

Architectural and Historical Study of Other Religions' Tombs in Iraq

Salwa Ibraheem Tawfeeq Mohammed Al-Amin

Foreword :

*T*his Study is not designed to deal with the theological dimensions or to venerate the persons who were buried in Iraq and are included herein. It aims at highlighting the deep spiritual connection between Muslims and other community members and the shared pilgrimage among them. Most of the targeted places/sites are still visited by members of those religions. This is a clear manifestation of the religious coexistence enjoyed by Iraq.

Amid the increasing ethnical and religious intolerance , it is vital to reflect the actual diversified make up of Iraq who shaped the social fabric, population , ancient and medieval civilization of this country .

The details of this Study is given in an alphabetical order. I am looking forward this Study to positively contribute in boosting the archaeological and historical awareness .

It is of great importance to highlight that the tombs which are included in this Study are located in different parts of Iraq and not limited to a certain region/area.

Commencing the Study with a focus on the tomb of **Prophet Daniel** and his companions which is located in the Centre of Kirkuk City within the Kirkuk Citadel.

There are various locations that have been named for the site, some said that the tomb is located in Susa, Iran⁽¹⁾. However Prophet Daniel has lived in Iraq and may have visited the palace of Susa, Iran.⁽²⁾

Daniel was one of the major four Biblical Prophets, a young from Jerusalem taken into captivity in Babylon. He is brought up at the royal court and excels the Babylonian magicians in their own arts because of his knowledge. He interprets dreams to kings and overcomes the threats, all the while he remained true to God, before being given a series of apocalyptic visions concerning the liberation of Jewish.⁽³⁾

His companions are Shadrach (Hananiah), Meshach (Mishael) and Azariah (Abednego): The names of those figures were mentioned in the Book of Daniel. They and Prophet Daniel are representatives of the royal Jews of the Kingdom of Judah.⁽⁴⁾

The tomb was first mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela, who visited the country during the role of the Abbasid dynasty (132 AH/750 AD- 656 AH/1258AD) between (555AH/1160AD) and (558AH/1163AD) and said, "In front of one of the synagogues is the Sepulcher of Daniel of blessed memory. The river Tigris divides the city, and the bridge connects the two parts. On the one side where the Jews dwell is the sepulcher of Daniel. Here the market-places used to be, containing great stores of merchandise, by which the Jews became enriched".⁽⁵⁾

Another two references to the tomb, one refers to a place in Mosul wherein a Maqam (Place) attributed to Prophet Daniel is located at the centre of Mosul city in Hatherat El Sada neighborhood beside a big mosque; the other refers to a tomb alleged to be to Prophet Daniel in Al Wajihya sub district near al-Miqdadaiya in Diyala governorate north east of Baghdad. However the two sites apparently were hit by terrorists in 2014.⁽⁶⁾

The building which is in Kirkuk city occupy an area of about 400 m², it houses four tombs believed to Prophet Daniel and his companions. The entrance to tomb carved Arabic inscriptions. The tomb is covered by two cupolas and there is a minaret in the side of the mosque that houses the tombs. The city's locals pay their respect and prayers to Prophet Daniel. There is a Muslim cemetery nearby. This graveyard may be regarded as the first cemetery in Kirkuk.

Going down to the south central of Iraq in Al-Kifil district of Babylon governorate which is located 132 KM south of Baghdad at the mid way between Hilla and Kufa cities there is the tomb of **Prophet Ezekiel** ⁽⁷⁾, the location is said to be Vologasia.⁽⁸⁾

Ezekiel was among the aristocracy whom Nebuchadnezzar (597 B.C.), after the first capture of Jerusalem carried off to be exiles in Babylonia.⁽⁹⁾

The place of his burial was referred to by Yāqūt al-Hamawī , who said: "It is a location in the land of Babylonia near

Hilla Bin Mezyed to the east of a village called Al-Qishonat, where the tomb of Baruch ben Neriah, Ezekiel's teacher, and the tomb of Rabbi Yusuf, Joshua, Ezra (not Ezra the scribe). Members of the Jewish community use to visit the tomb of Ezekiel".⁽¹⁰⁾ Also in another reference he said, " It is a village in the land of Babylonia down Hilla, where in the tomb of Imam Al-Qassim bin Musa Al-Kadhim bin Jafar Al-Sadiq⁽¹¹⁾, and the tomb of Ezekiel.⁽¹²⁾

In Islam , Ezekiel is referred to as Dhū'l-Kifl (PBUS) which means the guarantor, or the protector) after which the al-Kifl district is named. The name of 'Kifl' is also used by Jews as it is believed that Ezekiel's presence in the town guaranteed their safety and those of the town's inhabitants.⁽¹³⁾

His name given in the holy Quran in referring to his faithfulness "*And (mention) Ishmael, and Idris, and Dhu'l-Kifl. All were of the steadfast*".⁽¹⁴⁾

"And make mention of Ishmael and Elisha and Dhu'l-Kifl All are of the chosen".⁽¹⁵⁾ And " Have you not considered those who left their homes in many thousands, fearing death? Allah said to them, "Die"; then He restored them to life. And Allah is full of bounty to the people, but most of the people do not show gratitude".⁽¹⁶⁾

