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Title of research article 		Archaeological Correlates of Prophetic Narratives: A Comparative Study of Textual Traditions and Material Evidence in Ancient Civilizations
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Abstract This study examines the intersection between religious historiography and archaeological documentation by analyzing the representations of prophetic figures within the cultural frameworks of ancient civilizations, particularly those of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Levant. The research highlights the epistemological tension between textual narration and archaeological interpretation, focusing on how historical-critical methodologies engage with religious texts as sources of civilizational memory rather than theological affirmation. Through comparative analysis, the article evaluates the synchronism—or lack thereof—between scriptural accounts and verifiable historical chronologies. The findings reveal that while material evidence often remains incomplete or inconclusive, archaeological discoveries provide valuable contextual insights into the socio-political environments in which prophetic traditions emerged and evolved. Ultimately, this paper argues that integrating textual exegesis and archaeological data enables a more nuanced understanding of early human belief systems, without conflating empirical inquiry with doctrinal interpretation.		
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Methodology

The study employs an interdisciplinary qualitative methodology, combining approaches from archaeology, historical anthropology, and textual criticism. Comparative textual analysis was conducted on canonical sources—the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an—alongside ancient Near Eastern inscriptions, papyri, and cuneiform tablets, to identify thematic and chronological correspondences. Archaeological contextualization involved reviewing stratigraphic and material data from Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Levant, focusing on documented periods (Late Bronze Age to Classical Antiquity). Historiographical synthesis was used to compare the evolution of religious historiography with archaeological interpretations, aiming to identify where sacred narratives intersect with material

evidence. This combined framework allows for a balanced scientific examination that neither affirms nor denies theological claims, but seeks to interpret them within their cultural and historical matrices.

Findings and Discussion

1. Textual-Archaeological Divergence: The analysis demonstrates significant chronological and cultural gaps between scriptural timelines and established archaeological records. While religious texts maintain coherent internal chronologies, archaeological layers often show discontinuity or symbolic reinterpretation of similar narratives.
2. Historical Parallels: Certain figures and events described in ancient texts correspond to known historical or mythological archetypes, suggesting that oral traditions and political histories were frequently interwoven.
3. Regional Variations: Distinct civilizations—Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Canaanite, and Persian—exhibited different modes of integrating prophetic or divine figures into state ideology, art, and ritual practice.
4. Epistemological Implications: The study reveals that the tension between faith-based historiography and scientific archaeology is not one of contradiction but of differing epistemic frameworks. Both contribute to understanding how ancient societies conceptualized authority, morality, and destiny.
5. Scientific Integration: By treating religious narratives as cultural artifacts rather than theological proofs, archaeology provides a humanistic lens through which spiritual experiences of early civilizations can be analyzed without compromising scholarly objectivity.

However, the focus of this study will be on Ancient Egypt as a clear model encompassing all the aspects previously mentioned.

1. The Arabian Peninsula

The Arabian Peninsula is considered the cradle of the great divine revelations, as several prophets are mentioned in the holy scriptures in connection with ancient Arab communities. Archaeological discoveries at the site of Ibar, near Dhofar, indicate the existence of a flourishing civilization previously referenced in religious texts, such as the people of 'Ād and their prophet Hūd.

However, inscriptions do not provide direct details about his life. The prophet Šāliḥ, on the other hand, is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as a messenger sent to the Thamūd people, who lived in the northwestern Arabian Peninsula, in the area of Madā'in Šāliḥ (modern-day Al-'Ulā). The site preserves important archaeological remains, including Thamudic and Nabataean inscriptions, all of which point to the presence of a developed society.

Yet, despite the richness of the site, there remains no direct archaeological evidence confirming the personal existence of Prophet Šāliḥ. Some interpretations by Saudi researchers—such as 'Eid al-Yahya and 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Najjār (*Stories of the Prophets*, 3rd ed., Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Lebanon, 2005, pp. 46-49)—suggest that to the west of Madā'in Šāliḥ, about thirty kilometers away, lies a place called al-Hawārah, where a massive rock was found, said to have split open from which the she-camel of Prophet Šāliḥ emerged.

Their evidence lies in rock engravings nearby, which depict the story of the she-camel's emergence. The engraver, according to his depiction, seemed uncertain whether the camel emerged entirely from the right side or from another part of the rock. What is particularly noteworthy, however, is that the engraver faithfully reproduced the details of the event as they are described in the religious text (see Figure 01).





Figures 1: The Incident of Prophet Sālih's She-Camel Depicted in Rock Engravings (Al-'Ulā Region - Saudi Arabia)

2. Mesopotamia

a. Prophet Noah (Nūh):

He is one of the prophets of firm resolve (*Ulu al-'Azm*) whom God sent to guide humanity. He lived during a time when his people worshipped idols and lived in moral and religious corruption. Noah began calling his people to worship God alone, warning them of divine punishment if they persisted in disbelief. However, they ignored and mocked him for 950 years, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

Despite their rejection, Noah did not despair and continued his mission, warning his people that God would send a severe punishment if they did not repent. When they persisted in disbelief, God commanded Noah to build a great ark in preparation for the flood that would engulf the earth. Since the ark was built far from the sea, his people mocked him, but Noah replied that God would punish them for their unbelief.

During construction, Noah carried and shaped the wood according to divine instructions. He took with him the believers, their families, and pairs of animals of every kind to preserve life after the flood. When the ark was completed, God commanded Noah and the believers to embark and forbade any disbeliever from entering.

Then came God's command: the sky poured heavy rain, and the earth gushed forth springs, until the waters covered the whole land. The flood was overwhelming, and all disbelievers perished. After some time, the ark settled upon Mount al-Jūdī, and life began anew on earth. (*Mu'ayyad Ahmad Sa'id Khalaf, The Mythological*

Heritage in Ibn Kathir's Exegesis, Master's Thesis in Arabic Language and Literature, Palestine, 2015, pp. 119, 124.)

3. The Story of the Flood in Mesopotamian Epics and Myths

The Sumerian Epic of Ziusudra: The story of the flood in the Sumerian epic is regarded as the oldest known text addressing the concept of a great deluge, dating back to the 21st century BCE. It tells that the Sumerian gods decided to destroy humankind through a cosmic flood because their growing numbers and noise disturbed the gods—especially Enlil, who deemed their annihilation necessary to restore order.

However, Enki, the god of wisdom and fresh waters, sympathized with humankind and decided to warn King Ziusudra of Shuruppak (one of the earliest Sumerian cities). In a dream or divine revelation, Enki instructed Ziusudra to build a large boat to save himself, his family, and pairs of animals from the coming flood.

