



SACRED ART SCHOOL  
FIRENZE

## The Historicity of the Gospels: the Birth of Christ. The Comet Star.

*“The Church has always and everywhere held and continues to hold that the four Gospels are of apostolic origin... Holy Mother Church has firmly and with absolute constancy held, and continues to hold, that the four Gospels just named, whose historical character the Church unhesitatingly asserts, faithfully hand on what Jesus Christ, while living among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation until the day He was taken up into heaven” (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation Dei Verbum, Vatican Council II, nn. 18 and 19).*

*“In those days a decree of Caesar Augustus ordered that a census be made of all the land” (Luke 2,1)*

Jesus was not born and appeared in public in the unspecified "once upon a time" of the myth. He belongs to an exactly datable time and to an exactly indicated geographical environment: the universal and the concrete touch each other. In Him, the *Logos*, the creative Reason of all things, entered the world. The eternal *Logos* became man, and this is part of the context of place and time. Faith is linked to this concrete reality, even if then, by virtue of the Resurrection, the temporal and geographical space is overcome and the "preceding in Galilee" (Mt 28:7) by the Lord introduces us into the extent of the whole of humanity.

**Historical period:** Roman Empire with Caesar Augustus Emperor. Who was Augustus? (Caesar, Csar, Tsar...). Epigraph of Priene (9 B.C.), pg 72; pax augustea, a great and compact kingdom; "sō-tēr" savior who brings peace -> Ara Pacis Augusti



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The registration of all the inhabitants of the empire was aimed at collecting taxes. Dating of the birth of Jesus Christ: at the time of King Herod the Great, who however died in 4 B.C. Josephus Flavius (historian of the empire): writes that the census was conducted under the governor Quirinius (and therefore we are in 6 AD) and because it involved money, it led to the insurrection of Judas Galileo (cf. Acts 5.37). Some historians say that the census at the time was very difficult and could last several years, also considering the extent of the empire. A first registration concerned land and real estate, the second phase the determination of taxes. So the first stage took place when Jesus was born, with a few years difference.

Joseph was of the house and lineage of David: this is the reason for his journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

Luke says that he has done careful research on every circumstance (Lk 1:3) and in fact at the beginning of the public manifestation of Jesus gives us a series of details on the dating:

- fifteenth year of the empire of Tiberius Caesar
- the Roman governor Pontius Pilate is mentioned
- Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip the tetrarch of the Ituraea and the Trachonitis, and
- Lysania the tetrarch of Abilene.
- the high priests Anna and Caiaphas

In this way, we obtain the most precise possible dating by going back.

But the prophets must also be taken into account: Micah (5:1-3): the prophet of Israel would be born in Bethlehem. And he says so 800 years earlier.

Extract from "The Childhood of Jesus" by Benedict XVI, pg. 79-80:

*Now, while they were in that place, the days of childbirth were over. 7]She gave birth to her first-born son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the lodge.*

...there was no room for them in the lodge. The meditation, in faith, of these words found in this statement an inner parallelism with the word, rich in profound content, of the Prologue of Saint John: "He came among his own and they have not welcomed him" (Jn 1:11). For the Saviour of the world, for the One for whom all things were created (Col 1:16), there is no place. "The foxes have their dens and the birds of the sky their nests, but the Son of Man has no place to rest his head" (Mt 8:20), He who was crucified outside the gate of the city (Heb 13:12) was also born outside the gate of the city.

This must make us think, it must refer us to the reversal of values that there is in the figure of Jesus Christ, in his message. Since his birth he has not belonged to that environment which, according to the world, is important and powerful. But it is precisely this irrelevant and powerless man who reveals himself as the truly Powerful, as the One on whom everything ultimately depends. It is therefore part of becoming a Christian to leave the realm of what everyone thinks and wants, of the dominant criteria, to enter into the light of truth about our being and, with this light, to reach the right path.



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**The Comet Star at a glance.**

As "science" confirms the dating of the birth of Jesus.



