

# RATIO CHRISTI

Welcome to Ratio Christi



at Texas A&M

# Welcome!

Ratio Christi, meaning “reason for Christ” in Latin, serves to defend the Christian faith in honest dialogue with both our skeptical & believing friends.

**Weekly Meetings: Thursday @ 7:30pm**

**in person + via ZOOM**

RC-TAMU.org



RATIO CHRISTI

# Thomistic Institute

The Thomistic Institute exists to promote Catholic truth in our contemporary world by strengthening the intellectual formation of Christians at Texas A&M University, in the Church, and in the wider public square. The thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Universal Doctor of the Church, is our touchstone.

**Weekly Meetings: Wednesdays @ 8:45pm, ZOOM**

[thomisticinstitute.org/texas-am](https://thomisticinstitute.org/texas-am)



# Secular Students Alliance

The Secular Student Alliance seeks to provide a support network for the atheists, agnostics, and otherwise secular peoples of Texas A&M University.

SSA brings together people from a wide range of religious and ideological backgrounds in order to foster deeper levels of understanding through discussion and dialogue.

**Weekly Meetings: Wednesdays @ 8:30pm, ZOOM**

[facebook.com/groups/TAMUSecularStudentAlliance](https://facebook.com/groups/TAMUSecularStudentAlliance)



# Fall 2020: Confronting Old Testament Controversy

## How well do you know your Old Testament?

This fall Ratio Christi at Texas A&M is *Confronting Old Testament Controversy*.

Despite being the majority of the Bible, the Old Testament remains a difficult and sometime perplexing group of writings. With ancient laws, long histories, and confusing prophecies, we are often left wondering... ***what do we do with the Old Testament?*** Each week we will look at the toughest questions surrounding the Hebrew Bible:

- Is the God of the Old Testament evil?
- Did the Exodus really happen? If so, when?
- Were the Israelites polytheists?
- Did Moses write the Torah?

Join us each **Thursday at 7:30pm** to learn a little bit more about the old testament.

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# Recap of the semester so far

## 1. Week 1: Text of the Tanakh

- The text of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) consists primarily of the Greek LXX and Hebrew MT. Inspiration is a process, not an event.

## 2. Week 2: Interpreting Genesis 1-11

- Genre widely considered Proto-History: historical events and personages are cloaked in the mythological language of exalted prose.

## 3. Week 3: Integrating Genesis with science

- Only the Literal Calendar Day view and "Fixity of the Species" views are in any serious conflict with ancient universe and common ancestry. Darwinism is dead: Evolution is way more than random mutation + natural selection

## 4. Week 4: Historical Adam & Eve

- There is a range of views; genetic bottleneck at 500 kya, genealogical bottleneck at 10 kya. Secondary theology more influential than raw data.

# The Question of Israelite Origins

Did the Israelites Exit Egypt?

Did the Israelites Conquer Canaan?

Did God Command Genocide?



# The Question of Israelite Origins

Did the Israelites Exit Egypt?

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Did God Command Genocide?

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## Intro + Overview

What is the theological significance of the exodus from Egypt?

2

## Textual Considerations

What does the text say about the exodus event and can it be trusted?

3

## Archaeological Considerations

What unearthed specimens have shed light on the exodus event?

