and expression, Doré placed his scenes in "strictly local conditions," and that he did so "without excess, without puerile display but with continuous zeal."^[4] The most telling assessment, however, came from the critic and author Théophile Gautier, one of Doré's close friends: "With the smallest fragment, the faintest pieces of evidence, [Doré] reconstructs palaces buried in sand, collapsed temples fallen to dust, not through thankless archaic work, but through a powerful and rapid vision."^[5]

The suggestion that Doré had the ability to reconstruct biblical history "from the smallest fragment" speaks to the wealth of material that the artist could draw from, even without traveling beyond the confines of Second Empire Paris. New research into the areas of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Palestine abounded from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and popularizations of this material pervaded every facet of French culture. In his introduction to a compendium of Doré's illustrations, the British writer Edmond Ollier commented, "The artist has no personal knowledge of the East, and has therefore been obliged to compile his accessories . . . from books and museums."^[6] Archaeological investigations in the Middle East had spurred the public imagination since the Napoleonic campaigns in Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century, and new sites of discovery perpetuated an incessant fervor for the hidden remains of lost civilizations. Archaeological research began to shed unprecedented light on the pharaohs of Genesis and Exodus, the decadent cities of the Assyrian empires, and the culture of Galilee in the time of Jesus. And although many

questioned the historical validity of the biblical narratives, archaeological explorations revealed traces of historical credibility in the Bible.

Although religious skepticism and anti-clerical attitudes reached unprecedented heights in nineteenth-century France, many were loathe to completely disavow the entirety of Judeo-Christianity.^[7] This was keenly witnessed in the continued relevance of the Bible. As Jonathan Sheehan has stated, "at the same moment that the Bible is mourned (or celebrated) as a victim of secularism, it is also recuperated as an essential element of the transcendent moral, literary, and historical heritage that supposedly holds together Western society."^[8] One could point to any number of instances in the nineteenth century in which the Bible was appropriated for purposes beyond the purely theological—from the presence of biblical subjects in the French Academy's *Prix de Rome* competition to the invocation of Christ in the visual rhetoric of Republican politics.^[9] In what follows, I will explore one aspect of Sheehan's claim—that is, the persistence of the Bible as part of Western historical heritage, and specifically the representation of the biblical past. The perseverance of religious faith and practice in modernity is a far more complex topic than can be dealt with here, but the Doré Bible offers an important glimpse into historicist approaches to biblical representation in the nineteenth century.

One thing should be made clear from the outset, however: despite the widespread praise for the historical accuracy of Doré's work, his Bible illustrations abound with inaccuracies and misrepresentations. His images appropriate the most popularized elements of biblical archaeology and are completed by his own imaginative inventions or else amalgamated with elements from other sources. Doré's reconstructions of "palaces buried in sand" are dramatic backdrops for the epic narratives of the Bible, but other elements of his illustrations reveal a much less active engagement with the material remains of the biblical past. As I will conclude, however, Doré's often-haphazard appropriation of archaeological fragments is significant for what it reveals about the Bible in the modern world, a topic that has yet to be thoroughly analyzed art historically.

Describing Egypt

The Book of Genesis, chapters 37–50, tells the story of Joseph, the first son of Jacob and Rachel. The prophetic Joseph was the favored offspring, creating animosity and vengefulness among his half-brothers (born of Jacob and Leah). The brothers conspire to sell Joseph into Egyptian slavery where, through the grace of God, he prospers in all his endeavors. After interpreting two of the Pharaoh's dreams as foretelling a seven-year famine, Joseph is appointed Vizier and put in charge of all of Egypt. When Jacob sends Joseph's brothers from Canaan to Egypt to buy grain during the famine, they do not recognize the long-lost Joseph, who is costumed in Egyptian garb and speaking the local tongue. Joseph eventually reveals himself to his brothers, and the family is invited to resettle in the Egyptian province of Goshen, which the Hebrews would occupy until the time of the Exodus led by Moses.

The story of Joseph is one of the most coherent narratives of the Old Testament, fraught with tension, complex characters, and a satisfying conclusion, and unlike many other parts of the Old Testament has easily lent itself to visual representation. For his entry into the *Prix de Rome* competition of 1789, Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson (1767–1824) depicted, in typical neo-classical fashion, the moment when Joseph reveals himself to his brothers (fig. 1). The brothers

bow down in dramatic gestures of penance, directing their attention toward the embrace of Joseph and his younger brother, Benjamin. The scene is set in an austere, classicizing interior—the only attempts at Egyptian detail are the nondescript *ushabtis* (mummiform funerary statues) in the wall niches, and the golden sphinx that serves as an armrest for Joseph's throne. The focus in this history painting is primarily on the dramatic moment of revelation, and for Girodet and those who viewed the work at the time, concern for the accuracy of the architecture and costume would have been negligible if present at all.



Fig. 1, Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy-Trioson, *Joseph Recognized by his Brothers*, 1789. Oil on canvas. Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)

In Doré's illustration of the scene, on the other hand, the moment of Joseph's announcement is framed in rich, elaborate details (fig. 2). Open papyrus columns recede toward a portico dominated by winged suns and the head of the goddess Hathor. Every surface is covered with relief carvings. But the figural group of Joseph and his brothers, despite being flanked by sphinxes, is relatively divorced from this abundance of architectural splendor. Rather than just a rehearsal of Egyptian visual forms, the scene relies on the conventions of academic history painting, as in Girodet's work. The brothers, in various expressions of anguish, relief, and joy, are arranged pyramidally upward toward Joseph, whose outstretched arms suggest power and forgiveness. For good measure, Doré outfitted Joseph in a somewhat elaborate headdress, but he demonstrates none of the careful attention to costume that would be found in the work of William Holman Hunt (1827–1910), James Tissot (1836–1902), and other artists who spent significant time in the Middle East.^[10] Doré's way of mediating between the exoticizing details and the familiar standards of academic painting is characteristic of many of his Bible illustrations and, as I will show, sheds light on the particularly French perspective toward the biblical past.

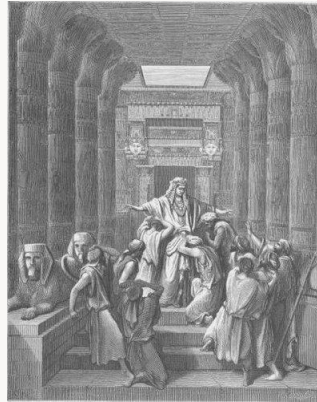


Fig. 2, Gustave Doré and J. Ettling, *Joseph Revealing Himself to his Brothers*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 1:188. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[larger image\]](#)

The Joseph story has a broader significance as well, as it is the first part of the Bible to pay great attention to the relationship of the Hebrews with another major civilization. And while in these chapters of Genesis we see a pharaoh promoting a slave to the position of counselor, and ultimately granting property to his family and tribe, the history of relations between the Hebrews and the Egyptians in the Bible ends with plague and destruction. The complexity of this relationship is in many ways mirrored in the relationship between France and Egypt in the nineteenth century.^[11] It is a relationship that cannot be viewed simply through a lens of imperial domination, but through one of cultural appropriation as well. In his catalogue essay from the Louvre's 1994 exhibition *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art, 1730–1930*, Jean-Marcel Humbert defined "Egyptomania" as the "borrowing, of the most spectacular elements, from the grammar of ornament that is the original essence of ancient Egyptian art." More importantly, Egyptomania was characterized not simply by the copying of ancient Egyptian visual language—rather, it consisted of artists recreating these forms "in the cauldron of their own sensibility and in the context of their times."^[12] This occurs in Doré's illustrations through the operation of figures within Egyptian spaces, through the ways these images fit into the larger narrative of biblical history, and through France's recuperation of this narrative.

The French fascination with Egyptian history and material culture began in earnest with the Napoleonic campaign to Egypt in 1798. Accompanying the immense Armée d'Orient, which included over 30,000 troops, were approximately 160 scholars known collectively as the "savants," who were tasked with compiling information on the history and culture of the region, both ancient and modern. The Institut d'Égypte, founded late in 1798, housed workshops, laboratories, and antiquities. The rigor with which the savants documented and organized their findings resulted in periodicals like *La Décade égyptienne* and *Courier de l'Égypte*, Dominique Vivant Denon's *Voyage dans la basse et la haute Égypte*, and, perhaps most importantly, the monumental *Description de l'Égypte, ou Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française*.

The first edition of the *Description de l'Égypte* was published in twenty-three volumes (the first ten of which contained text, the remaining thirteen the engravings) between 1809 and 1818,

and has been considered an inaugural moment for the field of Egyptology.^[13] In her analysis, Anne Godlewska argues that in creating an orderly conception of Egypt based on the collection and organization of facts and observations, the *Description de l'Égypte* paradoxically engages in the creation of a "mythical Egypt" under the aegis of European dominance.^[14] Moreover, through the resuscitation of Egypt as an (for many *the*) ancient cultural authority, the Napoleonic propaganda machine separated itself from the ancien régime and its self-fashioning as the inheritor of ancient Greece and Rome.^[15]

The images contained in the *Description de l'Égypte* consist of carefully drawn plans, elevations, and diagrams, which alternate with panoramic, picturesque landscapes. Artists rendered the interiors of extant structures with an overwhelming amount of detail but also used visual cues to convey a sense of majesty and grandiosity that is lacking in standard architectural elevations. In the *Perspective view of the Great Hypostyle Hall at the Temple of Amun in Karnak*, the artist reconstructed the nave of the Great Hall, placing figures in its midst to give a sense of scale, as was common in landscape and architectural drawing (fig. 3). The luminous entrance at the center of the image stands in contrast to the dark and imposing foreground, which is punctuated with a beam of light extending from an unknown source to the left. The effort extended in creating this reconstruction was not meant to serve merely as a testament to the monuments themselves, but to the creators of the *Description de l'Égypte*, and to France more broadly. The engineers Jean-Baptiste Prosper Jollois and Edouard Devilliers du Terrage, who undertook much of the work around Thebes and the Karnak temple complexes, speak to this fact in the *Description*: "No other work, in effect, has presented, nor perhaps will present, the drawings of monuments of which the plans, raised by architects and engineers, are the result of comparable notes, verified and completed reciprocally between them, For this reason, we believe that travelers who follow us will look vainly to add to the public works of architecture in the *Description de l'Égypte*."^[16] Although numerous publications followed on the heels of the *Description de l'Égypte*, it represents a monumental moment in the development of Egyptology.

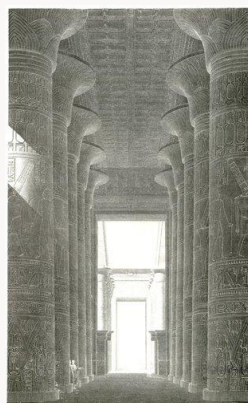


Fig. 3, *Perspective view of the Great Hypostyle Hall at the Temple of Amun in Karnak*, *Description de l'Égypte, ou, Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française* (Paris, Imprimerie impériale, 1809–28), Antiquities 3:pl. 42. [\[larger image\]](#)

Based on biographical sources published soon after his death, it appears that Doré was looking at works like *the Description de l'Égypte* when conceiving his Bible illustrations.^[17] In her

biography of Doré, published two years after his death, Blanche Roosevelt noted that the artist spent considerable time at the Bibliothèque Nationale, "to look at the marvellous treasure of prints and engravings, ancient and modern, which are stored up in such number and beauty at that institution."^[18] Roosevelt, whose biography is largely based on interviews with many of Doré's illustrious friends, is eager to stress, however, that Doré never copied images, large or small: "In the room dedicated to engravings he frequently took a little memorandum-book from his pocket and made notes, but never copied faces or figures. Sometimes he took notes of a costume, sometimes of an ancient helmet or weapon—a date or an inscription—never aught else."^[19] She quotes Georges Duplessis, curator of the library's print room, as saying, "He was scrupulously exact to the smallest detail and often came running back to look at a thing to which he had already devoted an hour, in the fear of having neglected to notice some trifling matter."^[20]

A number of Doré's images from Genesis and Exodus closely resemble illustrations found in the *Description de l'Égypte* and the *Voyage*, and it seems likely that he may have been looking at these books, or at reproductions derived from them. In *Joseph Revealing Himself to his Brothers*, the columns' reliefs and perspectival arrangement mirror the image of the Great Hypostyle Hall at Karnak (fig. 4). But Doré's image does not operate in exactly the same way as those in the *Description de l'Égypte*, and this is witnessed most notably in Doré's representations of scale. If he was looking to examples like the perspective view of Karnak, for example, then the architecture in his image is dramatically downsized. And this is the case with almost all of the Egyptian images in the Doré Bible. In Doré's illustration *Moses and Aaron Before Pharaoh*, the setting is likely derived from the Hathor Temple at Denderah, one of the best-preserved and awe-inspiring examples of ancient Egyptian architecture for French travelers (figs. 5, 6).^[21] But, as with *Joseph Revealing Himself to his Brothers*, the scale of the interior is dramatically decreased. This discrepancy makes the interactions between the characters legible, while also allowing for the maximal amount of ornamental detail.^[22] For archeological accuracy in replications of scale, one must look to an artist like John Martin, to whom Doré has often been compared.^[23] In Martin's *The Seventh Plague of Egypt*, a swirling composition of monumental structures and a tempestuous sky envelop the small figure of Moses, poised to call forth the plague of hail. As one contemporary reviewer put it, Martin's painting combined "the most dreadful phenomena of nature, with gorgeous piles of architecture, ranges of temples, palaces, towers, which the devastating elements seem about to overwhelm in universal ruin. The whole scene is impressed with an appearance of awe and horror."^[24]