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Balaam indica la stella - Madonna nelle Catacombe di Priscilla



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I Magi e la stella nel mosaico di s. Apollinare Nuovo a Ravenna

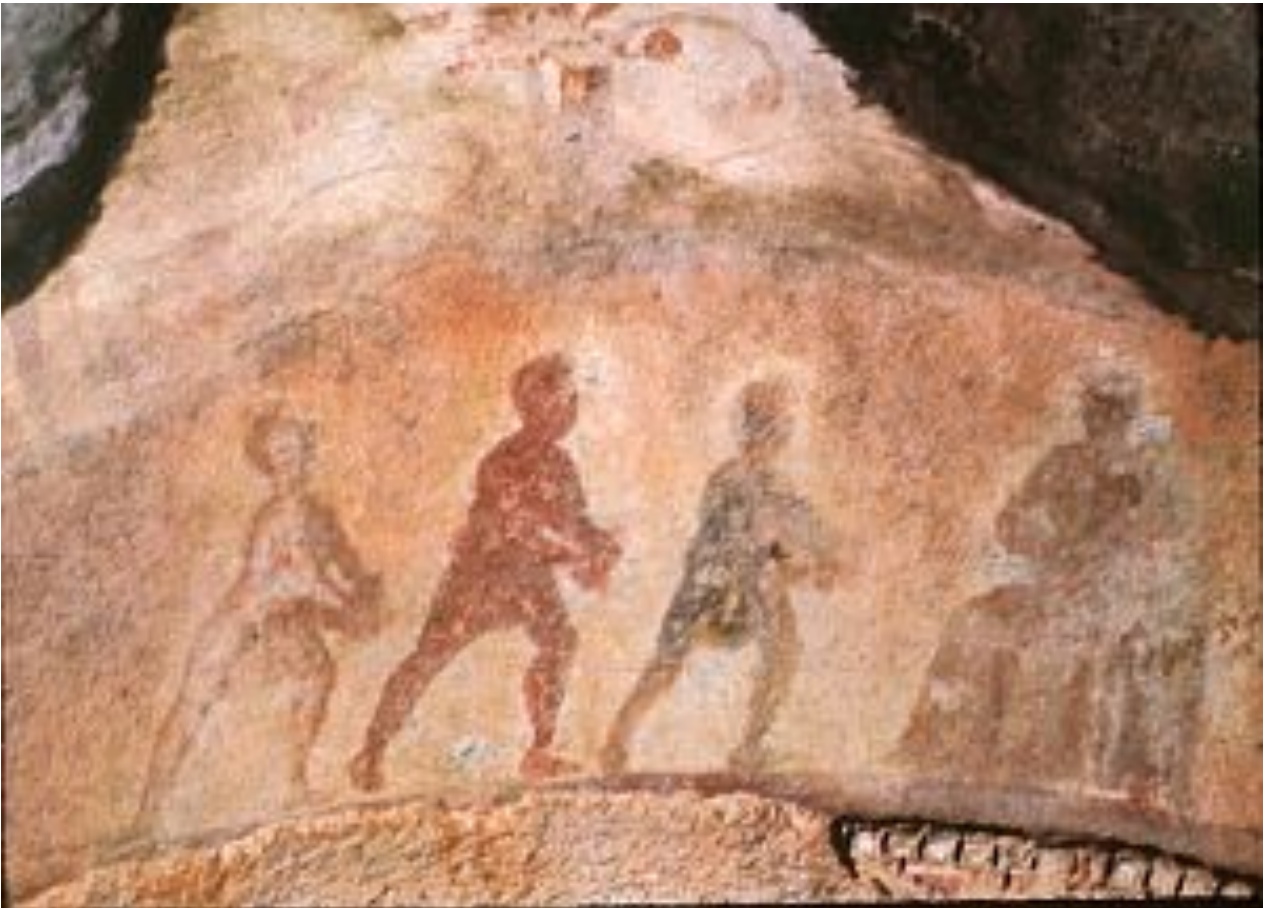


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## I tre Magi nelle Catacombe di Priscilla



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La cometa dipinta da Giotto nella cappella degli Scrovegni a Padova



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