

# **Dr. Robert Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 1B, Early and Late Date of the Exodus Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## **1. Abstract of Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 1B, Early and Late Date of the Exodus, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

The provided text is a lecture transcript discussing the dating of the Exodus, examining arguments for both early and late dates. Arguments for the late date include archaeological evidence of destruction in Canaanite cities and the absence of Egyptian campaigns mentioned in the book of Judges. The early date perspective relies heavily on 1 Kings 6:1, calculating the Exodus to be in 1446 B.C. based on Solomon's reign. Additional early date arguments involve correlating Thutmose III's reign with the oppression and the Habiru from the Amarna letters as possible references to the Israelites. The lecture provides responses to these claims, questioning the assumptions and interpretations of the evidence for each dating position. Ultimately, the text explores the complexities and challenges in establishing a definitive date for the Exodus event.

**2. 31 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 1B – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Exodus to Exile).**



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ession01B.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 1B, Early and Late Date of the Exodus

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main points of the provided lecture excerpts regarding the dating of the Exodus, focusing on both early and late date arguments.

#### Briefing Document: Dating the Exodus

##### Overview:

This lecture explores the debate surrounding the dating of the Exodus, presenting arguments for both a "late date" (13th century BC, specifically during the 19th Dynasty of Egypt) and an "early date" (15th century BC, specifically during the 18th Dynasty). The lecture critiques the assumptions made by proponents of each view and highlights the complexities inherent in using archaeological and textual evidence to pinpoint the Exodus event.

#### Key Themes and Arguments:

##### A. Late Date Arguments

###### 1. Pithom and Rameses (Exodus 1:11):

- **Argument:** Exodus 1:11 mentions the Israelites building the cities of Pithom and Rameses, suggesting the Exodus occurred during the reign of a pharaoh named Rameses, thus pointing to the 19th Dynasty.
- **Quote:** "In support of the late date, 13th century, 19th dynasty Exodus you have first, Exodus 1:11 with Pithom and Rameses."
- **Vannoy's Response:** While seemingly strong, evidence of 18th Dynasty construction in the delta, where these cities are located, has emerged, challenging this argument.

###### 1. Lack of Sedentary Population in Trans-Jordan:

- **Argument:** Nelson Glueck argued that there was no sedentary population in Trans-Jordan before 1300 B.C., thus not allowing for the conquest in that area during the early date.
- **Vannoy's Response:** This is presented as an argument from silence.

### 1. Destruction Levels in Canaanite Cities (Archaeology):

- **Argument:** Archaeological excavations at cities mentioned in the book of Joshua (Lachish, Bethel, Hazor, Debir) show destruction levels around 1250-1200 BC. This is correlated with the Israelite conquest under Joshua.
- **Quote:** "Thus if a clear view of the conquest period is to be obtained, it is important to distinguish between the events that characterized it and those that occurred after the death of Joshua... The conquest can be illustrated by the facts of archaeological exploration at sites such as Bethel, Lachish, Debir, Hebron, Gibeah, and Hazor, which show clearly that these places were occupied or destroyed in the latter part of the Late Bronze Age." (quoting R.K. Harrison)
- **Vannoy's Response:** This is an assumption that these destruction levels are directly attributable to the Israelites.
- Only Jericho, Ai, and Hazor are explicitly stated to have been *burned* by the Israelites in the biblical account. For other cities like Lachish, the text states the inhabitants were put to the sword, but doesn't necessarily mention complete destruction by fire.
- **Quote:** "When you go in there and you find a destruction level, there's no sign that says this was done by Joshua and the Israelites. In fact there is a certain degree of guesswork involved."

### 1. Absence of Egyptian Campaigns in Judges:

- **Argument:** The book of Judges makes no mention of the well-documented Palestinian military campaigns of Seti I and Rameses II (13th century BC). If the Exodus had occurred earlier (early date), the events of Judges would coincide with these Egyptian campaigns, and they would likely be mentioned.
- **Vannoy's Response:** This is an "argument from silence," which is inherently weak. The book of Judges simply may not have chosen to record Egyptian activity in Canaan.

### 1. Merneptah Stele Terminus Date:

- **Argument:** The Merneptah Stele (c. 1220 BC), mentions Israel as a group already present in Canaan. This sets a limit for the late date.

- **Quote:** "But what it means is the Israelites must have been in Canaan prior to 1220 B.C. And if you take forty years for the wilderness wandering before coming into the land of Canaan and add that on, it would suggest some time prior to 1260 for the date of the Exodus, 1260 B.C. By 1220 Israel is in Canaan according to Merneptah."