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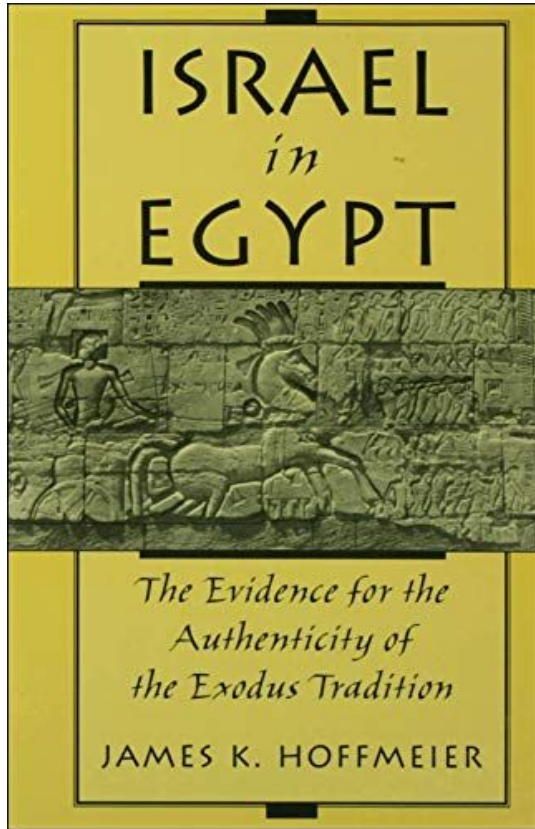
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"Owing to a famine in Palestine, the extended family of Israel/Jacob emigrated to Egypt and settled peacefully there for some time until their fortunes changed. Under a new king or dynasty, they were pressed into hard labour for some decades or longer before being released by a recalcitrant pharaoh with the help of a Hebrew named Moses to return to Canaan from whence they had come."

- James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt*, pg. 52

'A wandering Aramean was my father.

And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous.

And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor.

Then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression.

And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror, with signs and wonders.

And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O Lord, have given me.'

## Prologue to the Decalogue

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." - Exodus 20:2 // Deuteronomy 5:6 (ESV)

## Reminder of Terms and Conditions

Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: "I myself made a covenant with your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" - Jer. 34:12ff. (ESV)

"O my people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam" - Micah 6:3-4 (ESV)

"I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old...Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." - Ps. 77:11, 19-20 (ESV)

"How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert! They tested God again and again and provoked the Holy One of Israel. **They did not remember his power or the day when he redeemed them** from the foe, when he performed his signs in Egypt and his marvels in the fields of Zoan." - Ps 78: 40-43 (ESV)

"As I live, declares the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out I will be king over you. **I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered**, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out." - Ez. 20 (ESV)