The earliest known account in which the shrine is mentioned is in a letter by R. Sherira Gaon⁽¹⁷⁾ in ca 986 c. e. in which he said that the visitors burned incense and made supplications there.⁽¹⁸⁾

The New Year (Rosh Hashanah) to the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) was dedicated to Ezekiel's visit. Such gatherings, because of their importance in the life of medieval Iraqi Jewry. It was also an occasion to produce the Torah scroll apparently written by Ezekiel and read from it.⁽¹⁹⁾

Benjamin of Tudela visited the shrine around (564AH/1169AD).He said about it: "The tomb of Ezekiel is fronted by sixty turrets, and between each turret there is a minor Synagogue, and in the court of the Synagogue is the ark and at the back of the Synagogue is the sepulcher of Ezekiel. In a later period one of the turrets had been utilized to serve as a foundational structure for a building like a mosque. It is surmounted by a large cupola, and it is a very handsome structure. It was built of old by King Jeconiah,⁽²⁰⁾ and some 35,000 Jews who came with him when Evil-merodach brought him forth out of prison. This place is situated by the Chebar River on the one side and Euphrates.⁽²¹⁾The names of Jeconiah and those that accompanied him are engraved on the wall: Jeconiah at the top and Ezekiel at the bottom".⁽²²⁾

People come from a distance to pray there from the time of the New Year until the Day of Atonement. The Jewish have great rejoicings on these occasions and Arab merchants come there as well. The camp occupies a space of about two miles. A great gathering like a fair takes place, it is called (Fera), the celebrators bring forth a scroll of the Law written on parchment by Prophet Ezekiel and read from it on the Day of Atonement. The sepulcher of Ezekiel is an old casket of 10 feet length and 4 feet height; It is decorated by colored banners. The roof is also

decorated by golden and silver ornamentations; A lamp burns day and night over the sepulcher of Ezekiel; the light thereof has been kept burning from the day that he lighted it himself, and they continually renew the wick thereof and replenish the oil unto the present day.⁽²³⁾

There is also a large house belonging to the sanctuary filled with books, some of them from the time of the first temple, and some from the time of the second temple; anyone who has no sons consecrates his books is to its use. Jews who come to pray bring money from their countrymen who have offered to the Synagogue of Prophet Ezekiel. The Synagogue owns property, lands and villages which belonged to King Jeconiah.⁽²⁴⁾

Muslims also come to pray with great love for Prophet *Dhu'l-Kifl*; they call it Bar (Dar) Melicha (the Dwelling of Beauty). At times of disturbance nobody would dare touch the servants at the tomb out of fear of Prophet's taking revenge. This was a common belief among pilgrims visiting shrines.⁽²⁵⁾

Form architecture point of view the turrets of Ezekiel is like a miracle, it consist a wooden column penetrates from one side to another and both the ends of this column penetrate through the sides of the arcade. Accordingly any vibration to this columns the reaction can be sensed at the upper part of the turret. Some believe that when such think happens man should recite (In the name of the king of peace and his crown) a Jewish prayer to avoid being influenced by any bad consequences.⁽²⁶⁾

About 1.6 km away from the tomb there is a grave said to be of **Baruch Ben Neriah**, son of Mahseiah and brother of Seraiah, who was a scribe and friend of the Prophet Jeremiah.⁽²⁷⁾ Both of them witnessed the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem (587–586 BC).⁽²⁸⁾

A reference to the place was made by Yāqūt al-Hamawī, who said that "It is a location in the land of Babylonia near Hilla Bin Mezyed to the east of a village called Al-Qishonat, where the tomb of *Baruch ben Neriah*, Ezekiel's teacher, and the tomb of Rabbi Yusuf, Joshua, Ezra (not Ezra the scribe).⁽²⁹⁾ Members of the Jewish community use to frequently visit the tomb of Ezekiel and the grave of Baruch during the religious occasions.

Further down to the south in Al-Ozair District in Maysan Governorate which is situated 400km south of Baghdad there is the tomb of **Prophet Ezra**⁽³⁰⁾. He lived in Babylon. In (c. 457 BC) king of Persia Artaxerxes⁽³¹⁾ sent him to Jerusalem to teach the laws of God. He led a large group of exiles to Jerusalem where he found that the Jewish men had been marrying non-Jewish women.⁽³²⁾ He attempted to purify the community by enforcing the dissolution of such marriages.⁽³³⁾

Years later Artaxerxes⁽³⁴⁾ sent Nehemiah (a Jewish noble in his personal service) to Jerusalem to serve as a governor tasked with rebuilding the walls of the city.⁽³⁵⁾ When he completed his task, Nehemiah asked Ezra to read the Torah (Law of Moses PBUS) to the people and reintroduce the Torah in

Jerusalem. Consequently, The priests entered into a covenant to keep the law and separate themselves from all other peoples.⁽³⁶⁾

In Islam Ezra known as (Ozair). His name was mentioned in the holy Quran to narrate Ezra's story " *Or [consider such an example] as the one who passed by a township which had fallen into ruin. He said, "How will Allah bring this to life after its death?" So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years; then He revived him. He said, "How long have you remained?" The man said, "I have remained a day or part of a day." He said, "Rather, you have remained one hundred years. Look at your food and your drink; it has not changed with time. And look at your donkey; and We will make you a sign for the people. And look at the bones [of this donkey] - how We raise them and then We cover them with flesh." And when it became clear to him, he said, "I know that Allah is over all things competent."*⁽³⁷⁾

He was not mentioned as a Prophet. Yet, he is considered as one of them by Muslims according to the Islamic traditions.