Ziusudra obeyed the instructions carefully. When the flood began, heavy rains and surging waters overwhelmed the land for seven days and seven nights, destroying all life. After the waters receded, Ziusudra offered a sacrifice to the gods on a high mountain. The gods regretted their harsh decision and honored Ziusudra for his obedience and devotion. As a reward, they granted him eternal life and allowed him to dwell in a sacred place known as Dilmun, believed to symbolize the land of immortality. (*Epic of Gilgamesh, trans. Anwar Ghani al-Mousawi, Dar Aqwas Publishing, Iraq, 2015, pp. 116-125.*)

The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Epic of Gilgamesh also recounts the story of the great flood and is among the earliest narratives of the deluge in human history. The story appears on Tablet XI, where Gilgamesh meets Utnapishtim, a character often compared to Prophet Noah in the Abrahamic traditions.

Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh that the gods decided to destroy humanity due to their corruption and the noise that disturbed them. The god Enki (Ea), god of wisdom and fresh waters, secretly warned Utnapishtim about the coming catastrophe. He ordered him to build a massive ship, giving detailed instructions about its design and size, and to take aboard his family, artisans, and pairs of animals of every kind.

Utnapishtim followed the divine instructions, and the flood lasted six days and seven nights, submerging the earth and annihilating all life. When the waters receded, the ship rested upon Mount Nisir (sometimes translated as Mount Nimrod). To test whether the land was dry, Utnapishtim released three birds—a dove, a swallow, and a raven. The dove and swallow returned, but the raven did not, indicating that the land was habitable again.

After the flood, Utnapishtim offered a sacrifice to the gods, who regretted their decision to destroy humankind. Ultimately, Enlil rewarded Utnapishtim and his wife with immortality, allowing them to live in a distant paradise, away from humanity. (*Firas al-Sawah, The Adventure of the First Mind, 13th ed., Dar al-Aladdin, Damascus, 2007, pp. 171-172.*)

The Babylonian Atrahasis Myth: The Babylonian tablets narrate another version of the great flood sent by the god Enlil to destroy humankind because of their noise and disturbance. The wise god Enki, opposing total annihilation, warned Atrahasis, “the wisest of men,” about the impending disaster. He instructed him to build a large ark to protect himself, his family, and pairs of animals.

The flood lasted seven days and seven nights, during which the waters engulfed the earth and wiped out humanity. After the flood ended, Atrahasis offered a sacrifice to the gods, who regretted their act and decided henceforth to reduce the human population by other means—such as old age and infertility—rather than through total destruction, thus creating a new system of balance for humankind. (*The Holy Bible, Book of Genesis 7:1-5.*)

Prophet Noah in the Divine Scriptures

In the Old Testament: The story of Noah and the flood appears in the Book of Genesis, where God decided to send a great flood to destroy humankind for their wickedness, except for Noah, the righteous man who found favor in God's eyes. God commanded Noah to build an ark according to specific measurements and to take with him his family and pairs of every animal species to ensure the continuity of life after the catastrophe.

The flood lasted forty days and forty nights, covering even the mountains and destroying every living creature outside the ark. After the waters subsided, Noah released a raven and a dove to test whether the land had dried. When the dove returned with an olive branch, Noah knew the earth was drying. He then left the ark with his family and the animals, offering a sacrifice of gratitude to God.

God blessed Noah and his descendants, making a covenant with him that He would never again destroy the earth by flood. As stated in *Genesis 7:1-5*:

“Then the LORD said to Noah, ‘Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and a pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, and seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.’ And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.”

In the Holy Qur'an: Prophet Noah (Nūh) is mentioned 43 times in the Qur'an, and the story of the flood appears in several chapters, most notably Sūrat Nūh and Sūrat Hūd. The Qur'an recounts how God sent Noah to his people, who worshipped idols and practiced corruption. As stated in Sūrat al-'Ankabūt (29:14):

“And We certainly sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them a thousand years minus fifty years; and the flood seized them while they were wrongdoers.”

Noah called his people to monotheism, but they denied him. After losing hope in their faith, Noah invoked God to punish them. God commanded him to build a great ark and to take with him pairs of animals and the believers. When the flood came, water gushed from the heavens and the earth, covering everything.

As the Qur'an recounts in Sūrat Hūd (11:42):

“And it sailed with them through waves like mountains, and Noah called to his son who was apart [from them], ‘O my son, come aboard with us and do not be with the disbelievers.’”

Eventually, the ark rested upon Mount al-Jūdī, and when the waters subsided, God commanded Noah to disembark with peace and blessings, as stated in Sūrat Hūd (11:48):

“It was said, ‘O Noah, disembark in peace from Us and blessings upon you and upon nations [descending] from those with you. But other nations We will grant enjoyment; then there will touch them from Us a painful punishment.’”

(Abd al-Wahhāb al-Najjār, previous reference, pp. 100-115.)

b. Prophet Abraham (Ibrāhīm): In the Divine Scriptures: Prophet Abraham is a central figure in the Bible, mentioned in Genesis (Chapters 11-25). He is regarded as the spiritual father of many nations and peoples in both Jewish and Christian traditions. Born in Ur of the Chaldeans, originally named Abram, he came from a family of idol worshipers. From an early age, Abraham began to question idol worship and sought the true God.

God called Abraham to abandon idolatry and follow Him. Abraham obeyed, as mentioned in *Genesis 11:31*:

“Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Harran, they settled there.”

Abraham left his homeland with his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot, heading toward Canaan, the land God promised to give to his descendants. Although Abraham and Sarah were old and childless, God promised that Abraham would be father of a great nation. His name was later changed to Abraham, meaning “father of many.” He first fathered Ishmael, but God promised that the son of the covenant would be Isaac, born to Sarah in her old age.

In the Holy Qur'an: Prophet Ibrāhīm is mentioned 69 times in the Qur'an, and his story appears in several chapters, including Al-Baqarah, Āl 'Imrān, Ibrāhīm, and As-Şāffāt. His story begins in Ur, where he grew up among idol worshipers; his father Āzar was a sculptor of idols. From a young age, Abraham questioned this practice, asking how lifeless statues could be worshiped.

In his youth, Abraham destroyed the idols of his people, leaving only the largest one and placing the axe upon it. When they confronted him, he challenged their beliefs. God then commanded Abraham to call his people to monotheism publicly, which led to his opposition by King Nimrod, as stated in Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:258):

"Have you not considered the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord [merely] because Allah had given him kingship? When Abraham said, 'My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death,' he said, 'I give life and cause death.' Abraham said, 'Indeed, Allah brings up the sun from the east, so bring it up from the west.' So the disbeliever was overwhelmed [by astonishment]; and Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people."