## B. Early Date Arguments

### 1. 1 Kings 6:1:

- **Argument:** 1 Kings 6:1 states that the Temple construction began in the 480th year after the Exodus, and the fourth year of Solomon's reign can be dated to 966/967 BC, placing the Exodus around 1446 BC.
- **Quote:** "In the 480th year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the Lord."
- **Vannoy's Response:** This is the strongest argument for an early date. However, late date advocates offer alternative interpretations of the 480 years.
- **Late Date Interpretations of 1 Kings 6:1** 480 as a schematic number.
- 480 as an aggregate number.

### 1. Thutmose III and Moses' Lifespan:

- **Argument:** Thutmose III (1504-1450 BC) was a great builder with a long reign, fitting the biblical description of the pharaoh of the oppression. Moses' lifespan (120 years) also aligns better with Thutmose III than with pharaohs of the 19th Dynasty like Seti I, who had shorter reigns.
- **Quote:** "No other known Pharaoh fulfills all the specifications besides Thutmose III. He alone, besides Rameses II, was on the throne long enough...to have been reigning at the time of Moses' flight from Egypt, and to pass away not long before Moses' call by the burning bush, thirty or forty years later." (quoting Gleason Archer)
- **Vannoy's Response:** The lifespan of Moses fits better with the length of the reign of Thutmose than anyone in the 19th Dynasty.

## 1. The Amarna Letters and the Habiru:

- **Argument:** The Amarna Letters, correspondence from Canaanite city-state rulers to Egyptian pharaohs (Amenhotep III and Akhenaton), mention the attacks of a people called the "Habiru." Early date advocates have equated the Habiru with the Hebrews, suggesting these letters provide extra-biblical evidence of the Israelite conquest.
- **Quote:** "'Why do you love the Habiru and hate the regents?' But therefore am I slandered before the king, my lord. Because I say: 'The lands of the king, my lord, are lost.'" (Amarna letter of Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem).
- **Vannoy's Response:** The identification of Habiru with Hebrews is highly uncertain. The term "Habiru" may refer to a social class of semi-nomadic peoples rather than a specific ethnic group. The term is used widely from Asia Minor to Egypt and from the 18th century to the 12th.

### General Points and Cautions:

- **Arguments from Silence:** Vannoy frequently points out the weakness of arguments based on the absence of evidence.
- **Assumptions:** Both early and late date theories rely on assumptions, especially when interpreting archaeological evidence. The lecture is careful to not rely on what is uncertain.
- **Modernization of Archaic Place Names:** The lecture gives an example from Genesis 14 to support the idea that Rameses could be the modernization of an archaic place name in Exodus 1:11
- **Overlap of Chronological Statements:** It is widely accepted that there is overlapping in the chronological statements in the Book of Judges. The question is how much overlap is the main point of contention.
- **History and Theology:** Vannoy states that the question of the historicity of the Exodus is important, but he is cautious to separate this from the core theological message.

**Conclusion:**

The dating of the Exodus is a complex issue with no easy answers. Both the early and late date theories have strengths and weaknesses, and rely on interpretations of both biblical and extra-biblical sources. Vannoy's lecture encourages a critical approach to the evidence, acknowledging the limitations of each argument and the assumptions inherent in their construction.

## 4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 1B, Early and Late Date of the Exodus

### Exodus Dating: Early vs. Late

#### Study Guide

This study guide is designed to help you understand the arguments surrounding the dating of the Exodus event, focusing on the early and late date perspectives as presented in the source material.

#### I. Key Arguments for the Late Date (13th Century BC)

1. **Archaeology of Cities in Canaan (Destruction Levels at 1250-1200 BC):** Several cities mentioned in the Book of Joshua show destruction layers dating to this period, suggesting a conquest during the late Bronze Age.
2. **Exodus 1:11 and the Cities of Pithom and Rameses:** The biblical text mentions that the Israelites built the cities of Pithom and Rameses, seemingly connecting the Exodus with the reign of the pharaoh Rameses II in the 13th century BC.
3. **Absence of Evidence for Sedentary Population in Trans-Jordan Before 1300 BC:** Nelson Gleuck's assertion that there is no evidence of a sedentary population in Trans-Jordan prior to 1300 B.C.
4. **Judges Says Nothing About the Palestinian Expeditions of Seti I and Rameses II:** If the Exodus occurred earlier, the Book of Judges would likely mention these Egyptian military campaigns in Canaan.
5. **Merneptah Inscription Terminus Date:** Provides a limit for the late date, mentioning Israel as a people in Canaan around 1220 BC.