There are different stories alleging the place where Ezra was buried. A reference made to the place by Yāqūt al-Hamawī⁽³⁸⁾ Qazwini⁽³⁹⁾ Benjamin of Tudela⁽⁴⁰⁾ and Yehuda Alhariz⁽⁴¹⁾.

In the 10th century, Rav Sherrira Gaon described the shrine in his Circular Letter saying: "Where [did the Holy One of Blessing settle] in Babylonia? Rav says in the synagogue of Hutzeal, and Shmuel says in the Synagogue that slipped and settled in Nehardea. Do not say it was here and not there, rather at times it was here and at times it was there. Abbaye says, Whenever I am within a parsing from there, I go there to pray."

That synagogue in Hutzal was close to the study hall of Ezra the scribe below Nehardea".⁽⁴²⁾

The early nineteenth century, Ritch⁽⁴³⁾ gave a detailed description to the site in which he said: ((We came to a place of pilgrimage of Jews. It is a building like mosque on a promontory formed by a circular sweep of the river, which winds much in this part. A few Arabs have collected about it, and formed a small village of reed huts on the right bank of the river.⁽⁴⁴⁾ We landed to take a nearer view of it; It is surrounded by a wall with battlements, the cupola is covered with green glazed tile and surmounted by an ornament of brass representing an open hand enriched with a ray of glory).⁽⁴⁵⁾

According to Ritch the gate leads into a small court-yard and then to a large gloomy hall arched and supported by square masses of brick-work destitute of any ornaments.⁽⁴⁶⁾

A low door leads into the chamber which contains religious veneration objects. The room is valuated with a small grated windows placed at a great height, and paved with a tiles of white and green alternatively disposed.⁽⁴⁷⁾ There is also a lamp burning placed in small niches. The sepulcher in the center of the room, it is of an oblong casket made of wood and covered with green velvet. It is (8x4) feet and (6) height to the ridge of the roof. There is a three feet passage to the wall of the room.⁽⁴⁸⁾ The corners and tops are ornamented with a large balls of copper gilt.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The place is attributed to be to Ezra, whom Muslims calls Prophet al-Ozair, and make him out of the nephew Moses . A Jew by name Khopa Yakoob erected the

present building.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Near to the tomb there is a ruins of an old synagogue.

The place is a Mazar for both the Jewish and Muslim communities. Many of Baghdad and Basra Jewish used to visit the place.⁽⁵¹⁾

In Baghdad's Attawrat residential area there is a neighborhood called Sheik Isaac, where is the rest place of Rabbi Issac near an area called Suq Hanun.

Rabbi Isaac a Gaon of the Yeshiva Academy of Pumbedita⁽⁵²⁾, during the transition period between the Savora⁽⁵³⁾ and the Geonim⁽⁵⁴⁾ at the 7th century. It is said that Rabbi Isaac was a banker for Imam Ali Bin Abi Talib.⁽⁵⁵⁾

The tomb is consisted of a main hall where the sepulture of Rabbi Isaac next to it there was a Synagogue which is known as the oldest one in Baghdad's Resafa.⁽⁵⁶⁾ It occupied very large area, it is a structure supported by 16 columns. The roof ornamented by artistic work engraved in wood. There is a high podium in the middle of the synagogue where the Rabbai reads. The audience sit on the side wall of the synagogue. There are Hebrew inscriptions of quotes from the Torah on the walls. On 14-15 of Adar (March) the Book of Esther is read in the Synagogue. There is another portal leads to a commercial area called Street of Hanun.

The tomb's room is decorated with colorful flags, the Iraqi Jewish Community renewed the building after the destruction

probably in 1900, The room is square with a vaulted roof. The ground is paved with white and green porcelain tile. The sepulture is covered by golden velvet, above the entrance there is Hebrew inscriptions refers to the date of death of Rabbi Isaac Gaoni, 620 after destruction of the second temple".