Nimrod ordered Abraham to be burned in a great fire, but God saved him, commanding the fire: *"Be coolness and safety upon Abraham."*

Abraham continued his mission and later traveled with Sarah and Lot to Palestine and Egypt. He was blessed with Ishmael in his old age, and God promised that his descendants would form a great nation. In a test of faith, God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Ishmael, but at the last moment replaced him with a great ram, confirming Abraham's obedience.

The Qur'an also recounts how Abraham and Ishmael built the Ka'bah in Mecca, as stated in Sūrat al-Baqarah (2:125):

"And [mention] when We made the House a place of return for the people and [a place of] security. And take, [O believers], from the standing place of Abraham a place of prayer. And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], 'Purify My House for those who perform Tawaf and those who stay [for worship] and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer].'"

In Archaeological Sources: According to some archaeological studies, the Amraphel mentioned in the Bible as a contemporary of Abraham is believed by some to be King Hammurabi. Researcher Philby notes that cuneiform inscriptions tell of a ruler in southern Mesopotamia overthrown in a coup, named Yathi'-El, a name interpreted as "Friend of God," possibly referring to Abraham.

A Babylonian inscription mentioning "Abam-Rama" has also been linked by some scholars to Abraham, though Sayyid al-Qumni rejects this theory, arguing that the Semitic world was full of similar names and no definitive conclusion can be drawn.

Other scholars maintain that Abraham's existence remains archaeologically unverified, and research continues as not all cuneiform tablets from ancient Iraq have yet been discovered or deciphered. Thus, it is difficult to make a final judgment regarding the historical existence of Abraham. (*The Holy Bible, Genesis 11:31.*)

c. Prophet Jonah (Yūnus):

Prophet Jonah (Yūnus) was one of God's messengers sent to the people of Nineveh, a city in Iraq. His story is found prominently in the Qur'an, in chapters such as Al-Anbiyā', As-Şāffāt, and Al-Qalam.

Jonah was sent to call the people of Nineveh to worship God alone, but they denied him and persisted in sin. Angered by their rejection, Jonah left the city without God's permission. During his journey, he boarded a ship, but a violent storm arose, threatening to sink it. The crew cast lots to decide who should be thrown overboard to lighten the ship, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

He was cast into the sea, where he was swallowed by a great fish (whale). Inside its belly, Jonah realized his mistake and prayed earnestly, saying:

“There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.”

God accepted his repentance, and the whale released him safely onto the shore. Jonah then returned to his people to find that they had repented and accepted his message. God therefore spared them from the punishment that had been decreed. (*Abd al-Wahhāb al-Najār, previous reference, pp. 410-411.*)

Mention of Prophet Jonah (Yunus) in the Divine Scriptures

In the Old Testament:

The story of the Prophet Jonah is mentioned in the Book of Jonah. Jonah was a prophet sent by God to the city of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, which was filled with evil and corruption. God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and proclaim repentance to its people because their wickedness had come up before Him:

“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” (*The Holy Bible, Book of Jonah 1:2*)

God warned that if they did not repent, He would destroy them. But instead of obeying God’s command, Jonah decided to flee. He boarded a ship, and during the journey, a great storm arose that threatened to sink the vessel. The crew realized the storm had a divine cause, so they cast lots to determine who was responsible. The lot fell upon Jonah, who confessed that he was fleeing from God’s command. He asked them to throw him into the sea, and when they did, the storm ceased immediately.

Then the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, and he remained in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights:

“Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.” (*The Holy Bible, Book of Jonah 1:17*)

During this time, Jonah prayed to God from the depths of the sea:

“I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice.” (*The Holy Bible, Book of Jonah 2:2*)

Jonah repented and regretted trying to flee from God, pleading for His deliverance. God accepted his prayer and commanded the fish to vomit him onto dry land.

After his rescue, God again commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and deliver His message:

“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.” (*The Holy Bible, Book of Jonah 3:2*)

This time Jonah obeyed. He entered the city and proclaimed:

“Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”

The people of Nineveh believed the message, repented sincerely, wore sackcloth, and turned from their evil ways. Even the king rose from his throne, covered himself with sackcloth, and declared a citywide fast. When God saw their repentance, He forgave them and spared the city from destruction.

However, Jonah was displeased and angry that God had shown mercy to the people of Nineveh instead of destroying them. He sat outside the city, waiting to see what would happen. God caused a plant to grow to shade him from the burning sun, and Jonah rejoiced over the plant. But the next day, God sent a worm that withered the plant, and Jonah grieved over its loss. Then God explained that He had every right to show compassion to the people of Nineveh, who did not know their right hand from their left and were more deserving of mercy than the plant.

In the Holy Qur'an:

Prophet Yunus (Jonah) is mentioned four times in the Qur'an. He was sent to a people who worshipped other than God and lived in corruption, as stated in the verse: *"And indeed, Jonah was among the messengers." (The Holy Qur'an, Surah As-Saffat, 37:139)*

Jonah called his people to monotheism and the worship of God alone, warning them of divine punishment if they did not repent. But they denied and rejected his call, causing him to lose hope in their faith. In anger and despair, he left them without divine permission and boarded a ship to a distant land.

During the voyage, a violent storm arose, threatening to sink the ship. The crew sensed that something supernatural was behind the calamity, so they cast lots to find the cause. The lot fell upon Jonah, who asked them to throw him into the sea to calm the storm. When they did, the sea became calm.

Then God sent a great fish to swallow Jonah, and he remained in its belly for three days and three nights. During this time, Jonah prayed to God in humility and repentance, saying: *"There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers." (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Anbiya, 21:87)*

This supplication came from sincere repentance, so God accepted his prayer and commanded the fish to release him onto the shore. After his deliverance, God instructed Jonah to return to his people and call them once more to faith. This time, they accepted his message, repented from their sins and idolatry, and God forgave them and granted them a new chance at life.

Mention of Prophet Jonah in Archaeological Sources

The Prophet Jonah lived during the reign of the Assyrian King Sennacherib, known for his great military conquests. Historians have dated the siege of Jerusalem (Orshalim) by Sennacherib to 701 B.C., which suggests that Jonah died before this period.

As for his burial place, most historians and travelers believe it to be in the town of Halhul, located between Jerusalem and Hebron. It is said that Jonah lived there for seven years, built a place of worship, and died there.

As for the site known as Tell al-Tawbah in Mosul, where a tomb attributed to Jonah exists, it is considered an unlikely burial site. Some scholars argue that after God forgave the people of Nineveh, Jonah traveled with his companion, the king, and eventually reached Palestine, where he died.

(Nakhal Youssef Mohsen: "Prophet Yunus (Jonah) in the Books of Hadith and History," 8 May 2021, accessed 01/02/2025.)