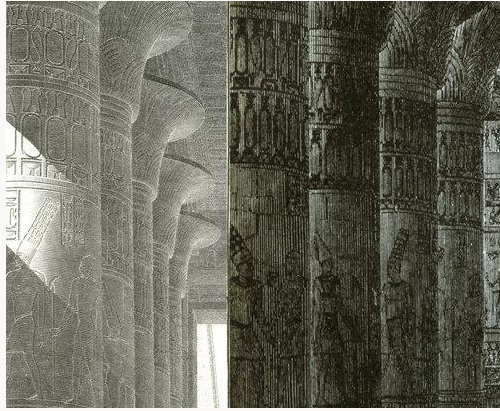


Fig. 4, Detail of figs. 2, 3. [\[larger image\]](#)

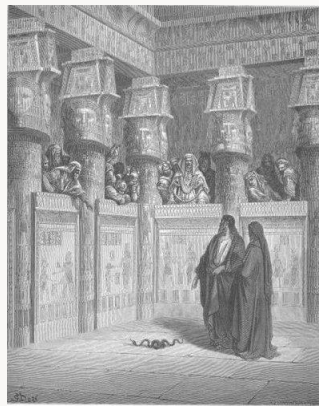


Fig. 5, Gustave Doré and Adolphe François Pannemaker, *Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 1:228. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[larger image\]](#)

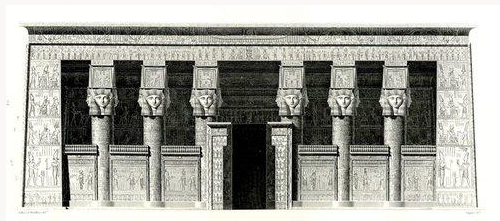


Fig. 6, *Elevation of the Portico of the Grand Temple in Denderah*, *Description de l'Égypte, ou, Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française* (Paris, Imprimerie impériale, 1809–28), Antiquities 4:pl. 9. [\[larger image\]](#)

Evoking the characteristics of the sublime, this review highlights precisely what is *not* to be found in most of the Doré Bible illustrations that replicated ancient Egypt. Instead, Doré crafted images that were both exoticizing and familiar—characteristics that are generally in keeping with French attitudes toward Egypt following its “rediscovery” at the beginning of the

nineteenth century. The Doré Bible emerged nearly a half-century after the final volume of the *Description de l'Égypte* was published and several smaller, more affordable versions of the *Description* had been released in its wake. Although Egyptomania reached a fever pitch in the aftermath of the Napoleonic campaigns, material culture in France abounded with references to ancient Egypt throughout the nineteenth century. Napoleon's expedition to Egypt resulted in the looting of a number of important artifacts, including the Rosetta Stone, but these objects did not ultimately enter into public display. It was not until Charles X's decree of May 15, 1826 that a department devoted to Egyptian antiquities was created within the Louvre, headed by the renowned scholar Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832) who four years earlier had published the first translation of the inscriptions on the Rosetta Stone. By the time Champollion died in March 1832, the Egyptian Department owned more than 9,000 objects, and Champollion had created a revolutionary manner of displaying them so as to thoroughly ground them in historical context.^[25] The collections continued to grow over the next several decades and, following the establishment of the Second Republic, a major expansion and reorganization of the Louvre gave increased space for the display of Egyptian antiquities.^[26]

The high esteem afforded to Egyptian antiquities bled over into virtually every arena of cultural life throughout the nineteenth century. The end of the Napoleonic Empire and the restoration of the monarchy did not result in a dissolution of interest in Egyptian material culture. As noted in the catalogue for the Louvre's *Egyptomania* exhibition: "The fifty years following the period of the First Empire show how quickly and extensively Egyptomania liberated itself from any connection with the Egyptian Campaign and, except perhaps with respect to the Napoleonic legend, found a life of its own. This was made possible in essence by the many new and varied readings of Egyptianizing themes."^[27] Governmental, educational, and residential buildings were designed in replication of Egyptian structures. Obelisks and sphinxes made their way into decorative objects. However, the connection between the emerging field of Egyptology and its circulation in the popular imagination was a complicated one: "The forms born of the ever-evolving Egyptomania continued, however, to swing between the archaeological rigor fiercely insisted on by some artists and a free-spirited fantasy that had virtually nothing to do with Antiquity but forged new links with both exoticism and the art of the current moment."^[28]

The way Doré used Egyptian material culture in his Bible illustrations is unquestionably an example of this free-spirited fancy. His images melded many of the most commonly referred to Egyptian monuments and motifs referenced throughout popular culture. But Doré was arguably the first biblical illustrator to evoke the specificity and monumentality of the ancient Egyptian settings with a notable degree of accuracy that was lauded by critics.^[29] Earlier illustrated Bibles occasionally drew from artists who had traveled to the Orient and incorporated their observations into Biblical representation. In 1841, the publishing house Furne released a four-volume illustrated Bible that included engravings after paintings by Raphael, Rembrandt, Rubens, and Murillo, as well as contemporary works by Girodet, Prud'hon, Overbeck, and Horace Vernet.^[30] The first volume included an engraving, *Abraham Dismissing Hagar*, after paintings by Horace Vernet (1789–1863) who had sought to "trace the connection between the customs of the people, which had survived all innovations, and those described in Holy Writ" (figs. 8, 9).^[31] Vernet's images are predominantly figural, and based on observation of contemporary life in the Holy Land. Doré's level of authenticity, on the other hand, was based almost entirely on his evocation of the grand monuments of by-gone civilizations, which he experienced through their dispersal in prints, books, and other forms of

popular culture. By evoking what had become some of the most familiar examples of archaeological discovery, Doré participated in the process of de-familiarizing the Bible as a moralizing text and negotiated a place for it in the popular imagination that was both monumental and accessible.

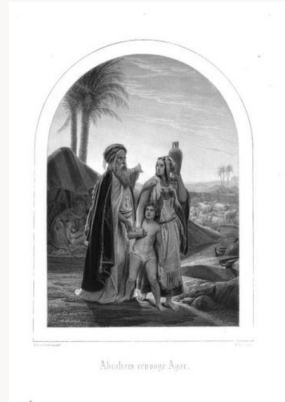


Fig. 8, After Horace Vernet *Abraham Dismissing Hagar*, *La Sainte Bible*: translated by Lemaistre de Sacy (Paris: Furne et Cie., 1841), l:n.p. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 9, Horace Vernet, *Abraham Dismissing Hagar*, 1837. Oil on canvas. Musée Des Beaux-Arts, Nantes. [\[larger image\]](#)

Monumentalizing Mesopotamia

The documentation and display of Egyptian antiquities had by the mid-nineteenth century led to widespread appropriation in the public sphere, but as new sites of archaeological inquiry emerged, new discussions and debates formed around them. In 1842, Paul-Emile Botta (1802–70) was appointed Consul to Mosul, capital of the Nineveh Province in present-day Iraq. Backed by Jules Mohl (1800–1876), a powerful member of the Société Asiatique,^[32] Botta began excavating at the site that the British antiquarian Claudius James Rich had correctly identified as ancient Nineveh in 1820. The British, out of fear that the French would extend their domination in the Middle East following the Egyptian campaigns, had sent Rich to Mesopotamia in 1807—the objects he brought back would form the genesis of the British

Museum's collection of Babylonian antiquities. Although England succeeded in being the first European power to amass such a collection, France would receive its own set of accolades in 1847 when Botta moved to Khorsabad (approximately 16 miles north of Mosul). There he immediately began making archaeological discoveries, ultimately believing that despite Rich's earlier claims, Botta had discovered the real remains of Nineveh.[\[33\]](#)

The city of Nineveh is mentioned briefly in the book of Genesis, but is not given significant attention until the book of Jonah, one of the Old Testament's minor prophets. The book, one of the more narratively oriented of the Prophets, is set during the reign of Jeroboam II (r. 786–746 BCE) and centers on God's call to Jonah to prophesy the destruction of Nineveh to the inhabitants of the great, corrupt city.[\[34\]](#) After attempting to escape God's decree, being swallowed by a large fish and then spewed back onto land, Jonah went to Nineveh, "an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across." Having heard Jonah's proclamation that Nineveh would be destroyed in forty days, the Ninevites repented and God spared the city. Doré devoted two illustrations to the book of Jonah, *Jonah Rejected by the Whale* and *Jonah Urges the Ninevites to Repent* (fig. 10) In the second, Jonah stands at the base of a plinth, arms outstretched, as a crowd listens intently below. The monumental structures of Nineveh loom ominously around the center, and Jonah, desperately trying to convey the urgency of the situation, seems on the verge of being swallowed up by the scene. Directly to the right of Jonah stands a *lamassu*, a protective deity represented by a human-headed winged lion or bull sculpture (figs. 11, 12), in powerful profile, registering to the viewer almost as an act of defiance in the face of the prophet's words. The *lamassu*, as we will see, functions in the Doré Bible as a powerful but problematic signifier of ancient Assyria and its influence on contemporary French culture.

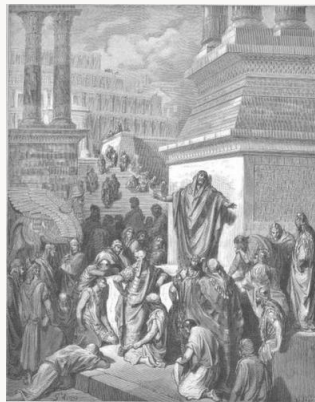


Fig. 10, Gustave Doré and Ad Ligny, *Jonah Urges the Ninevites to Repent*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:164. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[larger image\]](#)

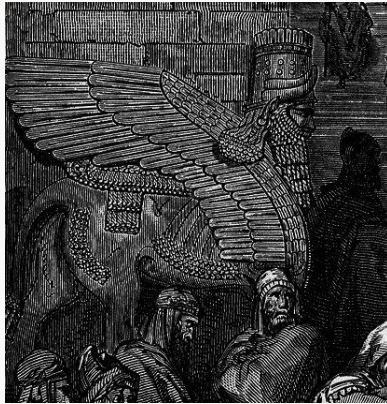


Fig. 11, Detail of fig. 10. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 12, Winged human-headed bull (*lamassu*), ca. 721–705 BCE. Musée du Louvre, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)

Botta's excavations had led to the discovery of a monumental complex that would eventually be identified not as Nineveh, but as the palace of the Assyrian ruler Sargon II (r. 705–702 BCE). In the period between 1843 and 1846, Botta would oversee the excavation and documentation of the structure and its inscriptions, with the assistance of the artist Eugène Flandin (fig. 13).^[35] The results of Botta's findings would ultimately be disseminated into the public's consciousness through publications and display, but on a much smaller scale than had been the case with Egyptian archaeology. Over the course of his investigations, Botta corresponded with Mohl, describing the details of his discoveries—Mohl published these letters, with his own annotations, in the *Journal asiatique*, and they were quickly translated and disseminated widely in France and England.^[36] In addition to praising Botta's work, Mohl generated positive awareness of the strides made by British archaeologists in Mesopotamia, especially those of the renowned scholar Austen Henry Layard (1817–1894).^[37] Upon returning from their respective archaeological campaigns in the area around Mosul, Botta and Layard both published major works outlining their discoveries. The French government spear-headed the publication of *Monument de Ninive, découvert et décrit par M. P. É. Botta; mesuré et dessiné par M. E. Flandin* (1849–50), a set of folios that included two volumes of plans, elevations, and reconstructions of the ruins at Khorsabad, two volumes of cuneiform inscriptions, and one

volume of textual descriptions. Layard's publication, *Nineveh and its Remains: with an Account of a Visit to the Chaldaean Christians of Kurdistan, and the Yezidis, and an Inquiry into the Manners and Arts of the Ancient Assyrians* (1848), received much wider attention than the *Monument de Ninive*, due to a number of factors. Though less impressive in terms of its breadth and the quality of illustrations, it was available to a much broader audience than the large and expensive *Monuments de Ninive*.^[38] Moreover, in addition to giving accessible descriptions of ancient Assyrian culture, Layard provided a romanticized narrative account of his journeys and explorations which cohered to the familiar and popular practice of travel writing. As an article in the inexpensive periodical *Le Tour du Monde* argued, "It may be regretted that the results of [Botta's] labors have not been published in a form which promotes awareness of them and spreads his fame. Such volumes in a gigantic format, whose price runs into the thousands of francs, are no doubt monuments worthy of a great nation, but they are hardly accessible and will never break out of a very narrow circle."^[39] Even Mohl, a fervent supporter of Botta's work, praised the accessibility of Layard's publications in the face of the "inconvenient size and exorbitant price" of the *Monument de Ninive*.^[40]



Fig. 13, Eugène Flandin, *Facade m, Door k, No. 1, Monument de Ninive* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1849–50), 1:pl. 45. [\[larger image\]](#)

The Assyrian discoveries would nonetheless reach popular audiences in France relatively immediately. In 1844, the popular *Magasin Pittoresque* reproduced drawings after bas-reliefs from Khorsabad, and Botta's own descriptions that had been published in the Société Asiatique's *Journal asiatique* the year before (fig. 14). Mohl also published an appeal for the public display of the Assyrian artifacts: "[U]ntil the Louvre shall be embellished by a hall of Assyrian Sculptures, Europe cannot profit by the discovery of Khorsabad."^[41] His entreaty was fulfilled when in 1847, the Louvre inaugurated the Musée Assyrien, located in the north wing of the Cour Carrée and consisting of objects that had returned with Botta.^[42] An article in the journal *L'Illustration* documented the opening of this display, and set a telling tone for its larger implications: "The Assyrian monarchy sets foot on the shores of the Seine. A new dwelling, more worthy, the palace of our kings, has been fated: the Louvre opens its double doors."^[43] The implicit argument echoes that which characterized the French engagement with Egyptian antiquities earlier in the century: that the remnants of a monumental ancient civilization were better preserved and re-articulated in the hands of a Western society.