Quote From the Book of the traveler Benjamin II. who visited the shrine in 1848, "While the ninth synagogue was a large building, resting on sixteen columns, called "Bet ha-Keneset Sheik Isaac Gaon," in a side room of which building the body of that saint was interred".⁽⁵⁷⁾

Another reference to the place, " At one of the sites of the present Baghdad we see a Jewish Synagogue where one of their Rabbis, (Isaac Gaoni) is buried. The name of the neighborhood is " Sheik Isaac". The Synagogue has another newly built portal leads to a commercial area called Street of Hanun".⁽⁵⁸⁾

In the Northern Mosul city, Nineveh Governorate 418 KM north of Baghdad there is the tomb of **Prophet Jonah**⁽⁵⁹⁾. Jonah is known for being swallowed by a whale and his story was mentioned in the holy Quran in Surat Yūnus.⁽⁶⁰⁾

His tomb is located on the hill of Nabi Yūnus in the central part of Mosul city, near to the walls and gates of Nineveh, where there was⁽⁶¹⁾ the shrine of Prophet Jonah which is believed to hold Jonah's tomb inside a mosque called the Mosque of Prophet Yūnus. The mosque was earlier an Assyrian Church and a place wherein King Esarhaddon⁽⁶²⁾ had built his palace.⁽⁶³⁾

The sepulcher of Jonah, in the central part of the mosque, was covered with a carpet of silk and silver. At the four corners there were great copper candlesticks in addition to several lamps. It is said that a whale's tooth reflecting Jonah's adventure at sea to be preserved there.

A reference made to the shrine of Prophet Jonah by Ibn Baṭūṭah who said: , " And there is the hill of Yūnus and about one mile distance from it there is the a spring, which is said to be the place wherein Yūnus ordered his people to purify themselves; then they all went up the hill, he and his people prayed to the Lord who afterward alleviated their sufferings. At the vicinity of the site there is a large village which nearly ruined, it is said to be known as Nineveh, the city of Yūnus (PBUHS) . There are also traces of the surrounding fence and its portals. On the hill there is a great building and huge area wherein many houses and irrigation spots were established. All of them are accessible through a single portal. In the center of the place there is a big house covered by a silk-made blinds and has an inlaid door. It is said that it is the place where Prophet Yūnus stood and the Niche of the mosque is said to the place where Prophet Yūnus prayed. It was customary for the local Mosulis to visit the place in every Thursday night to pay their respects and prayers in the worshiping place of Prophet Yūnus".⁽⁶⁴⁾

Currently the place is no more existed as it has been targeted by the terrorists in 2014 .

Alkosh⁽⁶⁵⁾ sub district in Nineveh governorate about 500km north of Baghdad is the rest place of **Prophet Nahum**.⁽⁶⁶⁾

He is the seventh in order of the minor prophets. His book comes in chronological order between Micah and Habakkuk. He wrote about the end of the Assyrian Empire.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Nahum is a nationalistic figure who lived in peace among the locals.⁽⁶⁸⁾ The Book on Nahum refers to his name as (Nahum the Elkoshite).⁽⁶⁹⁾ According to scholars Alkosh refer to a sub district in Iraq's Nineveh. However others claimed that it refers to the city of Capharnaum⁽⁷⁰⁾ of Galilee.⁽⁷¹⁾

There are contradicted statements vis-à-vis the place of his sepulcher, for instance, Benjamin of Tudela said that at Alkosh near Mosul the tomb of Nahum is pointed out and the Arabs say that after Jonah had fulfilled his mission to the people of Nineveh they relapsed into idolatry. Then Nahum denounced the city and was slain by the populace, who proclaimed him and Jonah to be false prophets, since the doom the latter foretold does not come to pass".⁽⁷²⁾

While in another reference, "Thence it is three miles to the city of Kotsonath, where there are 300 Jews. Here are the sepulchers of Rab Papa, Rab Huna, Joseph Sinai, and Rab Joseph ben Hama; and before each of them is a Synagogue where the Israelites pray every day. Thence it is three parasangs to Ain Siptha, where there is the sepulcher of the prophet Nahum the Elkoshite".⁽⁷³⁾

Before the Jewish exodus of Iraq, Nahum's tomb was reportedly visited by thousands of worshipers every year.

The tomb is nestled 300 meters from Saint Mekha School in the center of a small sub district against the backdrop of Bayhidhra Mountains. Previously there was a village at the south-western side. The place is locally known by " Quruzi".⁽⁷⁴⁾The compound includes a structure of an old Jewish synagogue occupies about 1000 m², consisted of large central yard surrounded by number of rooms and an arcade. The yard is surrounded by a high fence.⁽⁷⁵⁾ The rooms were utilized for providing services to the visitors. Inside the site, at the south-west edge there is a portal leading to the graveyard of Prophet Nahum and his sister Sarah.⁽⁷⁶⁾

The crumbling stone-made walls of one of Iraq's last synagogues remain mostly standing. Inside it lies the tomb of Prophet Nahum. Some of the walls are adorned with legible inscriptions carved into large stone plaques that remain firmly embedded.

Ancestors reported that a vaulted tomb is attributed to this place, in a form of a structure dated back to the tenth century. The current tomb is dated back to (1210AH/1796AD). It is consisted of a sanctuary covered by a big dome.

The grave is a small terrace of whitewash plaster covered with Green velvet. The walls of the room covered with Hebrew religious inscriptions. It reflect the dates and visits of various

Jewish families. The tomb room is of simple building and free of inscriptions or antiquities from the place .