#### II. Responses to Late Date Arguments

1. **Response to Archaeology of Cities in Canaan:** The Bible only explicitly states that Jericho, Ai, and Hazor were burned by the Israelites. Attributing all Late Bronze Age destruction levels to the Israelites is an assumption.
2. **Response to Judges expeditions:** Argument from silence. Judges may have been silent about Egyptian activity in the region.

#### III. Key Arguments for the Early Date (15th Century BC)

1. **1 Kings 6:1:** This verse states that the temple construction began 480 years after the Exodus. By dating Solomon's reign through synchronous chronology, the Exodus can be placed around 1446 BC.
2. **Thutmose III and Moses' Lifespan:** Thutmose III, a great builder with a long reign in the 18th dynasty, fits well as the pharaoh of the oppression, given Moses' lifespan. The late date pharaoh, Seti, did not have a long enough lifespan to match.
3. **Amarna Letters and the Habiru:** References in the Amarna letters to the Habiru attacking Canaanite cities could be interpreted as referring to the Israelite conquest.

#### IV. Responses to Early Date Arguments

1. **Response to 1 Kings 6:1:** Late date advocates interpret the 480 years as a schematic number, either representing 12 generations of 40 years each or an aggregate number composed of overlapping time periods, thus shortening the actual time span.

#### V. Concepts and Themes

- **Arguments from Silence:** The weakness of basing an argument on the absence of evidence.
- **Synchronous Chronology:** The method of correlating the reigns of kings in different kingdoms to establish absolute dates.
- **Schematic Numbers:** The idea that some numbers in the Bible are symbolic or approximate rather than literal.
- **Aggregate Numbers:** K.A. Kitchen's explanation of the 480 years mentioned in 1 Kings 6:1. Kitchen says that this is an accurate number, but it is an aggregate of component parts that are now unknown.
- **Modernization of Archaic Place Names:** Explanation for the mention of city "Rameses." Rameses can be considered a modernization of an archaic place name, much like the reference to "Dan" in Genesis 14:14.
- **History vs Theology:** Vannoy says that the date of the Exodus does not affect the theology, but this question of the historical background is an important issue.
- **Overlapping chronology:** Kitchen notes that it is impossible to take chronological data in Judges "straight up" because there may be overlap.

- **The identity of the Habiru:** the Hebrew may have been Habiru, but not all Habiru were Hebrew.

## Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each:

1. What archaeological evidence is cited to support the late date of the Exodus?
2. What is the key argument related to Pithom and Rameses?
3. Why do some scholars think the Merneptah Inscription is important?
4. What is the main argument against the late date from the book of Judges?
5. What does 1 Kings 6:1 state?
6. How do late date advocates address 1 Kings 6:1?
7. How does the lifespan of Thutmose III support the early date?
8. What are the Amarna letters, and how are they related to the debate on the dating of the Exodus?
9. Why is the identification of the Habiru with the Hebrews considered uncertain?
10. What three cities were explicitly stated to have been burned by the Israelites?

## Quiz Answer Key

1. Some cities mentioned in the Book of Joshua show destruction levels dating to around 1250-1200 BC. This suggests that the conquest occurred during the late Bronze Age.
2. Exodus 1:11 mentions that the Israelites built Pithom and Rameses. Because Rameses II reigned in the 13th century BC, this seemingly connects the Exodus with his reign.
3. The Merneptah Inscription mentions Israel as a people in Canaan around 1220 BC. The inscription provides a limit, beyond which the late date of the Exodus cannot be pushed.
4. Late date advocates assert that there is no mention in Judges of the Palestinian expeditions of Seti I and Rameses II.

5. 1 Kings 6:1 states that Solomon began building the temple in the fourth year of his reign, 480 years after the Israelites came out of Egypt. This passage is the strongest argument for the early date.
6. Late date advocates interpret the 480 years as a schematic number representing 12 generations of 40 years each. Another argument from Kitchen is that this is an aggregate number made up of component parts that are now unknown.
7. Thutmose III was a great builder with a long reign, which aligns with the biblical account of Moses' lifespan. Other pharaohs did not have a long enough lifespan to match Moses' lifespan.
8. The Amarna letters are correspondence from city-state rulers in Canaan to the Egyptian ruler. Some early date advocates say that references to the Habiru attacking Canaanite cities in the Amarna letters could refer to the Israelite conquest.
9. The word "Habiru" is used for various people scattered across Asia Minor to Egypt to Mesopotamia. It appears to designate a social class rather than an ethnic group, therefore these references cannot be directly equated.
10. Jericho, Ai, and Hazor