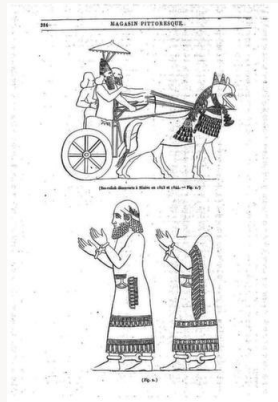


Fig. 14, *Bas-reliefs Discovered in Nineveh in 1843 and 1844*, *Magasin Pittoresque* 12 (1844): 284. [\[larger image\]](#)

Frederick Bohrer has traced the numerous ways in which Assyrian art was appropriated in high and popular visual culture in France, beginning with Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* (fig. 15). This work represented the Assyrian king known to nineteenth-century audiences from the ancient Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, and more recently in Lord Byron's *The Tragedy of Sardanapalus*. As Bohrer demonstrates, Delacroix's painting derived from a heterogeneous and often divergent set of sources, the artist "always substantiating the imaginary and sensational by including elements agreed to be authentic and attested."^[44] Although Delacroix's work was completed well before the "rediscovery" of ancient Assyria in the 1840s, French artists continued to assimilate elements of these discoveries in a manner that was consistent with this earlier example. Gustave Courbet (1819–77), for instance, produced a number of paintings that at least indirectly referred to the rhetoric of Assyrian art. Courbet described his self-portrait in the *Painter's Studio* (fig. 16), as "myself painting showing the Assyrian profile of my head," a style that he repeated in works like *The Meeting* (fig. 17).^[45] Despite the influence of Assyrian visual culture on Courbet's work, his references were ultimately dissolved of any meaningful relation to the complexities of ancient Assyria.^[46]



Fig. 15, Eugène Delacroix, *Death of Sardanapalus*, 1828. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 16, Gustave Courbet, *The Artist's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life*, 1855. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)

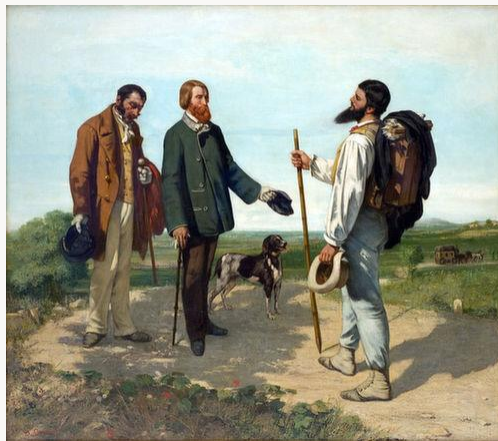


Fig. 17, Gustave Courbet, *The Meeting, or "Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet,"* 1854. Oil on canvas. Musée Fabre, Montpellier. [\[larger image\]](#)

In Doré's Bible illustrations, the *lamassu* serves a similar function as the "Assyrian profile." Of the mass of materials gathered by Botta, the *lamassu* became one of the most pervasive signifiers of ancient Assyria. Newspaper articles documented the difficult process of transporting the *lamassu* to France, and popular prints show them flanking the entrance to the Assyrian display at the Louvre (figs. 18, 19). The *lamassu* appears in a number of illustrations in the Doré Bible, including *Artaxerxes Grants Freedom to the Jews*, *Daniel Interprets the Writing on the Wall*, and *The Fall of Babylon*, and functions in these images metonymically for the entirety of ancient Mesopotamia. In Bohrer's words, the *lamassu* "is treated as something like a character witness for Doré's good intentions and wide acquaintance, but never allowed to dominate the decor."^[47] Indeed, Doré's incorporation of elements derived from Assyrian artifacts further underscore this claim. While the Egyptian images represented scaled-down amalgamations of monuments, the illustrations that sought to reconstruct the remnants of Mesopotamia are even more heterogeneous in their sources. *Artaxerxes Granting Freedom to the Jews* (fig. 20) includes several *lamassu* and bas-reliefs that are visually grounded in specific sites, but other elements, such as the graphic patterns on the structure to the right and the seated figures with splayed wings, are Doré's own inventions.



Fig. 18, Anonymous engraving, *Antiquities of Nineveh, Histoire du Palais et du Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Editions des Musées Nationaux, 1947–71), 9:pl. 77. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 19, Maurand and Régis, *Assyrian Antiquities—View from the South to the North, Histoire du Palais et du Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Editions des Musées Nationaux, 1947–1971), 9:pl. 80. [\[larger image\]](#)

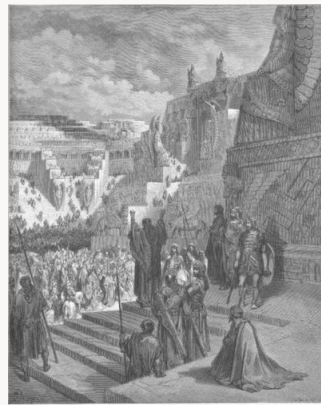


Fig. 20, Gustave Doré and Ad Ligny, *Artaxerxes Granting Freedom to the Jews, La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 1:820. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[larger image\]](#)

Although Botta's discoveries, subsequent publications, and the opening of the Musée Assyrien were landmark events in France, Assyrian art was never as thoroughly appropriated into popular culture as Egyptian art. Any number of factors contributed to this situation, not least

of which were its political connotations. Whereas the initial "rediscovery" of ancient Egypt occurred at the beginning of the Napoleonic empire and became embedded in its self-representation (as well as the next regime's), Botta's discoveries occurred in the waning years of the July Monarchy, and would continue to have a negative relationship with the government of Louis-Philippe.^[48] Although the initial opening of the Musée Assyrien was greeted with enthusiasm, the French public's interest in the artifacts and the work being done to decipher them rapidly deteriorated. The galleries closed during the tumultuous events of 1848, and upon its reopening the next year the *Magasin Pittoresque* was far less enthusiastic in its review of the objects, stating that "Ninevite artists possess neither the great grasp of proportions which guided the Egyptians, nor the marvelous concordance of style which burst forth from the Greeks."^[49] Thus, as Bohrer has argued, "even as Assyrian art received a (literal) place in the ranks of ancient art, it was problematic and difficult to assimilate into established artistic and cultural discourse."^[50] In France, much more so than in England, this led to a period of ambivalence toward the remnants of ancient Assyria, and the important work being done to decipher and situate them historically.

What is significant about Doré's illustrations, then, is that they still had the effect of making the specificity of the biblical setting intelligible to audiences, even if his reconstructions were deeply flawed. They functioned as a kind of "visual history," incorporating the remains of antiquity in a way that was useful to readers who had at least a vague familiarity with the archaeological work being done at the time. When describing the several scenes from the book of Ezra in the Doré Bible, the critic Paul de Saint-Victor notes the artist's reference to ancient Assyria: "All around Artaxerxes, Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar . . . Gustave Doré placed the gigantic scenery of Assyrian architecture."^[51] He then makes a brief detour while describing the *Rebuilding of the Temple*—with this image, Saint-Victor notes that Doré had "the occasion to reconstruct the Temple of Jerusalem, at least as much as it is possible to do so."^[52] Saint-Victor then highlights what had been the chief frustration in the representation of biblical settings like the Temple: "Even though the Bible beautifully describes it, from the foundations up to the festoons, it remains, unfortunately, an unintelligible building. The inconsistency of the plan, which appears so precise, the disorder of the sections, the vagueness of the measurements have always baffled the wisdom of scholars and architecture. . . . Thus, the multiplicity of details that abound in the biblical text prevent us from seeing the monuments that really mattered."^[53] One of the great merits of Doré's work, for Saint-Victor, is its reference to the monumental structures of ancient civilizations, like Assyria, that were only then becoming intelligible.

However, as we have already seen, Doré's attempts at archaeological veracity are often combined with completely imaginative elements. The inconsistencies and misappropriations of archaeological findings in the Doré Bible would likely not have been apparent or problematic for its first readers. The fact that it made any reference to Assyrian antiquities was enough for it to enter into the discourse of objectivity that surrounded the Bible and the debate over its continued relevance in modern culture in France. Biblical scholarship in Germany had been dominated by Higher Criticism of the Tübingen school, which sought to discover the text's primary meaning through historical analysis, and the movements of these scholars had a dramatic effect on many French scholars.^[54] By the end of the century, the debate would take place most publicly and fervently over Darwin's theory of evolution, but theories questioning the age of the Earth as suggested by the Bible had led to doubts about the Creation myth for decades prior to the publication of *On the Origin of Species*. Lay scholars who

questioned the scientific validity of the Bible or incorporated German methods into their own were dismissed or condemned by the French clergy.[\[55\]](#)

But while skeptics used scientific analysis as a way of questioning the biblical accounts, others used archaeological findings as a way of confirming them. A review written by the controversial archaeologist Louis Félicien de Saulcy (1807–80) in response to the opening of the Musée Assyrien offers a telling pronouncement in light of pervasive skepticism toward the Bible's historical validity:

"Scarcely three years ago, only the name and location of the capital of Assyria was known. To this name were attached several biblical stories and marvelous assertions by antique historians: some of them we refused to believe, others we wrote off as commentary, a sort of double-edged sword that prunes and grazes at will. On the site of the ancient city nothing was to be found except the traces of a rather narrow enclosure and some piles of bricks, formless vestiges of unknown structures. We had renounced the hope of removing the impenetrable veil that had spread over the Assyrian civilization for so long, when an almost miraculous discovery, of which our century can rightly be proud, came tearing through this unwelcome veil, and with a leap we can see right into the heart of this extinct civilization. And now can we accuse Diodorus of exaggeration with the same confidence? Should we again look at the sacred texts for the malleable phrases that elude common sense? This has almost become impossible as, once again, an unexpected fact has proved that: Truth can sometimes be unlikely."[\[56\]](#)

Biblical archaeology in the nineteenth century operated largely in the service of confirming religious belief. As Margarite Diaz-Andreu has argued, "we do not know of any atheist or agnostic undertaking archaeological work to disprove the Bible; in fact the opposite seemed to be the case."[\[57\]](#) In his 1903 treatise on biblical archaeology, Hermann V. Hilprecht (1859–1925) described the effect of finds like the palace of Sargon on scriptural reading:

With extraordinary enthusiasm, students of philology and history welcomed the enormous mass of authentic material, which . . . was soon to shed a flood of new light upon the person and reign and language of that great warrior, Sargon, so far known only by name from a statement in Isaiah (20:1), and upon the whole history and geography of Western Asia shrouded in darkness, and which, by its constant references to the names and events mentioned in the Bible, was eagerly called upon as an unexpected witness to test the truthfulness of the Holy Scriptures.[\[58\]](#)

For proponents of the Doré Bible, especially those writing for the Catholic press, the eagerness with which they endorsed the archaeological fragments present in the images is a testament to their need to at least in some ways situate themselves in the rhetoric of science and progress.

By referencing the material remains like those of ancient Assyria, Doré grounded his representations in both reality and fantasy. The importance of this kind of representation was noted by John Martin when exhibiting *The Fall of Nineveh* in 1827: "The mighty cities of Nineveh and Babylon have passed away. The accounts of their greatness and splendour may have been exaggerated. But, where strict truth is not essential, the mind is content to find delight in the contemplation of the grand and the marvellous. Into the solemn visions of antiquity we look without demanding the clear daylight of truth."[\[59\]](#) In the Doré Bible we find

similar expressions of both the scientific and the imaginative, as was noted by a number of critics. Victor Fournel described scenes like *The Reception of the Queen of Sheba*, *The Feast of Belshazzar*, and *Jonah Urges the Ninevites to Repent* as having a "science quasi-fantastique," that Doré projected like none before him.^[60] One could point to the sublimity of Martin's reconstructions, but where Doré's illustrations move away from these examples, especially with respect to ancient Assyria, is in the way he evokes the monuments while still paying heed to the complexity of human drama presented in the biblical texts. The most compelling statement in this respect comes from Léon Lavedan, writing for the Catholic journal *Le Correspondant*: "As it is, with its splendor and neglect, its science and fantasy, its semi-oriental and semi-sacred color, its character which is perhaps a bit more dramatic than biblical, but with its depth of scenery, its profound horizons, its extraordinary harmony of the effects of light, its size, and all its powerful features, this Bible is certainly the most significant monument of its genre that has ever been erected."^[61] As we have seen, it was through his science and fantasy, his use of antiquity only in so far as it supported the narrative being portrayed, that the Doré Bible illustrations enjoyed their greatest success in the public eye.

Palestine and the Life of Jesus

Thus far, I have only discussed Doré's illustrations for the Old Testament, which was the part of the Bible in which the new archaeological discoveries of the century made their biggest mark. Of the 243 images in the first edition, only a third are related to the New Testament, and reactions to these images were generally lukewarm. Gautier devoted one sentence in a three-and-a-half column review to these illustrations.^[62] Philippe Burty mentions no New Testament scenes in his review for the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*.^[63] Paul de Saint-Victor described the "batailles hébraïques" of the Maccabees, the last book in the Old Testament, and without a word about the New Testament concludes, "Voilà cette Bible de Gustave Doré."^[64] Even Victor Fournel, a consummate Doré supporter writing for the liberal Catholic journal *Le Contemporain*, was critical of the illustrations for the life of Christ: "As a whole, the New Testament does not rise to the same heights [as the Old]. What strikes the eye is the inadequacy and coldness of the figure of Christ."^[65]

Of all the scholarly work being done in relation to cultures represented in the Bible at the time the Doré Bible was first produced, the most contentious debates took place with respect to the life and times of Jesus. Artists and writers had been traveling to Palestine and the surrounding areas since the end of the eighteenth century,^[66] but from the 1850s onward, new and controversial figures entered into the fray of biblical research. The first major interlocutor of this era was Louis Félicien de Saulcy, who arrived in Palestine in the 1850s and would have great impact on the French popular imagination. Having previously visited sites in Greece, Italy, and Asia Minor, Saulcy traveled to Jerusalem where he immediately took to investigating the region around the Dead Sea. Over the course of his relatively short expedition, Saulcy managed to discover what he believed to be the tomb of King David, the authentic location of Sodom and Gomorrah, and a number of antique objects, which he packed up and carried back to France. News of Saulcy's discoveries quickly traveled to his homeland, and anticipation of his return with his precious archaeological finds was high. The discoveries Saulcy claimed to have made were almost immediately and categorically rejected by more learned and experienced biblical scholars, but the objects he collected were gratefully accepted by the curators of the Louvre, and his campaign sparked national interest in the Holy Land as a site for further exploration.^[67]

France's Holy Land explorations would be stymied by the events of the Crimean War (1853–56). As the Ottoman Empire fell into decline, the European imperial powers vied for control of the regions that had formerly been under Ottoman domination. Napoleon III argued forcefully that the Ottomans should recognize France as their sovereign authority, an assertion that was disputed by Tsar Nicholas I of Russia, which had been the de facto protector of Ottoman territories since the defeat of Napoleon I. Britain and the Kingdom of Sardinia would ally themselves with France and the Ottomans, to the eventual defeat of Russia. On March 30, 1856, the Treaty of Paris was signed, establishing France's and Britain's authority over regions (including the biblical lands) that had formerly been controlled by the Ottomans. When Napoleon III sent troops to Lebanon in 1860 to put an end to civil conflict that had broken out, it gave him the opportunity to launch France's first large-scale archaeological exploration of the area. This campaign would result in a new flourishing of popular interest in Holy Land history and culture.

