

The 10 Most Important Cuneiform Objects

<http://cdli.ox.ac.uk/wiki/doku.php?id=objects1to10>

1. Codex Hammurapi

Perhaps the most widely-known cuneiform object, this impressive monument lists laws of ancient Babylon in fascinating detail. More information...

Artifact: Stone stele

Provenience: Susa, modern Shush

Period: Late Old Babylonian (ca 1800-1595 BC)

Current location: Louvre Museum, Paris



2. The Weld-Blundell Prism/The Sumerian King List

From mythical kings including Gilgamesh, to historical figures, this document lists an ideologically significant series of Mesopotamian kings. More information...

Artifact: Clay prism

Provenience: Unknown

Period: Early Old Babylonian (ca. 2000-1800 BC)

Current location: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Ashm 1923-444)



3. The Middle Assyrian Laws, A

A law collection famously including some of the oldest written regulations on women's behaviour. More information...

Artifact: Clay tablet

Provenience: Assur

Period: Middle Assyrian (ca. 1400-1000 BC)

Current location: Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin



4. Sargon's letter to Ashur

King Sargon II of Assyria presents his military exploits in a letter addressed “to Assur, father of the Gods...” More information...

Artifact: Clay tablet

Provenience: Khorsabad

Period: Neo-Assyrian (ca. 911-612 BC)

Current location: Louvre Museum, Paris (AO 5372)



5. The Flood Tablet

A Mesopotamian tale of a great flood and one survivor chosen by the Gods, this section of the Gilgamesh epic caused a stir when discovered in the 19th century. More information...

Artifact: Clay tablet

Provenience: Nineveh

Period: Neo-Assyrian (ca. 911-612 BC)

Current location: British Museum, London (K 03375)



6. Complex surface calculations at Jemdet Nasr

An economic document providing some of the earliest written evidence for social hierarchy and unequal distribution of resources. More information...

Artifact: Clay tablet

Provenience: Jemdet Nasr

Period: Uruk III (ca. 3200-3000 BC)

Current location: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Ashm 1926-583)



7. The Cylinders of Gudea

A set of large cylinders inscribed with a Sumerian hymnic composition in which king Gudea receives instructions in a dream to build a temple. More information...

Artifact: Clay cylinders (and fragments)

Provenience: Girsu, modern Tello

Period: Lagash II (ca. 2200-2100 BC)

Current location: Louvre Museum, Paris



8. The Manistusu obelisk

A monument recording King Manishtushu's purchase of various plots of land in the area of Akkad from his subjects. More information...

Artifact: Stone monument

Provenience: Susa, modern Shush

Period: Old Akkadian (ca. 2340-2200 BC)

Current location: Louvre Museum, Paris (Sb 20)



9. The Stele of Vultures

An Early Dynastic Sumerian monument of conflict perpetrated by King and God. More information...

Artifact: Stone stele

Provenience: Girsu, modern Tello

Period: ED IIIb (ca. 2500-2340)

Current location: Louvre Museum, Paris



10. The Bīsītūn Inscription

Often considered a key to the decipherment of cuneiform, the Persian "King of Kings" Darius tells how he seized the throne in this trilingual inscription. More information...

Artifact: Rock relief

Provenience: Kermanshah Province, Iran

Period: Persian

Current location: Kermanshah Province, Iran