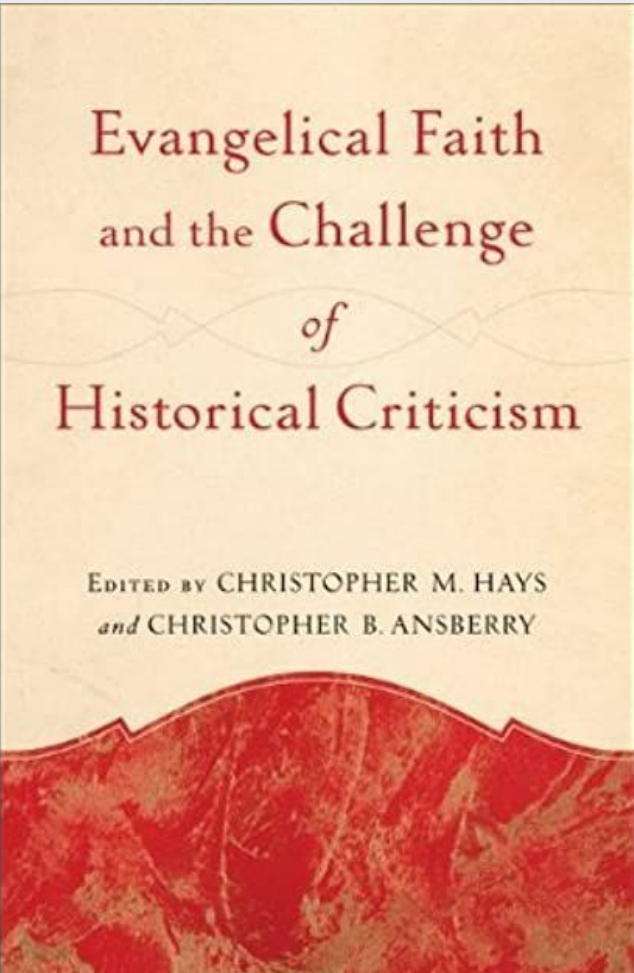


# What is at stake?



- Unlike Adam, the exodus event permeates the entire Hebrew Bible at multiple strata
  - Festivals (e.g. Passover)
  - Prologue to the covenant (Ex 20:2 cf. Dt. 5:6)
  - Foundation for trust in God (Ps. 77, 78, 105, Hos. 2:14-15)
  - Paradigmatic expression of God's redemptive intervention for his people and depiction of future salvation (Ez. 20:1-44, Is. 40-55)
- **Reminder:** If Christ was not raised, your faith is in vain. If Jericho was not razed, is your faith in vain?





Evangelical Faith  
and the Challenge  
*of*  
Historical Criticism

EDITED BY CHRISTOPHER M. HAYS  
and CHRISTOPHER B. ANSBERRY

"If Yahweh never intervened on Israel's behalf to deliver her from Egypt, then the nation's identity as the elect people of God is deprived of its foundation. What's more, if Yahweh never intervened on Israel's behalf to save her from Egypt, then her hope that Yahweh would again intervene in history to exact her deliverance from exile is largely baseless, for her expectation of future deliverance is grounded in the historical reality of God's redemptive release from Egyptian bondage."

- Christopher Ansberry

*Evangelical faith and the challenge of historical criticism (2013).*, pg. 70

- Two lines of data
  - Biblical story itself
  - Archaeological excavation
- **There is no direct, Biblically independent evidence for the exodus-conquest.**

"Once Alt had knocked the props out from under the conquest account, he had destroyed the moorings of the exodus." - Baruch Halpern, 1983 quoted in Hoffmeier (1996)

- **Minimalism - "Guilty until proven innocent"**
  - The Bible is a theological work that is thoroughly unreliable source of historical information unless archaeological data proves otherwise
  - No direct evidence = no exodus
- **Maximalism - "Innocent until proven guilty"**
  - The Bible contains historically relevant accounts and should be given the benefit of the doubt when claiming to communicate historical events.
  - No direct evidence = exodus not ruled out

**CHARIOT  
WHEELS ON  
THE FLOOR  
OF THE RED  
SEA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

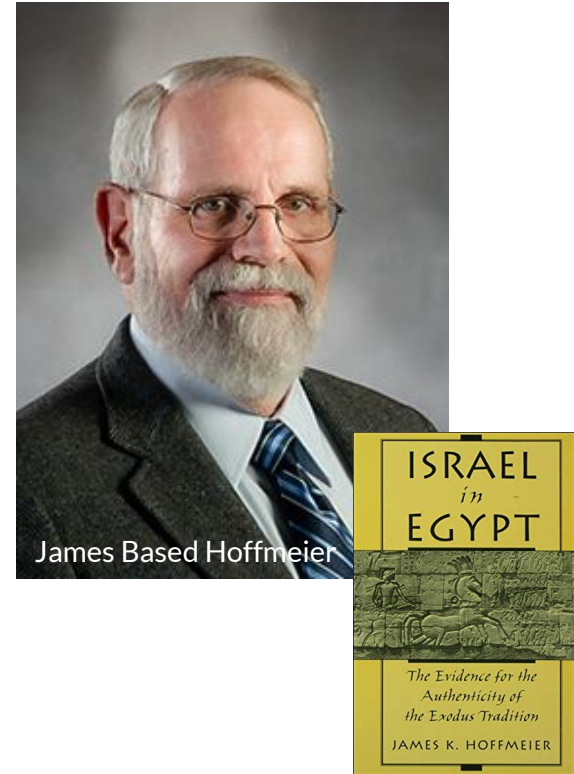


**Coral reef growth on the metal of the wheel, above helps us picture what it looks like under the coral**

# Our Approach: Responsible Maximalism

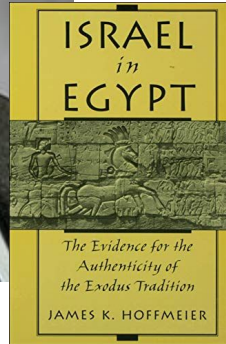
"The exodus is a **plausible historical event** preserved in a reliable textual account. The archaeological **data does not 'prove' the historicity of the exodus** and that the biblical account is a theological narrative that includes mythological language. The **indirect evidence from Egypt**, the witness of the biblical text, and prominence of the exodus tradition throughout the OT canon 'overwhelmingly supports' the historical authenticity of the event"

- Analyze the biblical text for its actual claims.
- Use archaeology to establish a plausible backdrop.