At the head of the expedition was the philologist and theologian Ernest Renan (1823–92), who in a few years was to publish one of the most significant and controversial biblical studies of the nineteenth century, the *Vie de Jésus*.^[68] Saulcy, at this point retired from his scholarly pursuits, established contacts between Renan and guides that had accompanied Saulcy's visits to the Holy Land. Although these contacts proved useful for Renan's work, Renan nonetheless felt compelled to criticize, in his reports to the emperor, Saulcy's flawed methods. Stunned by these attacks, Saulcy decided to return to Palestine in order to prove his initial findings, and in late 1863 set out on a well-funded campaign with several loyal assistants. Saulcy was the first Westerner to attempt an excavation within Jerusalem, and the loud enthusiasm with which he touted his findings sparked attention and anger among locals. As news spread that these intrepid archaeologists had unearthed the tombs of Old Testament kings, the Jewish community raged at the desecration of their forefathers' remains and demanded that the excavations be halted. Word eventually came from local authorities that Saulcy must stop his work, but not before he had managed to smuggle his team's finds out of Jerusalem.^[69]

After Saulcy's discoveries from his travels to Jerusalem in the 1850s were rejected by more seasoned scholars,^[70] he asked his friend Auguste Salzmann (1824–72), whom Saulcy described in *Le Constitutionnel* as "history painter, archaeologist, savant," to travel to the Holy Land in order to photograph the monuments that remained (fig. 21).^[71] In most of the archaeological explorations of the Middle East in the nineteenth century, some apparatus of visual documentation was incorporated into the process.^[72] The most comprehensive source of visual information on the Holy Land in the first part of the century was arguably the British artist David Roberts's (1796–1864) 272 watercolors for *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia*, first published between 1842 and 1849 (fig. 22). Roberts's project offered a more romanticized than scientific vision of biblical sites, and his "on the spot" images were highly constructed to fit within the Western ideal of the Orient.^[73] As photographic technology became more accessible, numerous photographers traveled to the Holy Land to document its sites, many settling there and setting up successful studios.^[74] Nonetheless, as Yeshayahu Nir suggests, "Following the traditions of genre paintings, photographers looked in Jerusalem or Jaffa, or for that matter Beirut or Tiberias, for scenes and costumes, faces and landscapes, that would fit painting conventions and yet convey 'on location' immediacy."^[75]



Fig. 21, Auguste Salzmann, *Damascus Gate*, 1854–56, *Jérusalem: Étude et reproduction photographique des monuments de la ville sainte depuis l'époque judaïque jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Gide et Baudry, 1856): pl. 14.

[\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 22, David Roberts R.A., *Damascus Gate*, from *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia* (London: F.G. Moon, 1842–49), 1:pl. 2. [\[larger image\]](#)

It is likely that Doré would have encountered prints, photographs, and paintings depicting the Holy Land, considering their widespread dissemination and popularity. Nonetheless, he refrained from making explicit references to sites and monuments that were now familiar to many if not most Europeans. When Doré visualized a specific site—for instance, the Temple of Ephesus in an image of St. Paul—particular details are left out and monumentality is generally downsized (fig. 23). Moreover, Doré occasionally incorporated architectural elements that significantly postdated the time of Christ. In *Saint Paul Preaching to the Thessalonians*, Moorish-style windows appear in the background—an architectural development that would not be established for centuries after Jesus and his apostles inhabited the Holy Land (fig. 24).

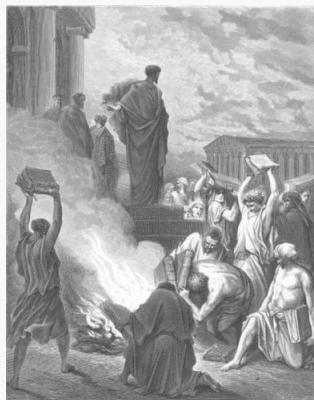


Fig. 23, Gustave Doré and J. Ettling, *Paul Preaching at Ephesus*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:808. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[larger image\]](#)

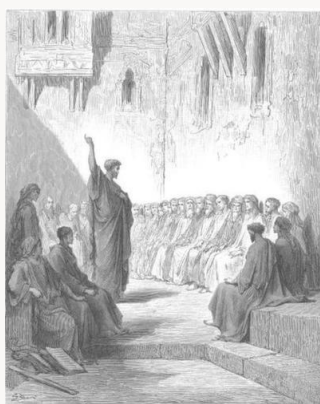


Fig. 24, Gustave Doré and Paul Jonnard, *Paul Preaches to the Thessalonians*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:796. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[larger image\]](#)

The rather generic view of the Holy Land in the New Testament images may be the result of Doré's limited research of the sites represented, and it also points to a broader problem with which any artist had to grapple when attempting to present an archaeologically accurate image of the life and times of Jesus. The Holy Land, and Jerusalem in particular, had been the center of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam for centuries, and was undergoing a period of immense architectural transformation from the second half of the nineteenth century.^[76] There were limited material remains of the earliest years of Christianity, and even less of the pre-Christian era. Islamic architectural styles dominated the cityscape, and many structures were the result of numerous periods of construction. In the commentary that accompanied David Roberts's illustrations of the Holy Land, the Reverend George Croly noted, "The walls of Jerusalem are chiefly modern and Saracenic, but are built evidently on the site of more ancient walls, raised in the time of the Crusaders, and those, not improbably, formed of material of others still more ancient."^[77]

But the sense of historical development toward the present moment is lacking in popular, picturesque images of the Holy Land—instead, the crumbling facades of stone structures suggest a culture of stasis. As Linda Nochlin noted in her landmark essay, "The Imaginary Orient," artists like Jean-Léon Gérôme represented non-Western peoples and locations as "a world without change, a world of timeless, atemporal customs and rituals, untouched by the historical processes that were 'afflicting' or 'improving' but, at any rate, drastically altering Western societies at the time."^[78] As countless studies have shown, many if not most European Orientalists chose to depict contemporary life in the Middle East as a quaint, primitive relic of pre-modern society suggested by texts like the Bible and *1001 Arabian Nights*.^[79] Perhaps even more interesting are the cases in which artists took the image of the timeless Oriental present and projected it backward in order to represent the biblical past. James Tissot, when describing the need to spend time in the Holy Land in order to produce his 350 watercolors for *The Life of Our Saviour Jesus Christ*, asked, "Was it not indeed absolutely necessary to study on the spot, the configuration of the landscape, and the character of the inhabitants, endeavoring to trace back from their modern representatives through successive generations the original types of the races of Palestine, and the various constituents which go to make up what is called antiquity?"^[80]

The desire to create an "authentic" image of the biblical past was regarded by a number of artists and critics as misguided and counterproductive. Eugène Fromentin, who had spent significant time in North Africa and was celebrated for his pictures of Arab life, felt that to reproduce authenticating details in biblical art was to diminish the importance of the scriptures: "To costume the Bible is to destroy it. . . . To place it in a recognizable location is to make it untruthful to its spirit, to translate an ahistorical book into history."^[81] Proponents of this opinion, including Charles de Montalembert (1810–70), Félicité de Lamennais (1782–1854), and Henri-Dominique Lacordaire (1802–61), heralded artists like Victor Orsel (1795–1850), Theodore Chassériau (1819–56), Hippolyte Flandrin (1809–64), and the German Nazarenes, who variously drew inspiration from the Middle Ages, Byzantium, and the early Renaissance. These sources, in the minds of many artists and critics, represented the culmination of Christian art—the austerity, elegance, and serenity of works by Fra Angelico and Raphael (in the early part of his career) served to heighten the true spirit of the Christian message.^[82] In his study of religious art in nineteenth-century France, Michael Paul Driskel traces the debate between proponents of the *goût pré-raphaélite*^[83] and those in favor of a naturalist approach, suggesting that each stylistic mode was aligned with particular political and institutional leanings.^[84] But Driskel's argument speaks little to the images that do not fit neatly into either category, of which Doré's Bible illustrations are an important example.

The illustration for the wedding at Cana demonstrates this point (fig. 25). In the image, we see a large crowd assembled under a canopy. In the foreground, several figures are occupied with waterpots; one turns back toward Jesus, seated at the table and gesturing toward the foreground. The image incorporates orientalizing details, like the austere, deteriorating facade of the courtyard, with windows only on the upper floor and a protruding balcony, as was common in Holy Land architecture.^[85] However, Jesus is still given a neatly contoured halo, and the overall monumentality of the composition recalls Veronese's famous version of the scene (fig. 26), which Doré would likely have seen at the Louvre (and which also seems to inform the setting of his massive painting, *Christ Leaving the Praetorium* (fig. 27). In his illustration of *The Last Supper* (fig. 28), Doré again relies on the visual rhetoric established

during the Renaissance: the table set parallel to the picture plane, Jesus seated at the center with light radiating from his body, the disciples neatly organized around him. The austere Ionic columns and artfully draped curtain in the background recall Frans Pourbus's and Tiepolo's *Last Supper* paintings in the Louvre.



Fig. 25, Gustave Doré and C. Maurand, *Wedding at Cana*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:356. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 26, Paolo Veronese, *The Wedding Feast at Cana*, 1563. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris.
[\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 27, Gustave Doré, *Christ Leaving the Praetorium*, 1867–72. Oil on canvas. Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 28, Gustave Doré and Antoine Valérie Bertrand, *The Last Supper*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:580. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[larger image\]](#)

Ultimately, in Doré's representations of the life, passion, and death of Jesus, the drama of the Holy Land setting takes a secondary position to the narrative being laid out. His original drawings, photographed and compiled by Mame into a single 4-volume set of books, demonstrate that he spent significant time working and re-working the New Testament scenes—of the 67 images devoted to the Gospels, 21 were conceived at least twice (as opposed to 28 for the entire Old Testament).^[86] In the initial version of the *Flight to Egypt* (fig. 29), the Holy Family is placed in the immediate foreground, trudging through a darkening, foreboding desert wilderness. In the version that was to be published, however, the group is set further back, amid an ominously empty landscape (fig. 30). In *Jesus Presented to the People*, the tempestuous landscape framed to the right by a large Corinthian column in the first version (fig. 31) becomes the far less peopled and dramatic setting in the version Doré produced in conjunction with the British publishers Cassell and Company (fig. 32).^[87] The epic character of the biblical narrative is enhanced by monumental and detailed backdrops in the Old Testament, which were to a certain extent rooted in archaeological reality. But in the Gospel images, the attention is focused more on the human drama, with far less reference to the actual sites of Jesus's life, or even to contemporary imaginings based on historical research. That Doré's New Testament images relied more on existing biblical iconography than Holy

Land research is perhaps why they were generally considered inferior. But his incorporation of both elements nonetheless speaks to an important aspect of biblical representation in the nineteenth century, and more broadly to the representation of history.



Fig. 29, Gustave Doré, *Flight into Egypt*, n.d. Photograph of drawing on woodblock, compiled by the Mame publishing company in 1868. Bibliothèque du Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg.
Photograph by the author. [\[larger image\]](#)

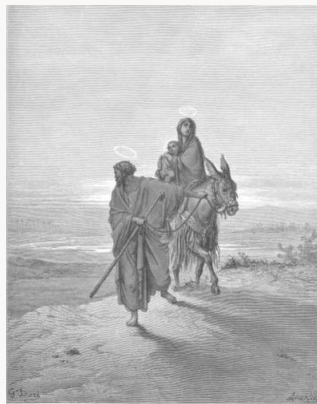


Fig. 30, Gustave Doré and John Quartley, *Flight into Egypt*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:308. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 31, Gustave Doré, *Jesus Presented to the People*, n.d. Photograph of drawing on woodblock, compiled by the Mame publishing company in 1868. Bibliothèque du Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg.
Photograph by the author. [\[larger image\]](#)

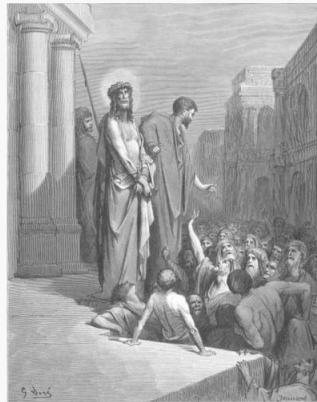


Fig. 32, Gustave Doré and Paul Jonnard, *Jesus Presented to the People, The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments According to the Authorized Version* (London, Paris, and Melbourne: Cassell & Co., Ltd, 1888–92), 2:185. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[larger image\]](#)

The Revelation of History

Doré's images demonstrate the problematic aspect of the representation of the biblical past. Although Doré made some effort to represent the authentic conditions of the "historical" locations of the Bible, these attempts are inevitably filtered through the lens of Doré's present. As many scholars have articulated, the historical self-consciousness which is a centerpiece of modernity is imbricated in the inevitable mortality of any historical moment, a consequence of the revolutionary impulse that pervaded the nineteenth century. Maurice Samuels has argued that the increasing need for authenticity in the representation of history, spoke to an impulse "to reassure spectators that a difficult past could be known and mastered."^[88] But the interest in uncovering, documenting, and preserving the remnants of ancient civilizations was not just a function of cultural hegemony or imperial motivations. As Göran Blix has argued, the French fascination with the rediscovery of ancient cultures was in part a function of an anxiety toward the tides of history: "The period's fascination with lost worlds . . . and its urge to

resurrect them in words and images can be seen as the flip side of the vast journalistic project of recording the modern world, and both endeavors were symptomatic of a culture that had grown hyperconscious of its own mortality."^[89] In a century plagued by repeated political upheaval, comparisons to the great civilizations of the past abounded in visual and literary representation. The rise and fall of civilizations, their moments of clarity and of excess, is a key theme throughout the biblical texts, and one that was eagerly consumed by the first viewers of the Doré Bible.