In Baghdad near to the shrine of Skeikh Ma'arouf Al-Karkhi ⁽⁷⁷⁾, there is the tomb of **Yūsha' ibn Nūn** (Joshua)⁽⁷⁸⁾ in an area was called Bab Al- Basra during the Abbasside Era. Apparently there was a monastery adjacent to the cemetery .⁽⁷⁹⁾

In Islam, Yūsha' enjoys the respect of Muslims. He and Caleb⁽⁸⁰⁾ one of two believing messengers sent by Prophet Moses to Canaan. They were referred to in the holy Quran, " They said, "O Moses, indeed within it is a people of tyrannical strength, and indeed, we will never enter it until they leave it; but if they leave it, then we will enter. Said two men from those who feared [to disobey] upon whom Allah had bestowed favor, "Enter upon them through the gate, for when you have entered it, you will be predominant. And upon Allah rely, if you should be believers."⁽⁸¹⁾

Muslims consider Joshua as the leader of Jacob's decedents ⁽⁸²⁾, after the death of Moses. Some Muslims also believe that Joshua is to be the "attendant" of Moses before he meets Khidr ⁽⁸³⁾ and some believe that he is a Prophet. There is a contradicted statement about the tomb, as some believe that is of a Rabbi Joshua Kuhen Kadool, not Yūsha' ibn Nūn. However, the Jewish community do firmly believe that the tomb is the rest place of a high priest .⁽⁸⁴⁾

A reference made to the tomb in which the writer said , "There is in a small building a tomb held in great reverence by

moors and Jews, wherein they say, rests the body of a Jewish high priest. It is like a great chest of masonry , and in the head of its copper plate with Hebrew charters in relief as follow, "Yehsudh Koengadbh" that is Joshua the high priest. They said that he is a holy saint, and all reverence him accordingly by reason of miracle that they say God Wrought by his means.⁽⁸⁵⁾

The Conclusion:

The purpose of this Study was to highlight the deep-rooted ties and the socio-religious, and historical bonds among community members of different religions, cults and ethnicities and the cooperative, constructive and positive interaction between people of different traditions and religions was and still ingrained at both individual and institutional levels.

(1) Shush: The administrative capital of the Shush County of Iran's Khuzestan province, located about 250 km east of the Tigris River at the ruins of the Susa city the capital of the First Persian Empire. For more information please see : D. T. Potts, **The Archaeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of an Ancient Iranian State** , Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom 1999 , P.46.

(2) Book of Daniel 8:2

(3) In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god. Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility, young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine

from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service. Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego. For more information see: Book of Daniel1.

(4) Book of Daniel : 01 ; Bullock . C . Hassell, **An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Book**, Moody Press, Chicago 1986, P. 340.

(5) Adler . Marcos N., **The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela, Critical Text Translation and Commentary**, Edition 1, London 1907P. 74.

(6) July 24th 2014 , Alarabia News online.

(7) Ezekiel : Son of Buzi, a priest of Jerusalem and a member of the Zadok family. For more detail please see :**Book Ezekiel 1:3 , John Knox Press , USA 1990, P. 15.**

(8) **Vologasia**: (or Vologesocerta) a city was founded in the vicinity of Babylon during the reign of Vologases I. The king's intention may have been to establish a new commercial center to compete with the older Seleucia, where party strife frequently disturbed the flow of trade and where opposition to the royal will often arose. Vologasia is frequently mentioned in inscriptions from Palmyra as the destination of the Palmyrene caravans. For more information please see: N. C. Debevoise, **A Political History of Parthia**, Chicago, 1938, P. 205; However, Frye, says it was north of Ctesiphon. Richard N. Frye, **The Heritage of Persia**, Cleveland , Ohio: World Publishing Company , 1963, P. 180.

(9) **The Book of Kings II,24:14** edited by André Lemaire, Baruch Halpern, Matthew Joel Adams, Koninklijke Brill NV Incorporates, USA 2010 , P. 37.

(10) Yāqūt ibn-'Abdullah al-Rūmī al-Hamawī , **Mu'jam al-buldan**, Dar al Fikr, Lebanon 1990, Vol. 1 , P. 403.

(11) Al-Qassim bin Musa Al-Kadhim: Son of the Seventh Shia Imam, born (150 /769) in Madina (KSA) died on (192 /808) in Hilla (Iraq). For more

information see : المجلسي، محمد باقر (تُوفي 1111هـ/ 1699م)، بحار الأنوار، مؤسسة الوفاء، بيروت 1983، ج 48، ص 282-284.

(12) Al-Hamawī , ibid, Vol. V, P.334.

(13) غنيمية. يوسف رزق الله، نزهة المشتاق في تاريخ يهود العراق، الطبعة الأولى، مطبعة الفرات، بغداد 1924، ص 201.

(14) القرآن الكريم، سورة الأنبياء، الآية 85 .

(15) القرآن الكريم، سورة ص، الآية 48

(16) القرآن الكريم، سورة البقرة، الآية 243.

(17) Son of Hai ben Sherira, he is the head of the Academy of Pumbeditha. Sherira was born in 906 and died in 1006. For more information see: **The Iggeres of Rav Sherira**, Translated by : Nosson Dovid Rabinowich, Jerusalem 1988 , P. 20.