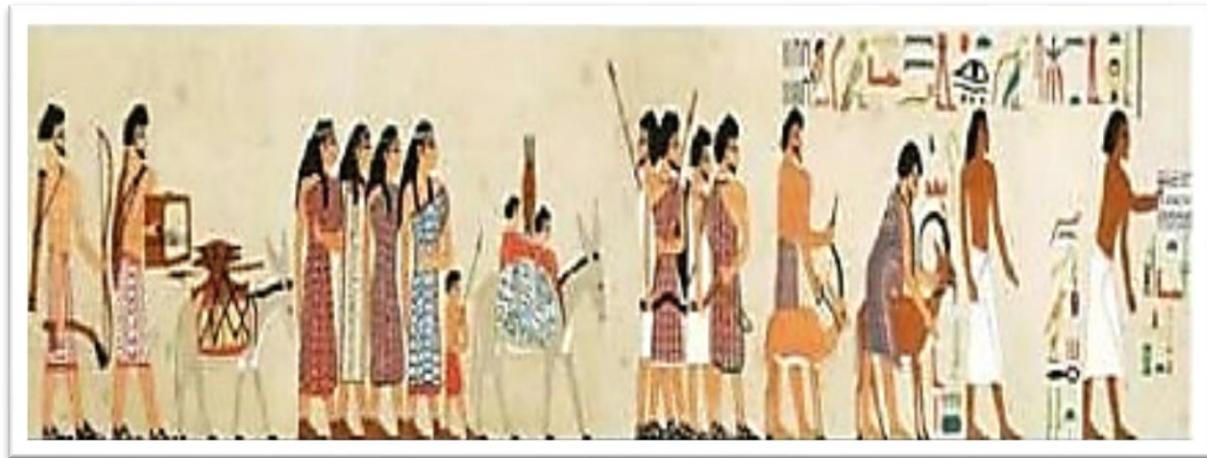


Figure No. 01:

Absha (Abraham) is shown with a gazelle, followed by Lot leading another gazelle. Behind them are four men, and further back appears Anan carrying Lot's two daughters on his back. Following them is a young man accompanied by four women, among whom are the wives of Abraham and Lot, followed by another Anan and two more men. (Magdy Sadiq: *The True History of Egypt*, p. 50)

Pharaoh then released him, and he was restored to health. The Torah also informs us that the Pharaoh of Egypt summoned Abram and said to him: “*What is this you have done to me?*”— because Abram had not told him that Sarai was his wife. Pharaoh said: “*Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go.*” Thus, Abram went up from Egypt with his wife and all that he possessed, and Lot went with him to the land of Canaan. This is confirmed by the historian Abu al-Fida, who stated that Pharaoh of Egypt released Sarah and gifted her Hagar as a maid-servant. (*Book of Genesis*, 12:18–20; see also Magdy Sadiq, *op. cit.*, pp. 83–84)

Prophet Joseph (Arso)

Prophet Joseph is regarded as one of the most prominent religious figures associated with ancient Egyptian history. His story is narrated in detail in the *Qur'an*, in *Surah Yusuf*, and also in the *Old Testament* in the *Book of Genesis*. Both accounts portray his transformation from a wronged young boy cast into a well to a high-ranking political and administrative figure in the Egyptian royal court.

This narrative reflects the complex interplay of religious, social, and political dimensions: Joseph symbolized patience and divine empowerment while also representing the foreigner who successfully integrated into Egyptian society and rose to the position of “the Chief Minister of Egypt” (*'Aziz Misr*).

Although religious texts do not specify the exact historical period in which Joseph lived, archaeological and historical studies have attempted to associate him with particular eras of Egyptian history — most notably the *Hyksos* period (second millennium BCE), which would have allowed a Semitic individual to ascend to such a position of authority.

In general, the story of Joseph in Egypt is closely linked to concepts of economic management and administrative organization. Religious texts state that he was entrusted with the storage and distribution of grain. Ancient Egyptian documents — particularly from the Middle and New Kingdoms — demonstrate that Egyptians had developed precise systems for recording and storing crops, making it plausible to interpret Joseph's story in a realistic historical-administrative context.

Thus, his figure stands as a historical model illustrating the interaction between Semitic elements and ancient Egyptian state structures — a topic that has fueled extensive debate among scholars of sacred texts and archaeology alike.

Regarding the sacred text, the *Torah* gives a detailed account of his story in the *Book of Genesis* (chapters 37–50), while the *Qur'anic* version appears in *Surah Yusuf*:

“And there came a company of travelers; they sent their water-drawer, and he let down his bucket. He said, ‘Good news! Here is a boy.’ And they concealed him, taking him as merchandise, and Allah was Knowing of what they did.

And they sold him for a reduced price — a few dirhams — and they were, concerning him, of those content with little. And the one from Egypt who bought him said to his wife, ‘Make his residence comfortable. Perhaps he will benefit us, or we will adopt him as a son.’ And thus We established Joseph in the land that We might teach him the interpretation of events. And Allah is predominant over His affair, but most of the people do not know.” (*Surah Yusuf*, verses 19–21)

It is known that the Pharaoh of Egypt admired Joseph after he interpreted his dream. He ordered his release from prison, but Joseph refused to leave merely as a pardoned prisoner; he wanted to emerge proven innocent and

honorable. He therefore requested that the king himself reexamine his case. The Pharaoh did so, and the women testified to Joseph's innocence, with the wife of the minister confessing her attempt at seduction.

Upon hearing this, the Pharaoh's admiration for Joseph increased, recognizing in him the man qualified to lead Egypt through the years of abundance and famine. (Salah al-Khalidi, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178)

When Joseph assumed the office of "Chief Minister of Egypt," he was not merely executing the Pharaoh's decrees; he possessed full authority to govern according to divine law. Joseph had complete administrative freedom — issuing and implementing regulations at will — while the Pharaoh remained a nominal ruler, with actual power in Joseph's hands. (Ibid., p. 182)

Prophet Jacob and His Family in Egypt

Jacob (peace be upon him) took all his household — his sons, their families, servants, livestock, and possessions — and set out from southern Palestine toward Egypt, where they settled with Joseph, the Chief Minister of Egypt.