## Essay Questions

1. Discuss the arguments for and against the late date of the Exodus, focusing on the archaeological evidence and the interpretation of Exodus 1:11.
2. Evaluate the significance of 1 Kings 6:1 in the debate over the dating of the Exodus. How do early and late date advocates interpret this verse differently?
3. Compare and contrast the arguments related to the reigns and activities of Thutmose III and Rameses II in relation to the early and late date theories of the Exodus.
4. Analyze the role of "arguments from silence" in the debate surrounding the dating of the Exodus. Provide examples of how these arguments are used and critiqued by scholars.
5. Explore the challenges and complexities of using extra-biblical sources, such as the Amarna letters and the Merneptah Stele, to determine the date of the Exodus.

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Exodus:** The event in which the Israelites left Egypt.
- **Early Date:** The theory that the Exodus occurred in the 15th century BC, specifically around 1446 BC.
- **Late Date:** The theory that the Exodus occurred in the 13th century BC, specifically during the reign of Rameses II.
- **1 Kings 6:1:** A biblical verse stating that Solomon began building the temple 480 years after the Exodus, a key verse in the dating debate.
- **Thutmose III:** An 18th dynasty pharaoh (1504-1450 BC) whose reign is associated with the oppression of the Israelites in the early date theory.
- **Rameses II:** A 19th dynasty pharaoh (1279-1213 BC) whose reign is associated with the oppression of the Israelites in the late date theory.
- **Pithom and Rameses:** Cities mentioned in Exodus 1:11 as being built by the Israelites.
- **Amarna Letters:** A collection of clay tablets containing correspondence from city-state rulers in Canaan to the Egyptian pharaohs.
- **Habiru:** A term used in the Amarna Letters and other ancient Near Eastern texts, sometimes associated with the Hebrews.
- **Merneptah Inscription:** An Egyptian inscription from the reign of Pharaoh Merneptah (c. 1213-1203 BC) that mentions Israel, providing a terminus date for the Israelite presence in Canaan.
- **Synchronous Chronology:** A method of dating historical events by synchronizing the reigns of kings from different kingdoms.
- **Archaeology:** The study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artifacts.
- **Schematic Number:** A number used to represent a more generalized concept or period rather than a precise chronological measurement.
- **Aggregate Number:** a total of selected figures taken from a larger total (Kitchen)
- **Overlapping Chronology:** The idea that time periods referenced in historical texts may have occurred simultaneously rather than sequentially.

- **Modernization of Archaic Place Names:** When an old place name is updated or changed to align with more current standards, so a reader can know what is being referenced.

## 5. FAQs on Vannoy, Exodus to Exile, Session 1B, Early and Late Date of the Exodus, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Exodus and Conquest: FAQ on Dating the Events

Here are some frequently asked questions and answers based on the provided text, exploring the debate surrounding the dating of the Exodus and the Israelite conquest of Canaan:

#### Questions

- **What are the main arguments supporting a late date for the Exodus (13th century BC)?**
- The main arguments for a late date for the Exodus include:
- **Exodus 1:11 and the Cities of Pithom and Rameses:** The mention of the cities Pithom and Rameses in Exodus 1:11 suggests a connection to the 19th Dynasty of Egypt, specifically the reign of Rameses II (1279-1213 BC).
- **Lack of Sedentary Population in Transjordan Before 1300 BC:** Nelson Glueck's archaeological surveys suggested no significant sedentary population in Transjordan before 1300 BC, which some interpret as conflicting with the biblical account of Israelite movements through that region during an earlier Exodus.
- **Destruction Levels in Canaanite Cities Around 1250-1200 BC:** Archaeological evidence shows destruction layers in cities mentioned in the Book of Joshua (e.g., Lachish, Bethel, Hazor) dating to around 1250-1200 BC. Late date proponents associate these destructions with the Israelite conquest.
- **Absence of Egyptian Military Campaigns in Judges:** The Book of Judges, which would cover the period after an early Exodus, does not mention any Egyptian military activity in Canaan, despite known campaigns by pharaohs like Seti I and Rameses II.
- **Merneptah Stele Inscription:** The Merneptah Stele (c. 1220 BC) provides the earliest extra-biblical reference to "Israel" in Canaan, establishing a latest possible date for the Israelite presence in the land.

