



Theoretical Framework of Archaeology in the Holy Quran

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Abstract

The foundational theoretical frameworks in archaeology, largely borrowed from other scientific disciplines, have a relatively short history within the field. Despite this, the Iranian archaeological community has embraced changes in theoretical frameworks since a short period before and a brief hiatus after the Islamic Revolution. This acceptance, although not without challenges, is primarily due to unfamiliarity with case studies related to these theoretical frameworks. Adapting theoretical frameworks tested in the context of ancient American societies to the research landscape of Iran is a complex and challenging endeavor. This paper examines the general theoretical frameworks of archaeology from the perspective of the Holy Quran. While a comprehensive examination of all relevant verses is beyond the scope of this paper, the author aims to present specific examples of Quranic verses. Theoretical frameworks prominent in Culture–History archaeology, processual archaeology, and post–processual archaeology, all of Western origin, find clear resonance in certain verses of the Holy Quran. In fact, some Quranic verses reflect a comprehensive view of the theoretical frameworks in these three domains. The aim of this paper is to highlight the capacity of the Holy Quran as a guiding source for theoretical frameworks in archaeology, particularly concerning Iranian heritage. By utilizing insights from the Quran, archaeologists can gain a deeper understanding of the past and provide more accurate interpretations of archaeological data.

Keywords: Quranic Archaeology, Theoretical Framework, Culture–History, Processual, Post–Processual

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Introduction:

The archaeology of the Holy Quran is an emerging and developing field that seeks to find archaeological evidence to examine the narratives and stories of the Quran. This field, relying on the theoretical concepts of the Quran and the lessons drawn from its stories, aims to gain a deeper understanding of the history and culture of ancient societies, as well as to enhance human thinking and reasoning skills. The theoretical frameworks presented in archaeology, such as Culture–History archaeology, processual archaeology, and post–processual archaeology, which all have Western origins, resonate clearly in specific verses of the Holy Quran. In fact, some verses of the Quran serve as comprehensive reflections of these three theoretical frameworks in archaeology. This article aims to highlight the potential of the Holy Quran as a guiding source for the theoretical framework of archaeology, particularly in the context of Iranian heritage. By using insights from the Quran, archaeologists can achieve a deeper understanding of the past and provide more precise interpretations of archaeological data.

Research Methodology:

This study utilizes a documentary–analytical method. During the research, sources and texts related to the subject, including books, scholarly articles, theses, and academic dissertations, as well as digital resources and scientific databases, were identified and collected. Subsequently, information was categorized based on topics and approaches, which proved to be very effective in the final analysis.

Research Findings:

This article proposes a new definition of archaeology as "the science of studying the outcomes of the interactive relationship between humans and the environment" and underscores its importance in examining the ways human societies have adapted, transformed, and interacted with their natural surroundings. This definition aligns well with the Quranic teachings on the interconnectedness of humans and nature. The Quran repeatedly emphasizes the concept of stewardship, placing the responsibility of caring for and managing the earth's resources on humans. From an archaeological perspective, the Quran's emphasis on stewardship is echoed in the material remains we discover from the past. Artifacts, structures, and landscapes all testify to how past societies interacted with their natural environment. For instance, agricultural tools and irrigation systems indicate the extent of human intervention in the landscape, while pottery and food remains provide insights into dietary patterns and food production. By studying these archaeological remnants, we gain valuable insights into how past societies adapted to their environment, managed resources, and interacted with the natural world. This knowledge can aid our efforts to live in harmony with nature and promote sustainable practices. The Quranic teachings on human–environment interaction offer a rich framework for interpreting archaeological data. By understanding the past, we can gain valuable insights into the present and shape



a more sustainable future. Archaeology, through the lens of the Quran, provides a unique perspective on human history and reveals the intricate connections between humans, their environments, and the delicate balance that sustains life on earth.

Conclusion:

In the evolution of theoretical frameworks, archaeology has shifted from the search for objective truths to the interpretation of the past considering cultural contexts and human experience. The wisdom of the Quran significantly contributes to this ongoing dialogue, offering a deeper understanding of human experience and history. Although archaeologists were initially focused on scientific methods and discovering objective truths about the past, by the mid-20th century, they recognized the limitations of this approach, especially for understanding intangible aspects like beliefs and ideas.

This led to a shift towards interpretive methods that considered the interpreter's perspective and the cultural context of the findings, emphasizing the human aspect of archaeology. The Quran, with its wisdom and insight into humanity, provides a valuable framework for this interpretive approach. This book offers a comprehensive and universal perspective on human nature, social dynamics, and the environment, enriching our understanding of the past beyond material remains. By incorporating Quranic insights into their research, archaeologists can achieve a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of both the tangible and intangible aspects of past civilizations. This shift in archaeological thought can be further expanded and connected to the foundations of Islamic civilization and the revelation of the Holy Quran. With its profound insights into human nature, social dynamics, and the relationship between humans and their environment, the Quran offers a rich theoretical framework for archaeological research.

By referencing the Quranic verses, archaeologists can gain a deeper insight into the past, move beyond the limitations of purely positivist approaches, and encompass a more holistic and humanistic understanding of human history. Essentially, the Quran provides a timeless and universal guide for archaeological research, offering a perspective that precedes the intellectual developments of the 20th century. By integrating the wisdom of the Quran into their methodologies and learning from its stories, archaeologists can develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the past, illuminating not only the material remains but also the intangible aspects of human civilization.

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