(18) Meri. Josef W., **The Cult of Saints Among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria**, Oxford University Press; Edition I. Oxford 2003, P. 229.

(19) Meri. Josef W, Ibid, P. 230.

(20) **Jeconiah**: King of Judah who ruled briefly over the Jewish people during the 6th century . Records of his existence have been found in Iraq. The Jehoiachin's Rations Tablets were excavated near the Ishtar Gate in Babylon and have been dated to c. 592 BCE. It is written in cuneiform and mentioned the name of Jeconiah ("Ia-'ú-kinu") and his five sons as recipients of food rations in Babylon. For more information please see: Pritchard. James B., **Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament**, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press 1969, P. 308.

(21) Adler, Ibid , P.68.

(22) Adler, Ibid, P.67.

(23) W. K. Loftus, **Travels and Researches in Chaldæa and Susiana** , London, 1857; Ezekiel in the Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. V, P. 315.

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(25) غنيمة، المصدر السابق، ص 198.

(26) غنيمة، المصدر السابق، ص 201.

(27) " Then I took the deeds of purchase, both the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions and the open copy; and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the sight of Hanamel my uncle's son and in the sight of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, before all the Jews who were sitting in the court of the guard." For more details see Book of Jeremiah 32:12.

(28) Book of Jeremiah 36:2 .

(29) Yāqūt ibn-'Abdullah al-Rūmī al-Hamawī , **Mu'jam al-buldan**, Dar al Fikr, Lebanon 1990, Vol. 1 , P. 403.

(30) A descendant of Seraiah who is a name of many persons who were mentioned in the Hebrew bible , of most important as ancestor of Ezra . for more information see: **The Book of Ezra and Nehemiah**, commentary by R.J Coggins, Cambridge University Press , NY 10022, USA 1976, Ezra 7–10 Neh. 8.

(31) Artaxerxes I. The third son of Xerxes I. and the fifth King of Persia. He ruled from (465 BC to 424 BC) . For more information see : A.T Olmstead, **History of the Persian Empire**, University of Chicago Press Ltd, London 1948, P. 289-290.

(32) The Book of Ezra and Nehemiah, Ibid, P.54.

(33) **All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial** , Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. – International Bible Students Association, First Edition Brooklyn New York 1963, USA, P. 85.

(34) In the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes; if the king referred to is Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C) , the date will have been 445; if Artaxerxes II (404-358 B.C) it was 384. The first is more likely but certainly is

impossible. For further information see: The Book of Ezra and Nehemiah, Ibid, P.73.

(35) The Book of Ezra and Nehemiah, Ibid, P. 75.

(36) Ibid, P. 75.

(37) القرآن الكريم، سورة البقرة، الآية 259.

(38) He referred to the area of Misan where the tomb of Prophet Ezra (PBUS) as an influential Jewish prophet served by the Jewish, properties endowed for ensuring the needed services to the site. For more information see: Yāqūt ibn-'Abdullah al-Rūmī al-Hamawī , **Mu'jam al-buldan**, Dar al Fikr, Lebanon 1990, Vol. V , P.242.

(39) Al-Qazwini, Abu Yahya Zakariya' ibn Muhammad, **Monument of Places and History of God's Bondsmen**, a geographical dictionary, Göttingen 1848, P. 130.

(40) Charton, Édouard T, **Voyageurs anciens et modernes** , ou Choix des relations de voyages, Bureaux du Magasin Pittoresque, Paris 1861, P. 190.

(41) Judah ben Solomon Harizi or al-Harizi : A rabbi, translator, poet and traveler active in Spain in the Middle Ages. For more information see : Mirsky, Aharon, Stroll, **Al-Harizi, Judah Ben Solomon**, In Skolnik, Fred. Encyclopedia Judaica, Detroit: Thomson Gale Vol. 1, Detroit 2007 . P. 655–657.

(42) B. M. Levin, **Iggeret Rav Sherira Gaon** , Jerusalem 1972, P. 78-81.

(43) Claudius James Rich, (1787-1821) a British traveler and antiquarian scholar. For more information see: Chisholm. Hugh, **Encyclopedia Britannica** , Edition 11, Cambridge University Press, 1911.

(44) Rich. Claudius J., **Narrative of a residence in Koordistan, and on the site of ancient Nineveh**, James Duncan, Paternoster Row , London 1836.P. 400.

(45) Ritch , Ibid, P. 401.

(46) Ritch , Ibid, P. 401.

(47) Ritch , Ibid, P. 401 .

(48) Ritch, Ibid , P. 402 .