Once his parents and brothers had recovered from the hardships of travel and resettled in Egypt near Joseph, the time came for the fulfillment of Joseph's childhood vision:

"And he raised his parents upon the throne, and they bowed to him in prostration. And he said, 'O my father, this is the interpretation of my dream before. My Lord has made it come true. And He was certainly good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you here from the desert after Satan had sown discord between me and my brothers. Indeed, my Lord is Subtle in what He wills. Indeed, it is He who is the Knowing, the Wise. My Lord, You have given me [something] of sovereignty and taught me of the interpretation of dreams. Creator of the heavens and the earth, You are my protector in this world and the Hereafter. Cause me to die a Muslim and join me with the righteous.' That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. And you were not with them when they put together their plan while they conspired." (*Surah Yusuf*, verses 99-102)

Joseph honored his parents, lifting them to sit beside him on the royal throne, while his eleven brothers stood before him. They all bowed in respect — his parents and brothers alike — fulfilling the dream he had seen in his youth. (Salah al-Khalidi, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-240)

The Entry of Prophet Jacob and His Sons into Egypt

The fact of Prophet Jacob's entry into Egypt along with his sons is also attested by the biblical texts. They state that a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, prompting Jacob son of Isaac to migrate to Egypt upon the invitation of the Pharaoh. There, he settled in the land of Goshen, located in the eastern part of the Nile Delta — one of the most fertile regions of Egypt — which suited the pastoral lifestyle of the Hebrews as it provided abundant grazing lands. (Taqi al-Din al-Maqrizi, *op. cit.*, p. 31)

The *Book of Genesis* also tells us that the Pharaoh of Egypt said to Joseph:

"The land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land; let them live in the land of Goshen." So Joseph settled his father and his brothers and granted them property in the best part of Egypt — the land of Rameses — as Pharaoh had commanded.

The specification of this region, where Joseph settled his father and brothers, indicates that Jacob's arrival in Egypt likely occurred during the reign of Ramses II. Joseph housed them in the best lands owned by Ramses, which later bore his name and were situated in the region known as Goshen (or *Jashan*). (Magdy Sadiq, *The True History of Ancient Egypt*, p. 91)

An inscription of Harmais (Ramses) was discovered in his tomb at Memphis, now preserved in the British Museum and the Leiden Antiquities Collection. It depicts Arsu (Joseph) standing between Pharaoh Harmais and his brothers, who are shown bowing before him as the ruler of Egypt. (Magdy Sadiq, *The True History of Ancient Egypt*, p. 64)

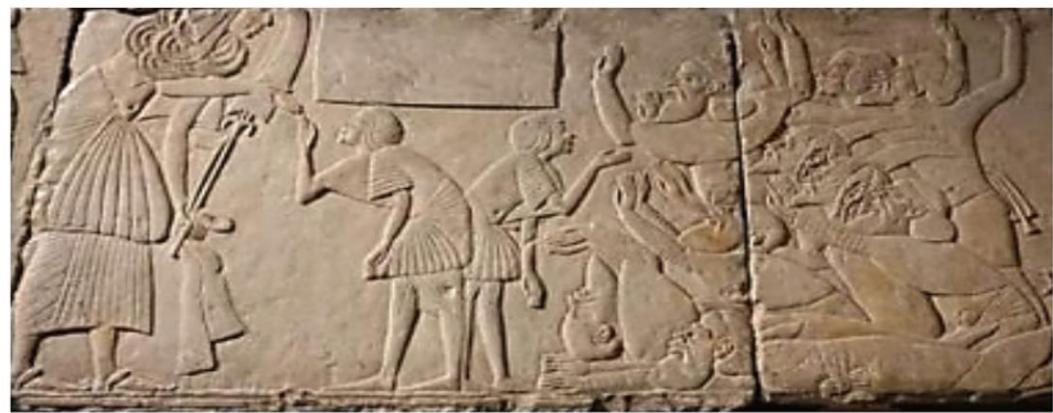
The scene also includes Semitic Hebrew migrants prostrating to him as the governor of Egypt, while he, along with his brothers, turns to offer allegiance to the Pharaoh as the second man in the kingdom. This episode provided the Israelites the opportunity to settle in Egypt, a land known in Egyptian sources as Gesem or Jasem, and in the *Torah* as Goshen, as mentioned by historian Muhammad Bayoumi Mehran in his work *Historical Studies from the Qur'an Regarding Egypt*.

There has been considerable scholarly debate about this view: some maintain that Goshen was a region adjacent to Egypt, while others affirm that it lay within Egypt itself — specifically in the Nile Delta — based on the biblical description. (Muhammad Bayoumi Mehran, *Historical Studies from the Qur'an Regarding Egypt*, Dar al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya, 2nd ed., Beirut, 1988, p. 108)

However, it is important to note that the text does not explicitly state that Prophet Joseph lived during the reign of Ramses. The biblical narrative associates the construction of the city of Ramses with the period of Israelite enslavement, which occurred centuries after Joseph's time. The sacred text speaks generally about the Israelites and their historical trajectory.

If we attempt to approximate the period of Joseph's arrival in Egypt, it can be placed within the era of the New Kingdom, while the arrival of his kin — the broader Israelite tribes — occurred later.

Nonetheless, some historians believe that the Israelites entered Egypt during the reign of Amenhotep II, a view supported by Bernie and Gershman, who wrote that certain Hebrew tribes had settled in Egypt's eastern frontier. (Donald Redford, *op. cit.*, p. 393)



Another inscription depicts Arsu (Joseph) presenting his brothers — arrested as spies — before Pharaoh, who subsequently ordered them to be imprisoned for three days, consistent with the narrative in *Genesis* 42:14-17. (Magdy Sadiq, *op. cit.*, p. 92)

The Story of Prophet Joseph (Yusuf) in Egypt

Arsu (Joseph) brought his brothers, who had been arrested as spies, and presented them to Pharaoh Horemheb, while holding a staff with ropes by which he led his detained brothers to the Pharaoh, who placed golden collars around his neck. Majdi Sadiq, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

Alan Gardiner, as cited by Majdi Sadiq, mentions that Lake Moeris was connected to the Nile through the Bahr Yussef ("Joseph's Canal"). The Bahr Yussef is the waterway branching from the Nile near Dairut and flowing toward Lake Moeris. In the Egyptian language, this canal was known as *Piom Arsinoe*, which was later translated into Arabic as "Bahr Yussef." In this case, can we consider Arsinoe to refer to Prophet Joseph himself?

Ramesses III answers this question in the Harris Papyrus, particularly in the section related to the Strike Papyrus, where it is written:

“... A severe famine brought Egypt into distress, and the country fell into a pitiful state of decline and disorder because of the intense hunger and drought. I saved Egypt from this affliction by appointing a man of Semitic origin called *Arsu* as ruler over the land of Egypt.”

Some studies have indicated that Prophet Joseph enjoyed privileges that allowed him to exercise the same authority as Pharaoh himself. Majdi Sadiq, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

In my opinion, however, this material evidence refers to a later period, perhaps as a symbolic comparison to what happened during the time of Moses, and does not necessarily mean that Prophet Joseph lived during the Ramesside era—a rather unlikely hypothesis.