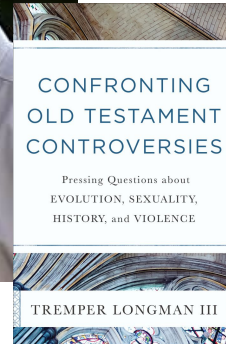
James Based Hoffmeier

# Sources and Recommendations



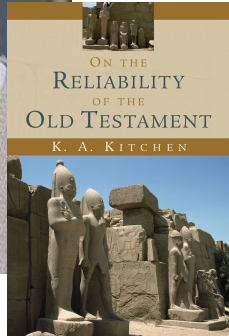
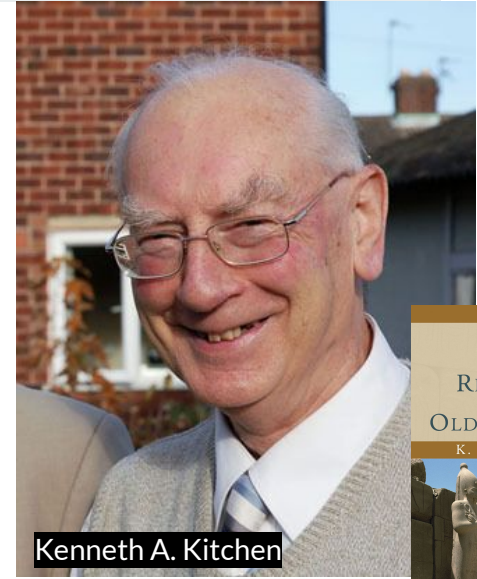
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# The Date of the Exodus

## Preliminary comments

- Ancient chronology in general is a quagmire and biblical chronology in particular is no exception.
- There is NOT a single authoritative biblical chronology.
- There are no absolute dates given in ancient records, only relative.
  - Archaeologists must piece together records as best they can, sync them with each other, and attach them to known *astronomical* events.
- The Septuagint (LXX) chronology does not line up with the Masoretic Text (MT) chronology.