This comes to fore most clearly in the final illustrations of the Doré Bible, which correspond to the Book of Revelations. Of this captivating set of images, *The Fall of Babylon* stands out as an important visualization of the concern over the life and death of a nation. Rather than showing the destruction of the famed city, Doré chose to represent its aftermath: the ruinous city is illuminated by moonlight, as birds and beasts begin to invade (fig. 33). To the left, a *lamassu* stands in crumbling decay, a harsh reminder of the city's former glory and prestige. In this we see how the fragment, on which Doré relied for his biblical reconstructions, also becomes an unsettling suggestion of the inevitable demise of every nation.

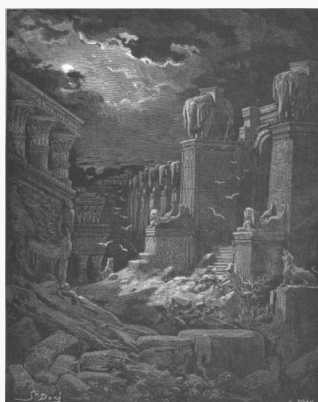


Fig. 33, Gustave Doré and Héliodor Pisan, *The Fall of Babylon*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:904. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[larger image\]](#)

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Notes

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All translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1866, 709–10.

[2] *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et Fils, 1866), hereafter referred to as the Doré Bible. The first and second editions are both dated 1866, but the first was actually released at the end of 1865. Doré's is the only name to appear on the title page of the first edition, but the second includes the names of the translators, Jean-Jacques Bourassé and Pierre Janvier, as well as the name of Hector Giacomelli, who produced the decorative elements that separated the two columns on each page of text.

[3] "L'éminent artiste, en empruntant aux plus récentes découvertes tout ce qu'elles nous ont appris sur l'architecture, les usages et les mœurs assyriennes, juives et égyptiennes, a donné aux scènes qu'il avait à traduire une couleur locale qui les rendra éternellement vraies." Emile Le Camus, "La Bible illustrée par Gustave Doré, et imprimée par A. Mame," *Le Contemporain*, November 1865, 955.

[4] "Il s'applique à remettre toutes les scènes dans les conditions extérieures où elles se sont passées, dans ce cadre strictement local dont la plupart de ses prédécesseurs, uniquement préoccupés du sentiment et de l'expression, ne s'inquiétaient pas assez. Il le fait sans excès pourtant, sans étalage puéril, mais avec un zèle continu." Victor Fournel, "Gustave Doré et son œuvre," *Le Contemporain*, December 1866, 1038.

[5] "Avec le moindre fragment, le plus léger indice, il recompose les palais enfouis sous le sable, les temples écroulés et tombés en poussière, non pas par un ingrat travail archaïque, mais par une puissante et rapide vision." Théophile Gautier, "Revue des beaux-arts: Exposition de la Société nationale des beaux-arts," *Le Moniteur universel*, March 9, 1864. The subject of Gautier's review is an exhibition of Doré's drawings for the Bible, not the Bible itself.

[6] Edmond Ollier, *The Doré Gallery: Containing Two Hundred and Fifty Beautiful Engravings Selected from the Doré Bible, Milton, Dante's Inferno, Dante's Purgatoria and Paradiso, Atala, Fontaine, Fairy Realm, Don Quixote, Baron Munchausen, Croquemitaine. . .* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co, 1870), 1:22.

[7] On the persistence of religious ritual and practice in nineteenth-century France, see, for instance, Edward Berenson, *Populist Religion and Left-Wing Politics, 1830–1852* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Joseph F. Byrnes, *Catholic and French Forever: Religious and National Identity in Modern France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005); D. G. Charlton, *Secular Religions in France, 1815–1870* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1963); Richard Helmstadter, ed., *Freedom and Religion in the Nineteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Thomas Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in 19th-Century France* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983); John Warne Monroe, *Laboratories of Faith: Mesmerism, Spiritism, and Occultism in Modern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); and Eugen Weber, "Religion and Superstition in Nineteenth-Century France," *Historical Journal* 31, no. 2 (1988): 399–423.

[8] Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), ix.

[9] A useful study on the use of biblical subject matter in nineteenth-century literature is Stephen Prickett, *Origins of Narrative: The Romantic Appropriation of the Bible* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Although there are a number of studies on religious visual culture in nineteenth-century France, there is yet to be a thorough investigation of the representation of biblical subjects.

[10] On Tissot's *Life of Christ* series, see Judith F. Dolkart, ed., *James Tissot: The Life of Christ: The Complete Set of 350 Watercolors* (London and New York: Merrell Publishers in association with the Brooklyn Museum, 2009).

[11] For example, Todd Porterfield has argued that Abel de Pujol's ceiling painting for the Musée d'Egypte, *Egypt Saved by Joseph* (1827), cohered to concurrent attitudes regarding the typological connection between Joseph and Jesus, significantly expounded in L.-H. Caron's *Essai sur les rapports entre le saint patriarche Joseph et Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ* (1825). For Porterfield, Pujol's picture "completes the familiar, bivalent, and imperialistic view of an exotic culture discovered,

known, and then, in this painting, managed." See Todd Porterfield, *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism, 1798–1836* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 106–9.

[12] Jean-Marcel Humbert, "Egyptomania: A Current Concept from the Renaissance to Postmodernism," in *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art, 1730–1930*, ed. Jean-Michel Humbert, Michael Pantazzi, and Christine Zeigler (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux; Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1994), 21. See also Richard G. Carrott, *The Egyptian Revival: An Introductory Study of a Recurring Theme in the History of Taste* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982); and James Stevens Curl, *Egyptomania: The Egyptian Revival, A Recurring Theme in the History of Taste* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994).

[13] A second edition was published between 1821 and 1829, and there are variants within each of these editions.

[14] See Anne Godlewska, "Map, Text and Image: The Mentality of Enlightened Conquerors: A New Look at the 'Description de l'Égypte,'" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20, no. 1 (1995): 5–28.

[15] In the "Préface historique" of the *Description de l'Égypte*, Jean-Baptiste Fourier wrote of the strategic and cultural importance of Egypt: "Placed between Africa and Asia, and communicating easily with Europe, Egypt occupies the centre of the ancient continent. . . . Homer, Lycurgus, Solon, Pythagorus and Plato all went to Egypt to study the sciences, religion and the laws. Alexander found an opulent city there, which for a long time enjoyed commercial supremacy and witnessed Pompey, Caesar, Mark-Anthony and Augustus deciding between them and the fate of Rome and the entire world." Moreover, the *Description* "reminds us that Egypt was the theater of [Napoleon's] glory." See Abigail Harrison Moore, "Voyage: Dominique-Vivant Denon and the Transference of Images of Egypt," *Art History* 25, no. 4 (September 2002), 538; and Humbert, Pantazzi, and Zeigler, "The Return from Egypt," *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art, 1730–1930*, 257.

[16] Quoted in Terence M. Russell, ed., *The Napoleonic Survey of Egypt: Description de l'Égypte: The Monuments and Customs of Egypt: Selected Engravings and Texts* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 1:225.

[17] Henrietta McCall has suggested that Doré spent 15 years researching his Bible illustrations. See Henrietta McCall, "Rediscovery and Aftermath," in *The Legacy of Mesopotamia*, ed. Stephanie Dalley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 203. I have found no evidence to corroborate this claim, and most sources suggest he began creating these images around 1862. See Philippe Burty, "La Sainte Bible, éditée par la maison Mame de Tours," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 8, no. 3 (March 1866): 272; and Paul de Saint-Victor, "Les livres illustrés: La Bible de Gustave Doré," *L'Artiste*, January 1, 1866, 10.

[18] Blanche Roosevelt, *The Life and Reminiscences of Gustave Doré* (New York: Cassell and Company, 1885), 76.

[19] Ibid, 76–77.

[20] Ibid, 77.

[21] Denon lauded the Denderah complex with characteristic flourish: "Twenty times I have been to Denderah and each time I have been confirmed in the same opinion: the decoration of the temple of Isis represents sciences and arts joined by good taste." Vivant Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte, pendant les campagnes de Bonaparte, en 1798 et 1799* (London: S. Bagster, 1807), xiv–xv.

The head of the goddess Hathor, to whom the temple was dedicated, became one of the most popularly reproduced motifs during the Egyptian revival. See *The Louvre and the Ancient World: Greek, Etruscan, Roman, Egyptian, and Near Eastern Antiquities from the Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Musée du Louvre; Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 2007), 70.

[22] The scale does resemble what one finds in an interior view of the Temple of Memnon at Thebes, but the reliefs and capitals do not. See *Description de l'Égypte*, 2: plate 37.

[23] See, for example, Robert Rosenblum, "Resurrecting Doré," *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré* (New York: Dahesh Museum of Art, 2007). On John Martin's reception in France, see Jean Seznec, *John Martin en France* (London: Faber & Faber, 1964).

[24] Quoted in Chris Coltrin, "Picturing Political Deliverance: Three Paintings of the Exodus by John Martin, Francis Danby, and David Roberts," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2011), accessed January 22, 2013, <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/index.php/spring11/paintings-of-the-exodus-by-john-martin-francis-danby-david-roberts>. Coltrin argues that Martin's painting, and the theme of exodus more broadly, were politically charged and used in reformist rhetoric in 1820s Britain.

[25] Champollion aggressively advocated for the importance of Egyptian history and a new way of arranging its display: "The important collection of Egyptian monuments, which through

royal munificence has enriched the museum, should be used as source material and as proof of the entire history of the Egyptian nation. It must therefore be organized in a new way. It is essential to consider the subject of each monument and its specific place in the museum—a rigorous knowledge of one and the other determines the place and status it should occupy." Under Champollion, the Louvre's Egyptian galleries included four rooms: two devoted to mortuary customs, one to precious objects, and one called the "room of the gods." See Guillemette Andreu, Marie-Hélène Rutschowskaya, and Christiane Ziegler, eds., *Ancient Egypt at the Louvre*, trans. Lisa Davidson (Paris: Hachette, 1997), 19–20.

[26] Porterfield has traced the evolution of the Musée d'Égypte, arguing that "the creation and presentation of the Musée d'Égypte reveal that what had seemed dynastic (Napoleonic) was coopted and transformed by the succeeding and ostensibly opposing (Bourbon) regime." For Porterfield, this marks a turning point at which imperial culture became "a national culture." See Porterfield, *Allure of Empire*, 81–82.

[27] See "The Development of Parallel Readings: 1815–1869," in Humbert, Pantazzi, and Zeigler, *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art, 1730–1930*, 317.

[28] Ibid.

[29] See Le Camus, "La Bible illustrée par Gustave Doré," 955; and Saint-Victor, "Les livres illustrés," 11.

[30] The Furne Bible also included an essay, "De l'authenticité des livres de l'Ancien Testament" by J.-B.-C. Chaud, a detailed chronology of biblical events, and a glossary of names.

[31] Quoted in Janet Emily Ruutz-Rees, *Horace Vernet* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1880), 22.

[32] For a history of the Société asiatique, see the volume published in connection with the Société's centenary, *Le livre du centenaire (1822–1922)* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1922). Douglas T. McGretchin has outlined the early history of the institution in relation to the opposing "Florist" scholarship, which sought to provide translations of Middle Eastern and Asian texts that were more literary than literal. See "Wilting Florists: The Turbulent Early Decades of the Société Asiatique, 1822–1860," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64, no. 4 (October 2003): 565–80.

[33] Much study has been devoted to the work of Botta as well as that of his British counterpart, Sir Henry Austen Layard. See, for instance, Elisabeth Fontan and Nicole Chevalier, eds., *De Khorsabad à Paris: La découverte des Assyriens, Notes et Documents des Musées de France* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1994); and Mogens Trolle Larsen, *The Conquest of Assyria: Excavations in an Ancient Land* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[34] "The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.'" (Jonah 1: 1–2, New International Version).

[35] On Flandin, see Françoise Demange, "Eugène Flandin, un peintre archéologue," in Fontan and Chevalier, *De Khorsabad à Paris*, 86–93.

[36] See Frederick N. Bohrer, *Orientalism and Visual Culture: Imagining Mesopotamia in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 66–97.

[37] On Jules Mohl and Paul-Émile Botta, see Larsen, *Conquest of Assyria*, 21–33.

[38] For discussions of Botta and Layard's excavations and writings, see *ibid.*; and Bohrer, *Orientalism and Visual Culture*, 66–131.

[39] M. Vivien de Saint-Martin, "Ninive," *Le Tour du Monde* 7 (1863): 318, quoted in Bohrer, *Orientalism and Visual Culture*, 74.

[40] McCall, "Rediscovery and Aftermath," 196.

[41] Quoted in Bohrer, *Orientalism and Visual Culture*, 71–72.

[42] See Elisabeth Fontan, "Adrien de Longpérier et la Création du musée assyrien du Louvre," in Fontan and Chevalier, *De Khorsabad à Paris*, 226–39.