Nevertheless, the Biblical account aligns with the papyrus narrative. The Book of Genesis tells us that Joseph interpreted Pharaoh’s dream, predicting seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine and drought. Joseph advised Pharaoh to appoint a wise man over Egypt to collect one-fifth of the harvest during the years of plenty so that the land would not perish in the famine. Pharaoh approved of Joseph’s counsel and made him ruler over all Egypt, saying to him:

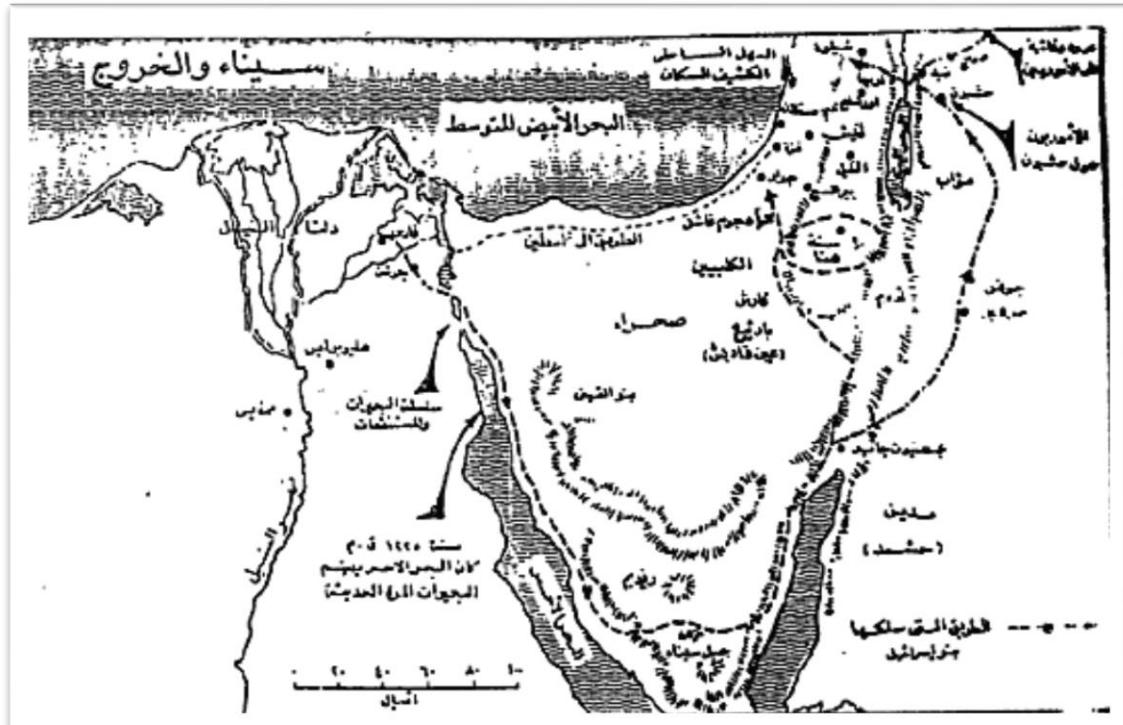
“I am Pharaoh, but without your word, no one shall lift hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.”

Pharaoh called Joseph *Zaphenath-Paneah*, meaning “the one entrusted with the treasures of the land.” Furthermore, according to the Book of Genesis, Pharaoh commanded Joseph to bring his father and brothers to dwell in the land of Goshen. Joseph settled his father and brothers and gave them property in the best part of Egypt, the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered (Genesis 47:11-16). Some scholars estimate that Jacob and the tribes came to Egypt around 1706 B.C., according to Biblical chronology.

It is worth noting that most studies comparing the story of Prophet Joseph in the Torah with Egyptian history find strong parallels between him and the historical figure of the vizier Yuya. Both share similarities, such as the dream involving seven ears of grain and seven cows, which Yuya is also said to have interpreted—corresponding to the Qur’anic narrative of Joseph’s gift of dream interpretation. Archaeological studies conducted by Theodore Davis, who discovered Yuya’s tomb in 1905, confirmed numerous resemblances between Prophet Joseph and Yuya, as evidenced by the papyri and the Book of Genesis. For example, both men held the title “*Bearer of the King’s Seal*”, signifying responsibility for royal granaries. Yuya bore several titles, including “*The Wise*” and “*Chief Overseer of the Sacred Cattle*”. He was also known for his wisdom and devotion to the Lord.

As recorded in Genesis 41, Pharaoh removed his signet ring and placed it on Joseph’s hand, adorned him with a golden chain, and made him ride in his second chariot. These details correspond precisely with the golden necklace and chariot found by Davis in Yuya’s tomb.

Further studies reveal that the tomb’s owner was likely not Egyptian by birth—unlike his wife, Asenath, daughter of Potiphera. The tomb itself consisted of a single chamber with no wall inscriptions, unlike typical Egyptian tombs. Anatomical studies of the mummy showed that the man was taller than average and possessed non-Egyptian physical features. Elliot Smith, the anatomist who examined the mummy, noted that its build differed markedly from typical Egyptian mummies. Moreover, the name *Yuya* was foreign to local naming conventions.



The Biblical narrative also adds an intriguing detail: before his death, Joseph requested that his bones be carried out of Egypt when the Israelites departed. The Israelites indeed fulfilled this request, burying his remains in Shechem, within the territory Jacob had purchased from the sons of Hamor for a hundred pieces of silver, making it the inheritance of Joseph's descendants (Joshua 24:32).

This strongly suggests that the discoveries in Yuya's tomb and the associated papyri align with the life story of Prophet Joseph in Egypt. However, the identity of the mummy itself cannot be definitively confirmed—it might belong to another Semitic figure, possibly a relative or close associate of Joseph.

After the deaths of Jacob and Joseph (peace be upon them), and the passing of Joseph's brothers, the Israelites continued to multiply and prosper in Egypt. New generations arose, but the period between Joseph and Moses (peace be upon them) remains unrecorded in authentic Islamic sources—neither in the explicit Qur'anic verses nor in sound prophetic traditions. This historical gap represents a “*missing link*” in which we possess no reliable details or events. Salah al-Khalidi, op. cit., p. 259.

Prophet Moses (Musa) in Egypt

Prophet Moses is regarded as one of the most significant religious and historical figures associated with Ancient Egypt. His name appears prominently in the holy scriptures, and his life is closely tied to Egypt—from his birth and upbringing to his mission to Pharaoh and his people, and finally to his exodus with the Israelites.

However, studying this figure from a historical and archaeological perspective remains highly controversial, primarily because no direct archaeological evidence recounts his story, while religious texts provide abundant material open to interpretation and inquiry.

The Torah tells us that a woman from the tribe of Levi gave birth to a son and hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer, she took a basket made of papyrus reeds, coated it with pitch and tar, placed the child inside, and set it among the reeds along the riverbank. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. Then Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe in the river, and her maidens walked along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds, sent her maid to fetch it, and when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrew children."

Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for you?" Pharaoh's daughter agreed, and the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the child and nursed him. When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him *Moses*, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water." *Ibid.*, pp. 274-275.

Later, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and saw their burdens. He noticed an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. The next day, he saw two Hebrews fighting and said to the one in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your companion?" The man replied, "Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and said, "Surely the matter is known."

When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, where he sat by a well. The priest of Midian had seven daughters who came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up, helped them, and watered their flock. When they returned to their father Reuel, he said, "How is it that you have come back so soon today?" They replied, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he even drew water for us and watered the flock." He said to his daughters, "Where is he then? Why did you leave the man? Call him, that he may eat bread." Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah in marriage. She bore him a son, and he named him Gershom, saying, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."

In those many days, the king of Egypt died, and the Israelites groaned under their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. Majdi Sadiq, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-103.

Moses and Aaron Before Pharaoh

Moses obeyed the command of Almighty God and, together with his brother Aaron (peace be upon them both), went to Pharaoh to inform him that they were messengers sent by God to him. This stage details the confrontations between Prophet Moses and Pharaoh.

When Moses met Pharaoh for the first time, he informed him of his divine mission and presented the staff and the shining hand as signs from God. Pharaoh responded by accusing him of practicing magic. Pharaoh then consulted his courtiers, who advised him to summon the sorcerers in order to challenge and defeat Moses. However, the situation turned against Pharaoh, for the truth became manifest to the sorcerers, and they believed in Moses (peace be upon him).

Pharaoh, enraged by their faith, threatened them with torture. He also ordered his minister Haman to build a towering edifice so that he might "ascend and look for the God of Moses." Pharaoh then called upon his people to worship him, claiming divinity and lordship over them.

God tested Pharaoh and his people with a series of trials and punishments: He afflicted them with calamities, reduced their harvests, and sent upon them floods, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood as signs. Yet, despite all these afflictions, they did not believe; they persisted in their disbelief and continued to follow their false deity, Pharaoh.

Thus ended the mission of Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) before Pharaoh. Neither did Pharaoh and his people believe in his message, nor did they release the Children of Israel or lift from them the oppression and torment they endured; instead, they only increased their persecution and killing.

The Exodus in the Torah

On the morning of the fifteenth day of the first Hebrew month, Nisan, the Children of Israel departed from Rameses to Succoth, numbering about six hundred thousand men on foot, not counting the children. A large mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks, herds, and an abundance of livestock (Exodus 12).

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: “Tell the Children of Israel to turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal-zephon; you shall encamp before it by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the Children of Israel, ‘They are entangled in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’ And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart so that he will pursue them, and I will be glorified through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.”

Map No. 01: The route followed by Moses during the Exodus from Egypt and the subsequent wandering in the desert. (*Ibrahim Malmat*, p. 54)

When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds about the people and said, “What have we done that we have let Israel go from serving us?” So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him; he took six hundred chosen chariots and all the chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of them. The Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart so that he pursued the Israelites, who were going out triumphantly. The Egyptians pursued them and overtook them, all Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and army, as they camped by the sea near Pi-hahiroth, opposite Baal-zephon.

When Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians marching after them, and they were terrified and cried out to the Lord. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. And you, lift up your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it, so that the Israelites may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them.” (*Magdy Sadiq*, “*The True History of Ancient Egypt*,” pp. 107-109)

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all that night and turned the sea into dry land. The Israelites went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, with the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and horsemen. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea again, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal state while the Egyptians were fleeing into it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen—Pharaoh’s entire army that had gone into the sea after them—not one of them survived (Exodus 14:26).

The Exodus marked the end of a long era of suffering and oppression endured by the Israelites and the downfall of the arrogant Pharaoh. This event thus signifies both the conclusion of one stage in Moses’ story and the beginning of another—his divine mission among the Children of Israel—as depicted in both the Qur’anic and Biblical narratives.

According to Josephus, Thutmose was the Pharaoh during the Exodus, specifically in the ninth year of his reign. Archaeological evidence supports this, as Thutmose III recorded the Battle of Megiddo on the walls of the Temple of Karnak, which many believe corresponds to the pursuit of the Israelites and the drowning of Pharaoh’s army in the Sea of Reeds. The historian Manetho mentioned that the Exodus occurred during the reign of Amenophis (Amenhotep), which Amenhotep II confirmed on his stela dated to his ninth regnal year. (*Magdy Sadiq*, *ibid.*, p. 104)

Historians and archaeologists generally place the entry of Joseph (peace be upon him) into Egypt in the 16th century BCE, and the Exodus of Moses (peace be upon him) and the Israelites in the 12th century BCE, during the reign of the Nineteenth Dynasty, meaning that the Israelites dwelt in Egypt for about four centuries. (*Nidal Abbas Jabr Dwaikat, ibid., p. 143*)

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, and Pharaoh and his army drowned in the sea. This was the final confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh: God commanded Moses to lead the Israelites out by night. Pharaoh and his courtiers pursued them with their army to annihilate them. When they reached the sea, God ordered Moses to strike the sea with his staff; the waters parted, forming a safe, dry path for them to cross. The Israelites were saved, but when Pharaoh and his soldiers followed, the waters closed over them, drowning them all. In his final moments, Pharaoh conversed with the Angel of Death, and God cast his body upon the shore as a sign for those who came after him. (*Salah al-Khalidi, ibid., p. 276*)

The Exodus in the Qur'an

The Qur'an also refers to Pharaoh's mobilization of his people to pursue Moses and those with him:

"And We inspired Moses, saying, 'Set out with My servants by night, for you will surely be pursued.' Then Pharaoh sent heralds throughout the cities, saying, 'These are but a small band, and indeed they have enraged us. But we are all on our guard.' So We expelled them from gardens and springs, treasures, and noble dwellings. Thus We made the Children of Israel inherit them." (*Surah Ash-Shu'ara, 26:52-59*)

These verses illustrate the swift and decisive mobilization Pharaoh undertook in his attempt to overtake Moses and his followers. (*Nidal Abbas Jabr Dwaikat, ibid., p. 144*)

The Ten Plagues

The Lord said to Moses: "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh." Then God struck the land of Egypt with ten great plagues—blood, frogs, gnats, flies, pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and finally, the death of the firstborn. After each plague, Pharaoh's heart hardened, and he refused to release the people.