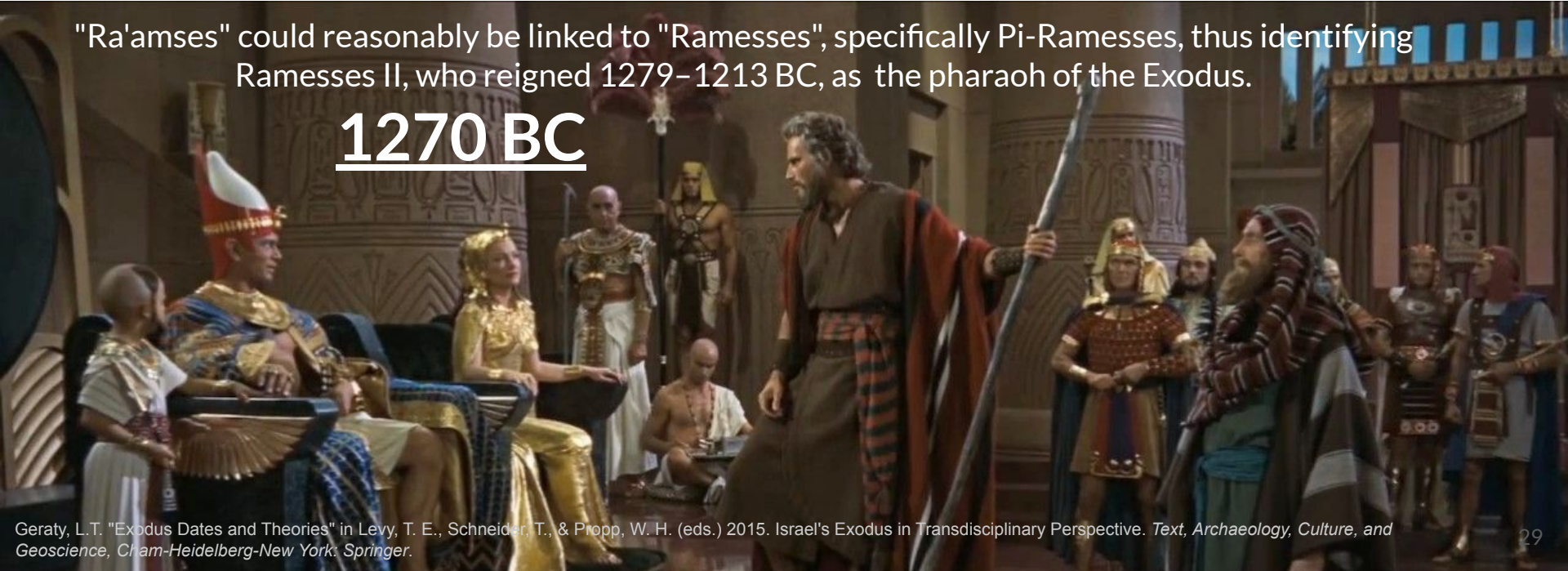


# The Date of the Exodus - Store Cities Approach

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, **that they also join our enemies and fight against us**, and so go up out of the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. **And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Ra'amses.**"  
- Exodus 1:8-11 (ESV)

"Ra'amses" could reasonably be linked to "Ramesses", specifically Pi-Ramesses, thus identifying Ramesses II, who reigned 1279–1213 BC, as the pharaoh of the Exodus.

1270 BC



# The Date of the Exodus - Additive Approach

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{Solomon's 4th year} \\
 966 \text{ BC} \\
 + \\
 630 \text{ years} \\
 = \\
 \underline{\underline{1596 \text{ BC}}}
 \end{array}$$

Time period	Event	Reference
3 years	Solomon's 4th year	<a href="#">1 Ki 6:1</a>
40 years	David's reign	<a href="#">1 Ki 2:11</a>
40 years	Saul's reign	<a href="#">1 Sa 13:1</a>
30 years (est.)	Samuel's leadership	<a href="#">1 Sa 7:14-15</a>
40 years	Eli's judgeship	<a href="#">1 Sa 4:18</a>
20 years	Samson's judgeship	<a href="#">Jdg 15:20</a>
40 years	Philistine oppression	<a href="#">Jdg 13:1</a>
8 years	Abdon's judgeship	<a href="#">Jdg 12:14</a>
10 years	Elon's judgeship	<a href="#">Jdg 12:11</a>
7 years	Ibzan's judgeship	<a href="#">Jdg 12:9</a>
6 years	Jephthah's judgeship	<a href="#">Jdg 12:7</a>
18 years	Ammonite oppression	<a href="#">Jdg 10:8</a>
22 years	Jair's judgeship	<a href="#">Jdg 10:3</a>
23 years	Tola's judgeship	<a href="#">Jdg 10:2</a>
3 years	Abimelech's rulership	<a href="#">Jdg 9:22</a>
40 years	Gideon's deliverance and peace	<a href="#">Jdg 8:28</a>
7 years	Midian's oppression	<a href="#">Jdg 6:1</a>
40 years	Peace after Deborah and Barak's victory	<a href="#">Jdg 5:31</a>
20 years	Jabin's oppression	<a href="#">Jdg 4:3</a>
80 years	Ehud's deliverance and peace	<a href="#">Jdg 3:30</a>
18 years	Moabite oppression	<a href="#">Jdg 3:14</a>
40 years	Peace after Othniel's victory	<a href="#">Jdg 3:11</a>
8 years	Mesopotamian oppression	<a href="#">Jdg 3:8</a>
20 years (est.)	End of conquest to death of Joshua and the elders	<a href="#">Jdg 2:6-7</a>
7 years (est.)	Joshua's conquest until the tribal allotments	<a href="#">Jos 14:7-10</a>
40 years	Time in the wilderness	<a href="#">Nu 14:33</a>