(49) According to Muslim traditions , Ezra was of the race of Jacob of the tribal of Levi , and the fourteen in descent from Aaron; and the holy scriptures, and all the scribes and doctors who would read and interpret

them were involved in the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar excepting few of them who were taken to Babylonia . Ezra , who was very young , was among this number , and continued to read and teach the law of God to his countrymen during their captivity. At the end of captivity , Ezra returned to Jerusalem, and some say , there near Babylon , while he was occupied in weeping over the reunited city and temple of God , he said often to himself , " how can fallen Jerusalem ever rise again " No sooner had he conceived this through when god struck him dead, and he remained so far for one hundred year, when he was raised again and employed the rest of his day on earth in explaining the world of God of Jewish. The Christian of the East say that Ezra drank three times of a well in which the holy fire had been hid and that thus he received the gift of the holy ghost, which rendered him capable of reestablishing the holy scriptures among his countrymen . See: Ritch , Ibid , P. 390.

(50) Ritch , Ibid, P. 402; غنيمية، المصدر السابق، ص 191.

(51) Shavuot : is the Feast of Weeks or harvest / Pentecost . It falls on the sixth day of the Hebrew month of Sivan (late May or early June) . It commemorates the anniversary when God gave the Torah to the entire nation of Israel in Mount Sinai . It is also one of the three biblical pilgrimage festivals . For more information see: Neusner, Jacob, **An Introduction to Judaism: A Textbook and Reader**, Westminster John Knox Press, UK 1991, P. 58.

(52) **Pumbedita**: A city near to the city of Fallujah, western Iraq. It had a large Jewish population and was famed for its Talmudic academy scholarship that, together with the city of Sura gave rise to the Babylonian Talmud. For more information see: Neusner. Jacob, **A History of the Jewish in Babylonia**, Scholars Press 1999, P.235.

(53) **Savora'im**: (A plural of Savora which means a reasoned), it is a term used in Jewish law and history to signify one among the leading rabbis living from the end of period of the Amoraim (c.a 500 CE) to the beginning of the Geonim . for more information see: Brody. Robert, **The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture**, Yale University Press 1998, P 04.

(54) **Geonim** : (A plural of Gaon which means the splendor according to Biblical Hebrew), with the Savoraim represent successive group leading the Babylonia Rabbis in the Jewish Academy (Yashiva). They presented themselves as the successors of corresponding institutions of the Amoraic

period, which had functioned with only minor interruptions since the third century. A major factor for teaching the Torah and the Jewish Law. It began in 589 CE and ended in 1038 (Hebrew date: 4349- 4798). For more information see: Brody. Robert, Ibid, P.35-53.

(٥٥) غنيمة، المصدر السابق، ص ٢٠٧

(٥٦) غنيمة، المصدر السابق، ص ٢٠٧

(57) J. J. Benjamin II., **Eight Years in Asia and Africa**, Hanover 1859; P. 109 et seq.

(٥٨) غنيمة، المصدر السابق، ص ٢٠٨.

(59) Jonah : Son of Amittai and a Prophet of the northern kingdom in the 8th century BC Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me." **Book of Jonah 1:2**

(60) القرآن الكريم، سورة يونس .

(61) Referring to the Shrine of Prophet Jonah by (was) due to the fact that the entire site was detonated by ISIS terrorists in July 24, 2014 . for more information see CNN link: http://edition.cnn.com/2014/07/24/world/iraq-violence/index.html?hpt=hp_t1

(62) **Esarhaddon**: The youngest son of Sennacherib and queen Naqi'a . He reigned (681 – 669) BC. For more information see : Porter. Barbara N. , **Images Power Politics : Figurative Aspect of Esarhaddon's Babylonian Policy** , American Philosophical Society , Philadelphia 1993, Vol. 16, P.62 .

(63) McKenzie John L., **The Dictionary of the Bible** , Macmillan Publishing Company, US 1965, P.618.

(64) ابن بطوطة، محمد بن عبد الله بن محمد اللواتي الطنجي (توفي 779هـ/1377م)، **تحفة النظار في غرائب الأمصار وعجائب الأسفار**، دار الكتب العلمية، بيروت 1992، ج1، ص111.

(65) **Alkosh**: A city 40-50 KM north of Mosul, Northern Iraq . A reference made to the city in holy Book of Nahum as his hometown . For more information see : The Book of Nahum , 1:1.

(66) Nahum : A minor prophet descended from a Jewish family who resided in Alqosh during the captivity of Ninavah.The Book of Nahum , 1:1.

(67) The Lord's anger against Ninevah , The Book of Nahum 1: 2.

(68) Rich. Claudius, Ibid_ P. 111.

(69) Marious in a letter to Busbequius in Assemani , referred to Alkosh as the country of Prophet Nahum. It is celebrated both Jews and Christian for containing his tomb. For more information see : Rich. Claudius J, Ibid , P . 111.

(70) Capharnaum: A place on the north west bank of lake Tiberias . For more information , Please see : Freedman, David N., **The Anchor Bible Dictionary**, Bantan Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc., USA 1992, Vol. I, P. 868.

(71) Schwarz . Joseph, **The Holy Land**, Edition I., Frankfort 1852, P. 259.

(72) Adler . Marcos N, Ibid , P. 120.

(73) Adler, Ibid , P. 69 .

(74) غنيمية، المصدر السابق، ص 214.

(75) غنيمية، المصدر السابق، ص 214.

(76) غنيمية، المصدر السابق، ص 214.