[43] "La monarchie assyrien mit le pied sur le rivage de la Seine. Une habitation nouvelle, plus digne de lui, le palais de nos rois, lui avant été destinée: le Louvre lui ouvrit ses portes à deux battants." *L'Illustration*, May 15, 1847, quoted in André Parrot, "Centenaire de la fondation du Musée Assyrien au Musée du Louvre," *Syria* 25, no. 3–4 (1946): 175.

[44] Frederick Bohrer, "Inventing Assyria: Exoticism and Reception in Nineteenth-Century England and France," *Art Bulletin* 80, no. 2 (June 1998): 339.

[45] *Ibid.*, 85.

[46] See Robert L. Alexander, "Courbet and Assyrian Sculpture," *Art Bulletin*, 47, no. 4 (December 1965): 447–52; and Bohrer, *Orientalism and Visual Culture*, 86.

[47] Bohrer, *Orientalism and Visual Culture*, 92.

[48] On the relationship between the government of Louis-Philippe and the reception of Assyrian art, see Bohrer, *Orientalism and Visual Culture*, 70–83. Nonetheless, as Bohrer argues, the appropriation of Assyrian art in France was, although generally casual, still grounded in a program of cultural hegemony.

[49] "Les artistes ninivites ne paraissent avoir atteint ni la grande science des proportions qui dirigeait les Égyptiens, ni le merveilleux accord du style et de la vie qui éclatait dans les Grecs." "Collections du Louvres: Musée Assyrien," *Magasin pittoresque* 16 (1849): 194.

[50] Bohrer, "Inventing Assyria," 336.

[51] "Autour d'Artaxerxès, de Nabuchodonosor et de Balthasa, . . . Gustave Doré a déroulé les gigantesques décors de l'architecture assyrienne." Saint-Victor, "La Bible de Gustave Doré," 12.

[52] The image *Cyrus rendant les vases sacrés au grand-prêtre* gave Doré "l'occasion de reconstruire le Temple de Jérusalem, autant du moins qu'il est possible de le restituer." *Ibid.*

[53] "Car la Bible a beau le décrire depuis les pierres des fondations jusqu'aux festons des solives, il reste, malgré tout, un édifice inintelligible. L'incohérence du plan en apparence si précis, le désordre des divisions, le vague des mesures ont dérouté de tout temps la sagacité des érudits et des architectures. . . . Ainsi, la multiplicité des détails dont fourmille le texte biblique empêche de voir le monument qu'il dénombre." *Ibid.*

[54] On Christian theology in nineteenth-century France and Germany, see Douglas Hedley, "Theology and the Revolt against the Enlightenment," in Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley, eds., *World Christianities, c.1815–c.1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 30–52; Albert Houtin, *La question biblique chez les catholiques de France au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1902); Gerald A. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the 19th Century: The Quest for a Unitary Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977); James McMillan, "Catholic Christianity in France from the Restoration to the Separation of Church and State, 1815–1905," in Gilley and Stanley, *World Christianities*, 215–232; Harry W. Paul, "In Quest of Kerygma: Catholic Intellectual Life in Nineteenth-Century France," *American Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (December 1969): 387–423; and Sheehan, *Enlightenment Bible*, 223–40.

[55] See Michael Paul Driskel, *Representing Belief: Religion, Art, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 19–58.

[56] Il y a trois ans à peine, on ne connaissait de l'antique capitale du royaume d'Assyrie que l'emplacement et le nom. A ce nom se rattachaient quelques récits bibliques, quelques assertions merveilleuses des historiens de l'antiquité: on refusait aux uns toute croyance, on n'opposait aux autres que des commentaires, espèce d'arme à deux-tranchants, qui, maniée avec adresse, élague ou effleure à volonté. Sur l'emplacement même de la cité assyrienne, on n'avait rien trouvé que les traces d'une enceinte assez resserrée et quelques amas de briques, vestiges informés d'édifices indéfinissables. On avait donc renoncé à l'espérance de soulever le voile impénétrable depuis si long-temps étendu sur la civilisation de l'Assyrie, lorsqu'une de ces découvertes presque miraculeuses, dont notre siècle pourra s'enorgueillir à bon droit, est venue déchirer ce voile importun et nous reporter d'un bond au cœur de cette civilisation éteinte. Et maintenant peut-on avec la même assurance accuser Diodore de Sicile d'exagération ridicule? Doit-on chercher encore dans les textes sacrés des expressions élastiques qui permettent d'en éluder le sens grammatical? Cela est devenu à peu près impossible, car, une fois de plus, un fait inattendu a prouvé que: Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable." Louis Félicien de Saulcy, "Le Musée assyrien du Louvre," *Revue des deux mondes* 20 (1847): 447–48.

[57] See Margarite Diaz-Andreu, *World History of Nineteenth-Century Archaeology: Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 133.

[58] Hermann V. Hilprecht, *Explorations in Bible Lands during the 19th Century* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004), 87.

[59] Quoted in Albert Boime, *Art in an Age of Counterrevolution, 1815–1848* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 558.

[60] See Fournel, "Gustave Doré et son œuvre," 1038.

[61] "Telle qu'elle est, avec ses splendeurs et ses négligences, sa science et sa fantaisie, sa couleur mi-orientale et mi-sacrée, son caractère peut-être un peu plus dramatique que biblique, mais avec sa largeur de paysages, sa profondeur d'horizons, son entente extraordinaire des effets et de la lumière, son ampleur et toutes ses qualités puissantes, cette Bible est certainement le monument le plus considérable qui ait été élevé en ce genre." Léon Lavedan, "La Bible, illustrée par Gustave Doré," *Le Correspondant*, December 25, 1865, 1043–44.

[62] "Dans les sujets du Nouveau Testament, Doré a fait sentir admirablement l'esprit de douceur du Christ, et pour la grand tragédie du Golgotha il a trouvé des effets inattendus, des

émotions profondes, et de ces lueurs soudaines qui trouent l'obscurité jusqu'au fond des cieux." Gautier, "Revue des beaux-arts: Exposition de la Société nationale des beaux-arts," n.p.

[63] Burty, "La Sainte Bible," 272–80.

[64] Saint-Victor, "La Bible de Gustave Doré," 12.

[65] "Dans son ensemble, le Nouveau Testament ne s'élève pas à la même hauteur. Ce qui frappe d'abord le regard, c'est l'insuffisance et la froideur de la figure du Christ." Fournel, "Gustave Doré et son œuvre," 1040. One of the only positive notes on this front came from Le Camus: "Puis dans le nouveau Testament, la fuite en Egypte, les noces de Cana, le crucifiement, sujets si souvent traités et que l'artiste a su rendre cependant encore nouveaux par l'exactitude des détails et les effets de lumière qui rappellent si bien l'Orient." Le Camus, "La Bible illustrée par Gustave Doré," 954–55.

[66] Significant work has been done to trace and problematize the various encounters of visitors to the Holy Land—names like Chateaubriand, Disraeli, Delacroix, and David Roberts figure into most debates over representations of the Orient in the first half of the nineteenth century. The body of scholarship on nineteenth-century Orientalism is vast and ever-growing. In addition to Edward Saïd's *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), useful studies on the debate with regard to French art include Davy Depelchin and Roger Diederer, eds., *De Delacroix à Kandinsky: L'orientalisme en Europe* (Paris: Hazan; Brussels: Musées Royaux des Beaux-arts de Belgique, 2010); Hélène Gill, *The Language of French Orientalist Painting* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003); Philippe Jullian, *Les Orientalistes: La vision de l'Orient par les peintres européens au 19^e siècle* (Fribourg: Office du livre, 1977); and John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

[67] See chapter 7 in Neil Asher Silberman, *Digging for God and Country: Exploration, Archaeology, and the Secret Struggle for the Holy Land, 1799–1917* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982).

[68] Ernest Renan, *Vie de Jésus* (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1863).

[69] For a discussion of Saulcy's campaigns and the objects he uncovered, see Michel de Bry, "La vie et l'œuvre de Félix de Saulcy," in Musée d'art et d'essai, Palais de Tokyo, *Félix de Saulcy et la Terre Sainte*, exh. cat. (Paris: Ministère de la Culture, Editions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1982), 17–68.

[70] On scholarly rejections of Saulcy's discoveries, see Silberman, *Digging for God and Country*, 68–72.

[71] Quoted in Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "A Photographer in Jerusalem, 1855: Auguste Salzmann and His Times," in *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 155.

[72] As Solomon-Godeau has argued, Salzmann defied the picturesque conventions that were common in Holy Land photography at the time, and was instead guided by a documentary impulse. Solomon-Godeau acknowledges, however, the dubiousness of categorizing these types of images in terms of either documentary or aesthetic intent or effect. See *ibid.*, 150–68.

[73] See, for example, *Jerusalem and the Holy Land Rediscovered: The Prints of David Roberts (1796–1864)* (Durham: Duke University Museum of Art, 1996); and Naomi Shepherd, *The Zealous Intruders: The Western Rediscovery of Palestine* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

[74] See Claude W. Sui, "Travel to the Holy Land and Photography in the Nineteenth Century," in *To the Holy Lands: Pilgrimage Centres from Mecca and Medina to Jerusalem; Photographs of the 19th Century from the Collections of the Reiss-Engelhorn Museums, Mannheim*, ed. Alfried Wiczorek, Michael Tellenbach, and Claude W. Sui, trans. Andrew Cowin (Munich and New York: Prestel, 2008), 10–11.

[75] Yeshayahu Nir, *The Bible and the Image: The History of Photography in the Holy Land, 1839–1899* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 22.

[76] See David Kroyanker, *Jerusalem Architecture* (New York: Vendome Press, 2002); and David Kroyanker, *Jerusalem Architecture: Periods and Styles; The Jewish Quarters and Public Buildings Outside the Old City Walls, 1860–1914* (Jerusalem: Domino Press for the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 1983).

[77] George Croly quoted in David Roberts, *The Holy Land: From Drawings Made on the Spot* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1999), 63.

[78] Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," in *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 35–36.

[79] See, for instance, Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture, 1799–1917: Palestine and the Question of Orientalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 105–81; and Nochlin, "Imaginary Orient," 35–41.

[80] James Tissot, *The Life of Our Saviour Jesus Christ: Three Hundred and Sixty-Five Compositions from the Four Gospels, with Notes and Explanatory Drawings* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1886), 1:ix.

[81] Quoted in Driskel, *Representing Belief*, 189.

[82] See *ibid.*, 59–97.

[83] On the development of the *goût pré-raphaélite*, see Bruno Foucart, *Le renouveau de la peinture religieuse en France, 1800–1860* (Paris: ARTHENA, 1987), 27–28.

[84] See Driskel, *Representing Belief*, 59–97.

[85] See Mary Eliza Rogers, "Causes of Certain Differences in the Styles of Domestic Architecture in Syria and Palestine," *Art Journal* 6 (1880): 86–89.

[86] Doré drew his illustrations directly onto woodblocks that were then handed off to one of his engravers. The blocks for the Bible were exhibited at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in 1864. It is unclear when the blocks were photographed, but the single copy that was compiled by Mame is now held by the library of the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporaine in Strasbourg, France.

[87] Cassell and Company bought the rights to reproduce the Doré Bible almost immediately after the first edition appeared in France in 1866. Several illustrations were altered or changed completely before being published by Cassell. See Roosevelt, *Life and Reminiscences*, 302–3.

[88] Maurice Samuels, *The Spectacular Past: Popular History and the Novel in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 8.

[89] Göran Blix, *From Paris to Pompeii: French Romanticism and the Cultural Politics of Archaeology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 2.

Illustrations



Fig. 1, Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy-Trioson, *Joseph Recognized by his Brothers*, 1789. Oil on canvas. Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 2, Gustave Doré and J. Ettling, *Joseph Revealing Himself to his Brothers*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 1:188. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[return to text\]](#)

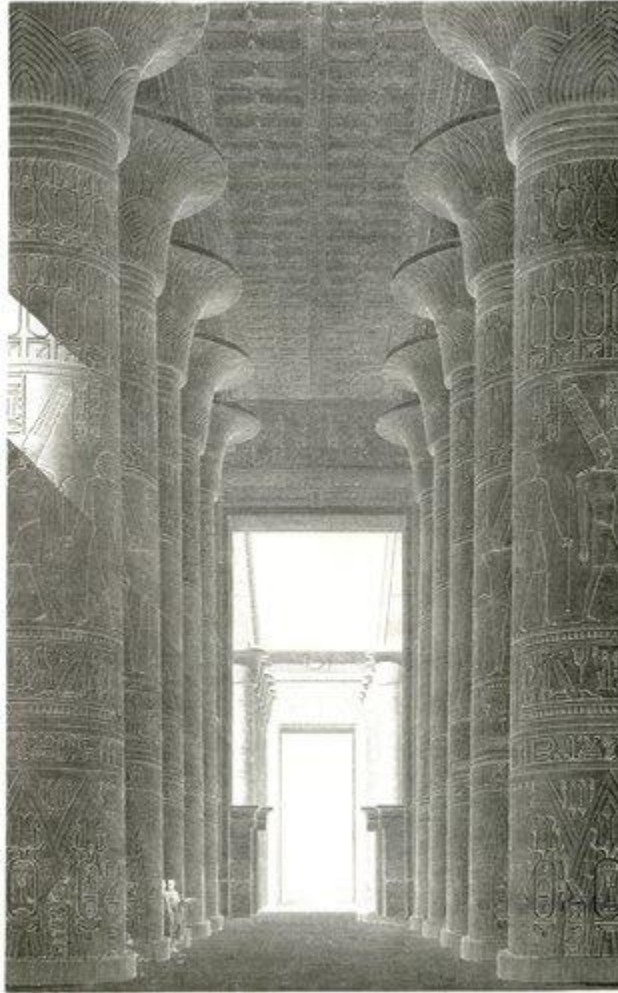


Fig. 3, *Perspective view of the Great Hypostyle Hall at the Temple of Amun in Karnak, Description de l'Égypte, ou, Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française* (Paris, Imprimerie impériale, 1809–28), Antiquities 3:pl. 42. [\[return to text\]](#)