God commanded Moses and Aaron in Egypt: "This month shall be for you the beginning of months, the first month of the year. Speak to the whole congregation of Israel, saying: On the tenth day of this month, each man shall take a lamb for his family, a lamb for each household. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old; you may take it

The Exodus in Egyptian Studies and Archaeology

The issue of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt is considered one of the most controversial topics in historical, archaeological, and religious studies. While some scholars regard it as a pivotal event in shaping the religious and historical identity of the Jewish people, others question the authenticity of the entire narrative, suggesting that it was formed later during the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BCE as part of constructing the Jewish collective memory.

In 1941, Dr. Ahmad Badawi, during his excavations at the Temple of the god Ptah in Memphis, discovered an inscription depicting the ninth-year campaign of Pharaoh Amenhotep II. He translated it and recorded the translation in the second volume of his work *In the Procession of the Sun*, later published by Selim Hassan in the fourth volume of his encyclopedia *Ancient Egypt*. The content can be summarized as follows:

"In the ninth year, on the twenty-fifth day of the spring season, His Majesty advanced upon the province of Afaq, then moved with his chariots and warriors toward *Yam* (the sea), riding in his war chariot. He destroyed *Misan* (Etham) and *Khethithan* (Goshen), which lie west of *Sukkoth*. Pharaoh Amenhotep II, 'Aa Kheperu Ra,' had seen in his dream the god Amun coming to him to grant him strength and protection. As a result of that vision, Pharaoh's heart was strengthened; he arose early in the morning, mounted his war chariot, and went toward *Orin* (Pi Hahiroth) and *Magdolion* (Migdol). When he saw the abundance of spoils before him and the Nile approaching, he dug two trenches around the captives, filled them with fire, and kept watch over them all night with

his weapon in hand, for he was alone and his battalions were far behind him. On the day of his coronation feast, he plundered the town of 'Ana Wakhret,' then marched upon 'Hu Akni,' and afterward returned to Memphis, where he reviewed his war spoils and prisoners." (*ibid.*, pp. 111-112)

For this reason, some scholars argue that the Exodus took place during the reign of Thutmose III, in the Eighteenth Dynasty. Historically, it has been established that, according to the biblical account, the Exodus occurred in 1491 BCE, during the reign of the second king of the New Kingdom. Archaeological evidence, however, places the event in the time of Amenhotep II, while the Jewish historian Josephus claims it occurred during the reign of Thutmose, leading to the conclusion that it likely happened under Thutmose II, known also as Amenhotep II, King of Egypt. Later, Ramesside inscriptions inform us that the armies of Seti I and Ramses II conducted campaigns in the land of Canaan. (*ibid.*, pp. 96-97)

Historical sources also mention that Thutmose I (Amenhotep I) was the Pharaoh of oppression, as he ascended the throne of the Egyptian Empire and founded a new dynasty (Magdy Sadiq, *op. cit.*, p. 102). The Book of Exodus recounts that "a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph," and that he said of the Israelites:

"Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and when war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and depart from the land."

Therefore, Pharaoh set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built for Pharaoh the store cities of Pithom and Raamses. When this method failed to curb their increase, Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying:

"Every son that is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall keep alive." (*Exodus 1:8-22*)

When power in Egypt passed from the Hyksos to the native pharaohs, the latter began oppressing and enslaving the Israelites. The Egyptians likely regarded the Israelites as allies of the foreign Hyksos invaders and thus unleashed their anger upon them. They forgot the favor of Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him), who had governed Egypt during a severe economic crisis of seven lean years, saving the land through wise management. While the Israelites in Egypt were monotheists, the Egyptians worshiped local deities and considered Pharaoh himself divine—one of the fundamental causes of hostility between them.

The Qur'an acknowledges this, as Allah Almighty says:

"Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land and made its people into factions, oppressing a sector among them, slaughtering their sons and keeping their women alive. Indeed, he was of the corrupters." (*Surah Al-Qasas, 28:4 - Sahih International*)

Based on the foregoing, it can be said that the Israelites' departure from Egypt occurred in two stages:

1. The first, which we may term "the expulsion exodus", took place around 1550 BCE, coinciding with the expulsion of the Hyksos during the reign of Thutmose III.
2. The second, which may be called "the flight exodus," occurred with Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) during the Ramesside period, specifically under King Merneptah.

This conclusion is supported by the Merneptah Stele, a black granite monument discovered in his mortuary temple at Thebes, which records his victory over these people in a poetic inscription. The term "Israel" appears here for the first time in ancient Egyptian inscriptions, where it states:

"Israel is laid waste; its seed is no more."

Therefore, the Pharaoh of oppression was Ramses II, who built the cities of Raamses and Pithom, in which he exploited the Israelites for labor—just as the Torah recounts. After the story of Midian and the death of Ramses II,

Moses returned to Egypt during the reign of Merneptah, who is thus identified as the Pharaoh of the Exodus for the reasons mentioned above.

In conclusion, the Torah portrays the Exodus of the Israelites under Moses as the culmination of a series of divine plagues against Egypt, followed by the crossing of the sea and the wandering in the Sinai desert before entering the land of Canaan. It presents the event as the foundation of a new covenant between God and His chosen people. The Qur'an, meanwhile, affirms the Exodus as a divine miracle emphasizing moral and monotheistic dimensions—the liberation of the Israelites from Pharaoh's tyranny—as mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:50):

“And [recall] when We parted the sea for you and saved you and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you were looking on.” (*Sahih International*)

As for the absence of archaeological evidence explicitly confirming the event, it may be attributed to the ancient Egyptians' tendency not to record defeats or events that could diminish their prestige and royal dignity.

Conclusion:

It becomes clear, through the review of religious texts, historical sources, and archaeological data, that the historicity of prophets in the ancient world remains a topic that bridges both faith-based and scholarly perspectives. On one hand, the narratives of the prophets in the sacred scriptures provide a foundational framework for understanding divine messages and their role in shaping the religious and spiritual consciousness of ancient societies. On the other hand, archaeological studies and historical criticism reveal that many of these figures lack direct material evidence. However, this should not deter us; we must investigate the names carried by these prophets according to the societies in which they lived, in hopes of uncovering details that the archaeological record may indeed contain, albeit in the language and symbols of its inscriptions.

Accordingly, it can be said that the debate over the historicity of the prophets will continue as long as the boundaries between sacred texts and archaeological interpretation remain unresolved. Yet, the true value lies in the fact that the prophets—whether historically verified or not—serve as spiritual and civilizational references. It suffices that God, in His decisive revelation, affirmed their existence as a guiding legacy that continues to inspire human thought to this very day.

Ethical Considerations

The study upholds the ethical standards of academic neutrality by refraining from promoting or dismissing any religious doctrine. All interpretations are based on verifiable historical and archaeological data, following ethical principles of academic integrity, transparency, and respect for cultural and religious sensitivities. No fieldwork involving human participants or sacred artifacts was conducted; all data are derived from published academic sources and accessible archives.

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Conflict of Interest

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