(77) Abu Mahfuz Ma'ruf Ben Fayruz, Muslim Sunni cleric , born to a Christian parents. he and his parents converted to Islam . for more information see :

السلمي. أبو عبد الرحمن ، **طبقات الصوفية**، دار الكتب العلمية، بيروت 2000، ص 80-85؛ ابن خلكان، أحمد بن محمد بن أبي بكر أبو العباس شمس الدين (توفي 681هـ/1282م)، **وفيات الأعيان وأنباء أبناء الزمان**، تحقيق: إحسان عباس، دار صادر، بيروت 1972، ج2، ص 553.

(78) Yūsha' ibn Nūn: A figure in the Torah identified in several passages as Prophet Moses' assistant . Coogan, Michael D., **A Brief Introduction to the Old Testament**, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2009, P. 166.

(79) غنيمية، المصدر السابق، ص 204 .

(80) Caleb: Son of Jephunneh, is one of the twelve spies sent by Moses to Canaan, as reported in Book of Numbers 13:3:

(81) القرآن الكريم، سورة المائدة، الآية 22-23 .

(82) Refers to them by the Israelites as the direct descendants of the Prophet Jacob and the populations of the United Kingdom of Israel and Judah. For more information see : Mills. Watson E. , **Israelite: Mercer Dictionary of the Bible**, Mercer University Press, USA 1999, P. 420.

(83) Al-Khdir : A figure was referred to in the Quran as a righteous servant of God possessing great wisdom or mystic knowledge. For more information see the holy Quran, : And they found a servant from among Our servants to whom we had given mercy from us and had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge. Moses said to him, "May I follow you on [the condition] that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment? He said, "Indeed, with me you will never be able to have patience. And how can you have patience for what you do not encompass in knowledge?" [Moses] said, "You will find me, if Allah wills, patient, and I will not disobey you in [any] order." Surat Al-Kahf, Ayat 65-69.

(84) غنيمة، المصدر السابق، ص 205 .

(85) Sinclair. William F., Travels of Pedro Teixeira, The Hakluyt Society , London P. 68.

The Holy Writes

القرآن الكريم

The Book of Numbers

The Book of Kings II

The Book of Jeremiah

The Book of Ezekiel

The Book of Jonah

The Book of Nahum

The Book of Daniel

The Book of Ezra

The Book of Nehemiah

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(Fig. 1)

Prophet Daniel – Exterior landscape



(Fig. 2)

(The Cupola of Prophet Daniel Mosque)



(Fig. 3)

(Prophet Daniel and His Companions)





(Fig. 4)

(A nearby ruins of a synagogue)

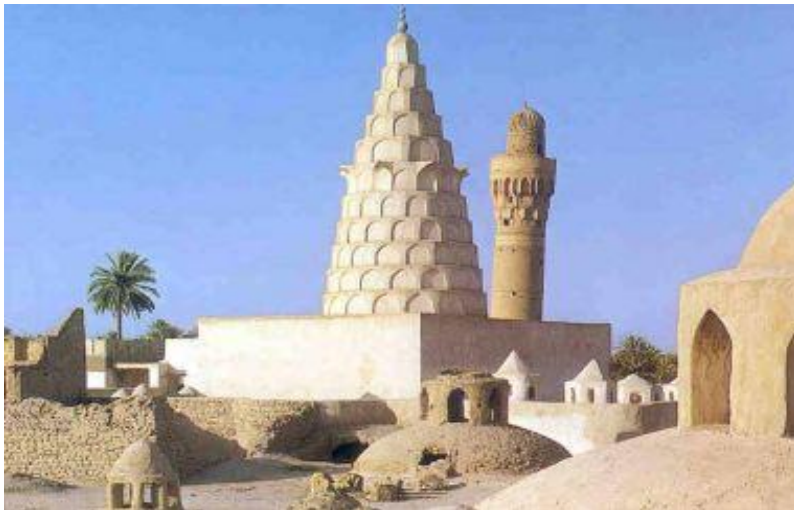






(Fig. 5)

(Sepulture of Prophet Ezekiel)





(Fig . 6)

**The Five Tombs of Geonim(were the presidents of the two great Babylonian, Talmudic Academies of Sura and Pumbedita)
Room in the Shrine of Prophet Ezekiel**



(Fig. 7)

(The Ancient Synagogue)





(Fig. 8)

The Tomb of Ezra, Southern Iraq



(Fig. 9)

An oblong wooden casket



**(Fig. 10) Hebrew inscriptions carved round the upper ledge
the large wooden catafalque**



(Fig. 11)

Hebrew Inscriptions



(Fig.12)

**An exterior landscape of the Mosque and Tomb of Nabi Yunus
(Jonah)**



(Fig. 13)

Status quo of Mosque and Tomb of Nabi Yunus (Jonah)



(Fig. 14)

The Sepulture of Prophet Nahum



(Fig. 15)

Prophet Nahum

Portal with Hebrew Inscriptions



(Fig. 16)





(Fig. 17)

The Shrine of Yūsha' ibn Nūn in Baghdad



(Fig. 18)

The sepulture of Yūsha' ibn Nūn