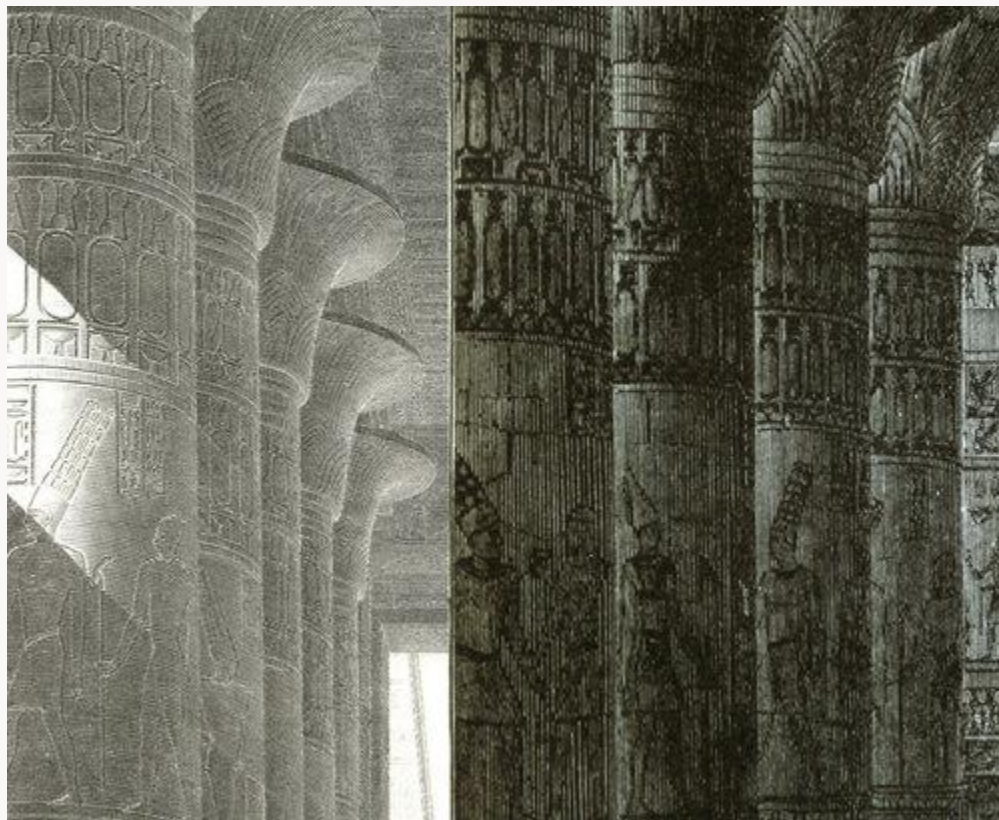


Fig. 4, Detail of figs. 2, 3. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 5, Gustave Doré and Adolphe François Pannemaker, *Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 1:228. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[return to text\]](#)

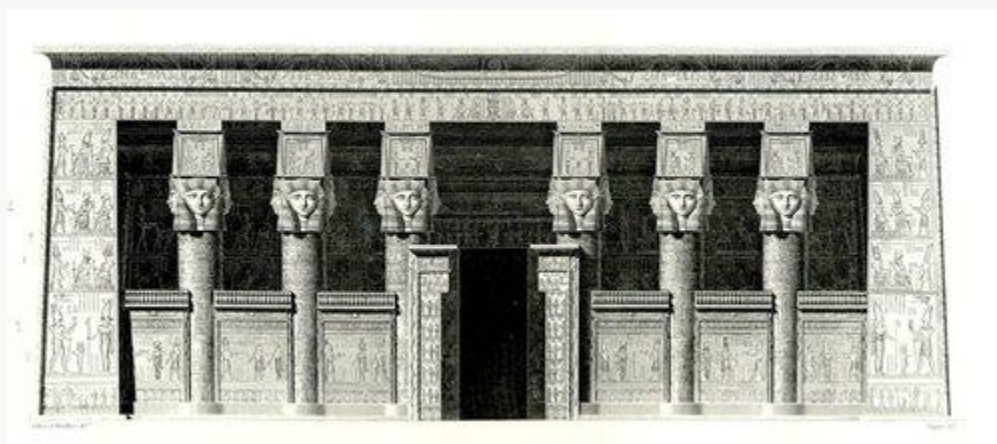


Fig. 6, *Elevation of the Portico of the Grand Temple in Denderah*, *Description de l'Égypte, ou, Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française* (Paris, Imprimerie impériale, 1809–28), Antiquities 4:pl. 9. [\[return to text\]](#)

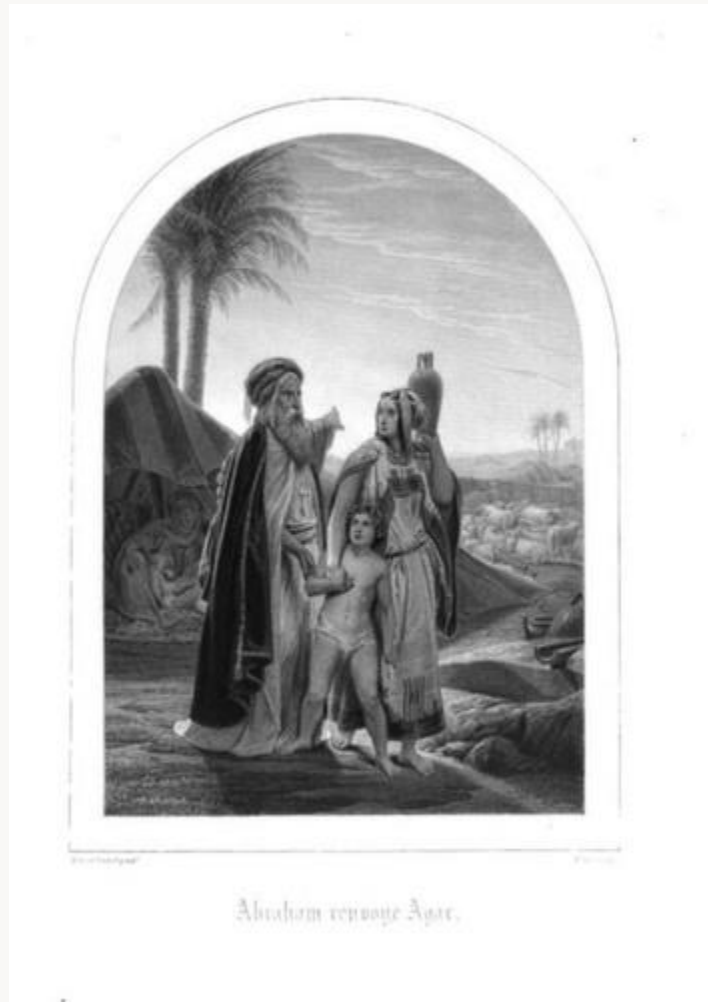


Fig. 8, After Horace Vernet *Abraham Dismissing Hagar*, *La Sainte Bible*: translated by Lemaistre de Sacy (Paris: Furne et Cie., 1841), 1:n.p. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 9, Horace Vernet, *Abraham Dismissing Hagar*, 1837. Oil on canvas. Musée Des Beaux-Arts, Nantes.
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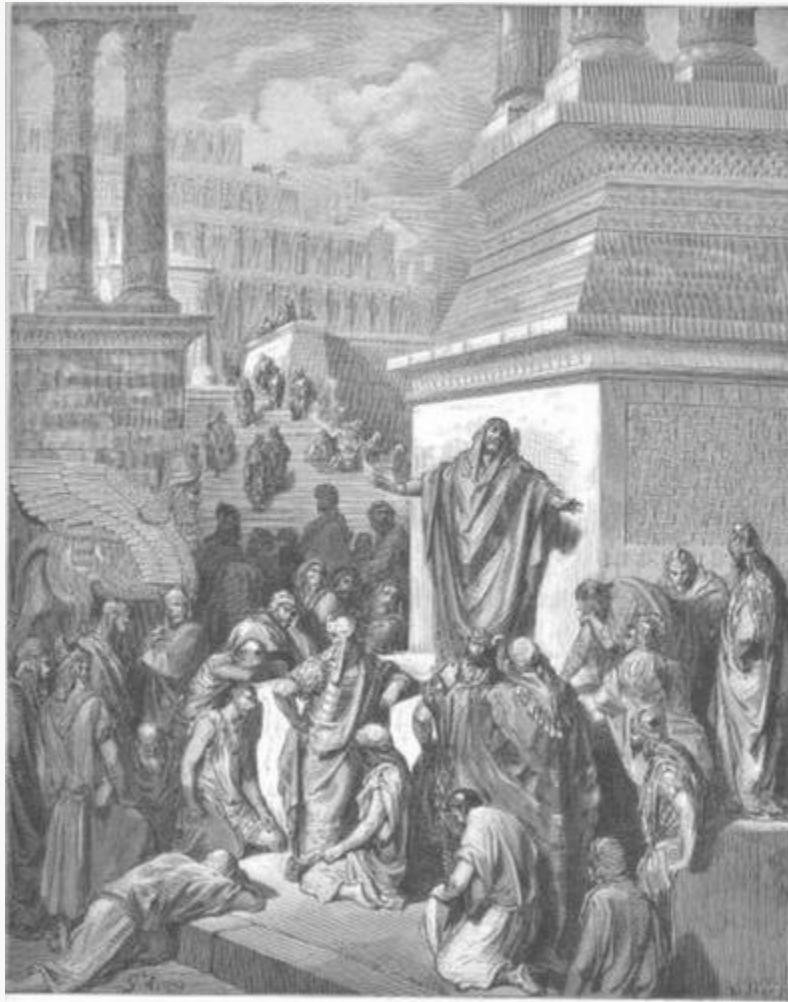


Fig. 10, Gustave Doré and Ad Ligny, *Jonah Urges the Ninevites to Repent*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:164. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[return to text\]](#)

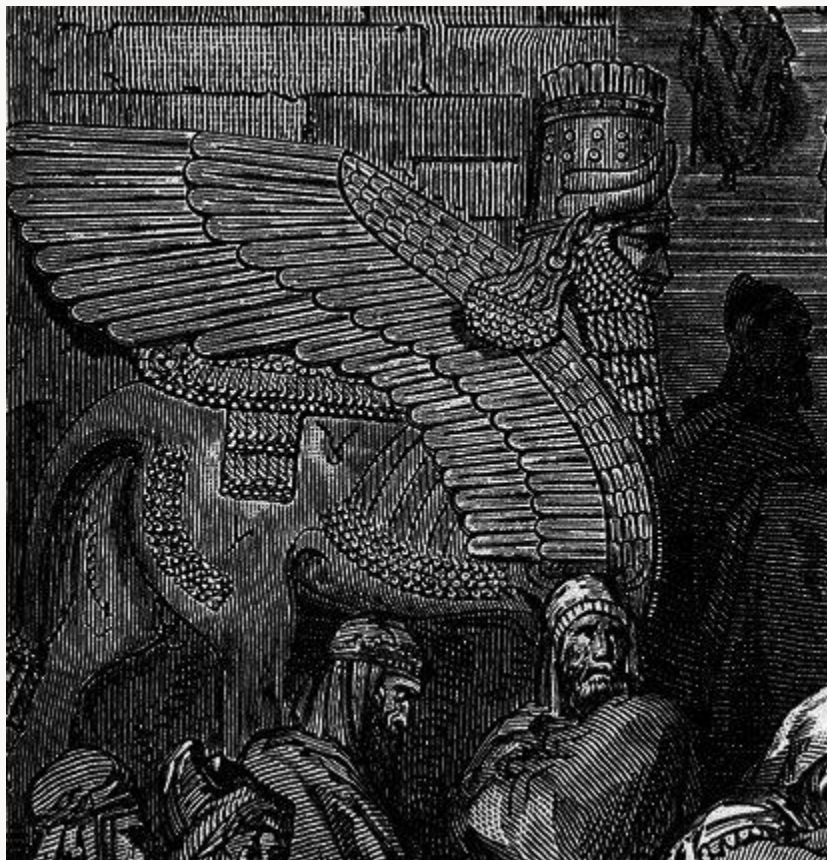


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Fig. 12, Winged human-headed bull (*lamassu*), ca. 721–705 BCE. Musée du Louvre, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 13, Eugène Flandin, *Facade m, Door k, No. 1, Monument de Ninive* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1849–50), 1:pl. 45. [\[return to text\]](#)