- **What are the main arguments for an early date for the Exodus (15th century BC)?**
- The primary arguments for an early date for the Exodus (15th century BC, specifically around 1446 BC) revolve around biblical chronology and correlations with Egyptian history.
- **1 Kings 6:1 and Solomon's Temple:** The verse states that the Temple was built in Solomon's fourth year, 480 years after the Exodus. Based on established dates for Solomon's reign (around 966-967 BC for his fourth year), this places the Exodus around 1446 BC.
- **Thutmose III and the Pharaoh of Oppression:** The long reign of Thutmose III (1504-1450 BC) aligns well with the biblical portrayal of a pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites for an extended period and also provides time before the Exodus for Moses' lifespan.
- **Amarna Letters and the Habiru:** Some scholars connect the Habiru, mentioned in the Amarna Letters as a disruptive force in Canaan during the 14th century BC, with the invading Israelites.
- **How do late-date proponents address the chronological challenge presented by 1 Kings 6:1?**
- Late-date proponents offer alternative interpretations of the 480 years mentioned in 1 Kings 6:1. Two primary explanations are:
- **Schematic Number:** The 480 years is viewed as a symbolic or schematic number representing 12 generations of 40 years each. By reducing the length of a generation to a more realistic 25 years, the time frame is shortened, aligning with a later Exodus date.
- **Aggregate Number:** K.A. Kitchen suggests the 480 years is an aggregate number derived from selected figures in a larger, now incomplete, historical record. This implies that the actual time elapsed was shorter due to overlapping periods or other factors not explicitly stated in the biblical text.

- **How does the life span of Moses factor into the debate about the date of the Exodus?**
- The lifespan of Moses, as described in the Bible, presents a challenge for late-date advocates. Moses lived for 120 years, spending 40 years in Midian after fleeing Egypt and returning at age 80 to confront Pharaoh. This timeline fits better with Thutmose III, who had a long reign in the 18th dynasty, than with Seti I, who had a shorter reign. For the early date, this means that there is ample time for Moses to have been born, fled into exile, and returned, all before the Exodus.
- **What is the significance of the Merneptah Stele for the dating of the Exodus?**
- The Merneptah Stele (c. 1220 BC) mentions "Israel" as a people already present in Canaan. This inscription serves as a *terminus ad quem* (latest possible date) for the Israelite presence in Canaan. It implies that the Exodus and subsequent conquest must have occurred prior to 1220 BC, but does not pinpoint when.
- **What are the challenges in using archaeological evidence to date the Exodus and Conquest?**
- Using archaeological evidence to date the Exodus and Conquest is fraught with challenges.
- **Attribution of Destruction Levels:** It's difficult to definitively attribute destruction layers in Canaanite cities solely to the Israelites. Other factors like internal conflicts, other invading groups, or natural disasters could have caused the destruction.
- **Interpreting Silence:** Arguments from silence, such as the lack of Egyptian military campaigns mentioned in the Book of Judges, are inherently weak. The absence of evidence is not necessarily evidence of absence.
- **Dating Methods and Chronological Discrepancies:** Establishing precise dates for archaeological finds is complex, and differing interpretations of dating methods can lead to varying conclusions.

- **What is the "Habiru" and how does it relate to the Exodus debate?**
- The "Habiru" (also spelled 'Apiru) refers to a group of people mentioned in ancient Near Eastern texts, including the Amarna Letters. They are portrayed as a disruptive element, sometimes raiding or threatening cities. Some scholars have attempted to equate the Habiru with the Hebrews, suggesting the Amarna Letters provide evidence of the Israelite conquest. However, this identification is contested. The term "Habiru" appears to designate a social class of semi-nomadic peoples rather than a specific ethnic group, and they are mentioned in various regions and time periods, making a direct equation with the Hebrews problematic.
- **What is the significance of the city of Rameses for the Exodus debate, and how do early date advocates address this?**
- The mention of the city of Rameses in Exodus 1:11 is a key point for late date proponents, linking the Exodus to the reign of Rameses II in the 13th century BC. Early date advocates offer two main counter-arguments:
- **Earlier Use of the Name:** Evidence suggests the name "Rameses" was known and used in Egypt even before the 19th Dynasty. Thus, the city could have been called Rameses prior to the reign of Rameses II.
- **Modernization of Archaic Place Name:** The name "Rameses" in Exodus 1:11 could be a modernization of an older, archaic place name. Similar to how Genesis 14:14 refers to the city of "Dan" even though it was originally called "Laish" at that time, the author of Exodus might have used the more familiar name "Rameses" to identify a city known by a different name during the period of Israelite oppression.