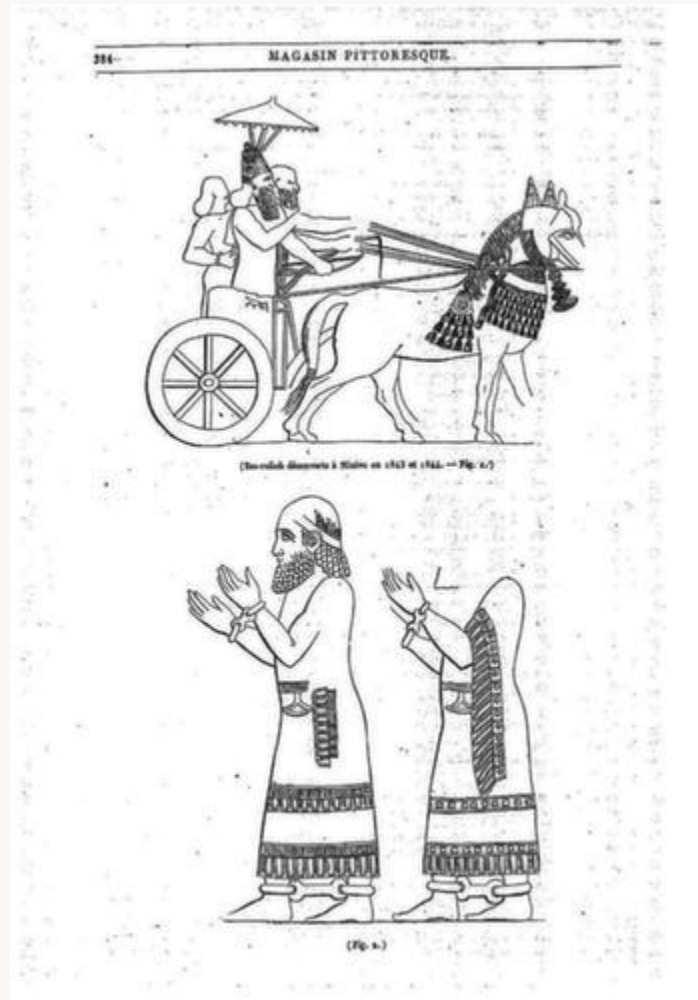


Fig. 14, *Bas-reliefs Discovered in Nineveh in 1843 and 1844*, *Magasin Pittoresque* 12 (1844): 284. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 15, Eugène Delacroix, *Death of Sardanapalus*, 1828. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris.
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Fig. 16, Gustave Courbet, *The Artist's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life*, 1855. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 17, Gustave Courbet, *The Meeting, or "Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet,"* 1854. Oil on canvas. Musée Fabre, Montpellier. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 18, Anonymous engraving, *Antiquities of Nineveh, Histoire du Palais et du Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Editions des Musées Nationaux, 1947–71), 9:pl. 77. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 19, Maurand and Régis, *Assyrian Antiquities—View from the South to the North*, *Histoire du Palais et du Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Editions des Musées Nationaux, 1947–1971), 9:pl. 80. [\[return to text\]](#)

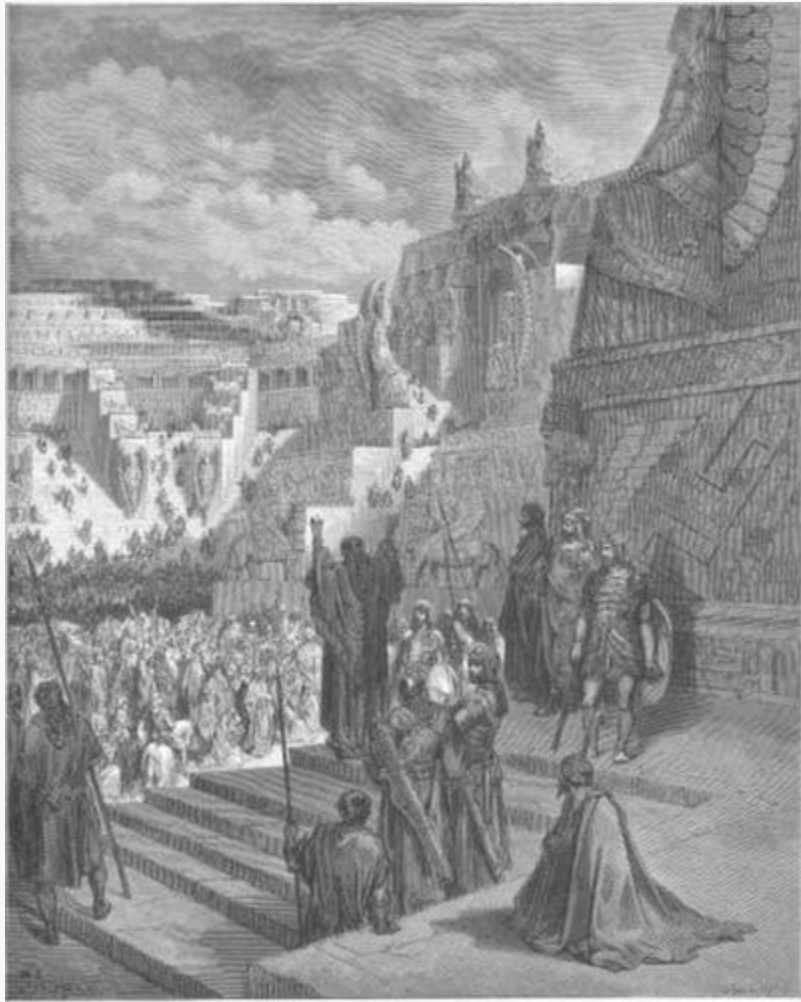


Fig. 20, Gustave Doré and Ad Ligny, *Artaxerxes Granting Freedom to the Jews*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 1:820. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 21, Auguste Salzmann, *Damascus Gate*, 1854–56, *Jérusalem: Étude et reproduction photographique des monuments de la ville sainte depuis l'époque judaïque jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Gide et Baudry, 1856): pl. 14.

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Fig. 22, David Roberts R.A., *Damascus Gate*, from *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia* (London: F.G. Moon, 1842–49), 1:pl. 2. [\[return to text\]](#)

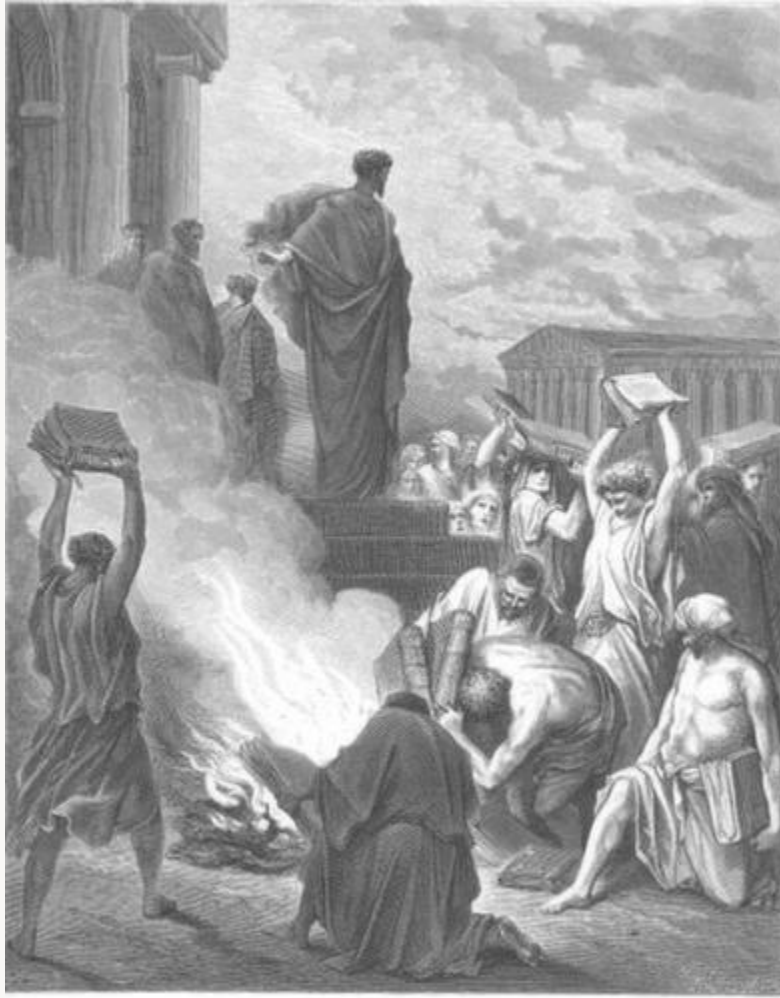


Fig. 23, Gustave Doré and J. Ettling, *Paul Preaching at Ephesus*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:808. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 24, Gustave Doré and Paul Jonnard, *Paul Preaches to the Thessalonians*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:796. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 25, Gustave Doré and C. Maurand, *Wedding at Cana*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:356. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 26, Paolo Veronese, *The Wedding Feast at Cana*, 1563. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

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Fig. 27, Gustave Doré, *Christ Leaving the Praetorium*, 1867–72. Oil on canvas. Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 28, Gustave Doré and Antoine Valérie Bertrand, *The Last Supper*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:580. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 29, Gustave Doré, *Flight into Egypt*, n.d. Photograph of drawing on woodblock, compiled by the Mame publishing company in 1868. Bibliothèque du Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg. Photograph by the author. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 30, Gustave Doré and John Quartley, *Flight into Egypt*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:308. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 31, Gustave Doré, *Jesus Presented to the People*, n.d. Photograph of drawing on woodblock, compiled by the Mame publishing company in 1868. Bibliothèque du Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg. Photograph by the author. [\[return to text\]](#)

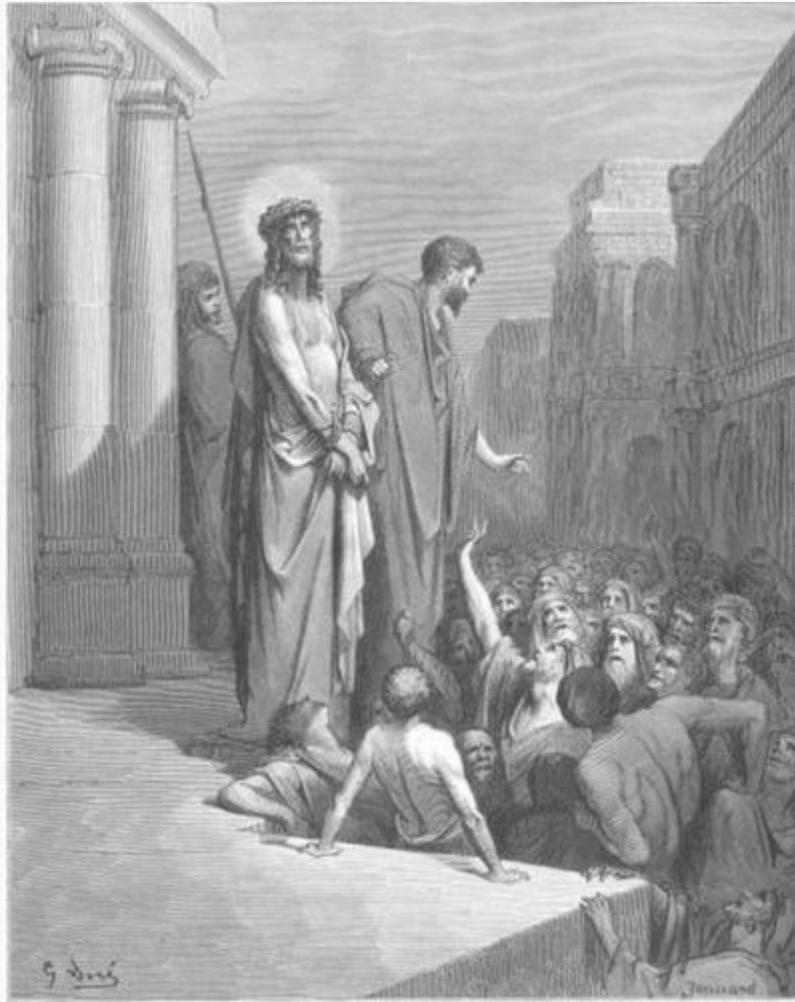


Fig. 32, Gustave Doré and Paul Jonnard, *Jesus Presented to the People*, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments According to the Authorized Version* (London, Paris, and Melbourne: Cassell & Co., Ltd, 1888–92), 2:185. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[return to text\]](#)

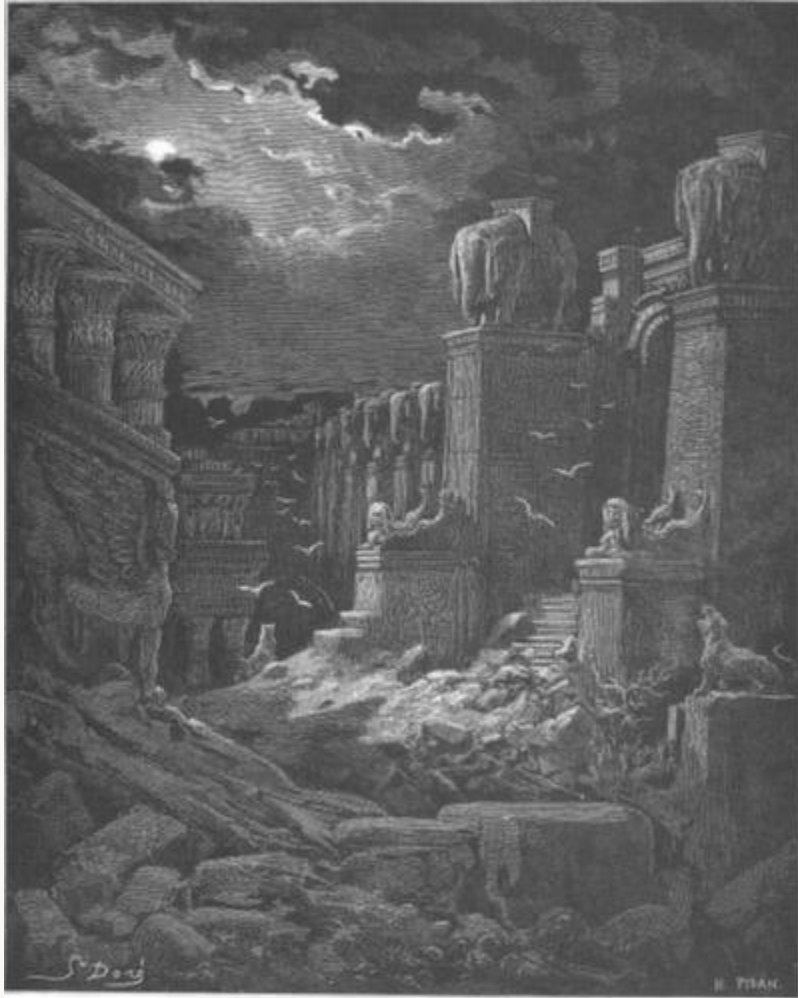


Fig. 33, Gustave Doré and Héliodor Pisan, *The Fall of Babylon*, *La Sainte Bible: Selon la Vulgate* (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1866), 2:904. Photograph by Felix Just, S.J. [\[return to text\]](#)