# The Date of the Exodus - Pauline Approach

The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. For about 40 years he put up with them in the wilderness. After he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance for about 450 years. After that he gave them judges until the time of the prophet Samuel. Then they asked for a king; and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for 40 years. (Acts 13:17-21)



Years	Event
40	Wilderness wanderings
?	Destroying 7 nations in Canaan
450	Between destroying 7 nations and the judges
?	Judges
40	Saul*
40	David
<hr/>	
570	+ 966 BC = <u>1536 BC</u>

"In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites came 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." - 1 Kings 6:1 (NIV, MT)

$$966 \text{ BC} + 480 = \underline{1446 \text{ BC}} \text{ (MT)}$$

"And it came to pass in the four hundred and fortieth year after the departure of the children of Israel out of Mizraim{gr.Egypt}, in the fourth year and second month of the reign of king Solomon over Israel, that the king commanded that they should take great [and] costly stones for the foundation of the house, and hewn stones." - 1 Kings 6:1 (Brenton's Septuagint)

$$966 \text{ BC} + 440 = \underline{1406 \text{ BC}} \text{ (LXX)}$$

# The Date of the Exodus - Biblical Summary

- |    |                               |           |
|----|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 01 | Store Cities                  | ● 1270 BC |
| 02 | Septuagint Literal Chronology | ● 1406 BC |
| 03 | Masoretic Literal Chronology  | ● 1446 BC |
| 04 | Pauline Summary               | ● 1536 BC |
| 05 | Narrative Adding              | ● 1596 BC |

Hoffmeier, J. K. (2007). What is the Biblical date for the exodus? a response to Bryant Wood. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 50(2), 225.

Geraty, L.T. "Exodus Dates and Theories" in Levy, T. E., Schneider, T., & Propp, W. H. (eds.) 2015. *Israel's Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective. Text, Archaeology, Culture, and Geoscience, Cham-Heidelberg-New York: Springer.*

# When Was the Exodus?

## Approximate date (+/-50 to +/-100 years)

ca. 2100 BC

ca. 1700 BC

ca. 1600 BC

ca. 1500–1450 BC

ca. 1550 BC

ca. 1350 BC

ca. 1500 BC

ca. 1450 BC

ca. 1400 BC (1840s dating of Ramses II  
Dyn.19—current dating ca. 1250 BC)

ca. 1300 BC

ca. 1250 BC (Ramses II and/or Merneptah)

ca. 1170 BC ca. 650 BC

## Theory/pharaoh identification

MB I/EB IV (IBA) Exodus

-

Thera eruption

Thera eruption

Hyksos expulsion as Exodus

Leper expulsion as Exodus Ramses II as pharaoh of oppression

Traditional early date Exodus (Thutmose III or Amenhotep II)

Ramses II as pharaoh of oppression

Traditional Jewish date (ca. 1313 BC)

Late date Exodus

Sea Peoples-Philistine era Exodus

Egyptian Saite period Exodus

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# Date of the Exodus - Solutions

## 1270 BC

**"Late Date"**

Store cities are taken as the primary biblical data point, interpreted as Ramesside. Corroborated with the Merneptah Stele and early Iron Age influx of settlements, the date converges to around 1270 BC

- Sequence of Judges are overlapping tenures, not sequential.
- Time period from exodus to Solomon is a non-literal 12 x 40 schema.
- Other kings may have non-literal reigns *vis a vis* exactly 40 years

## 1446 BC

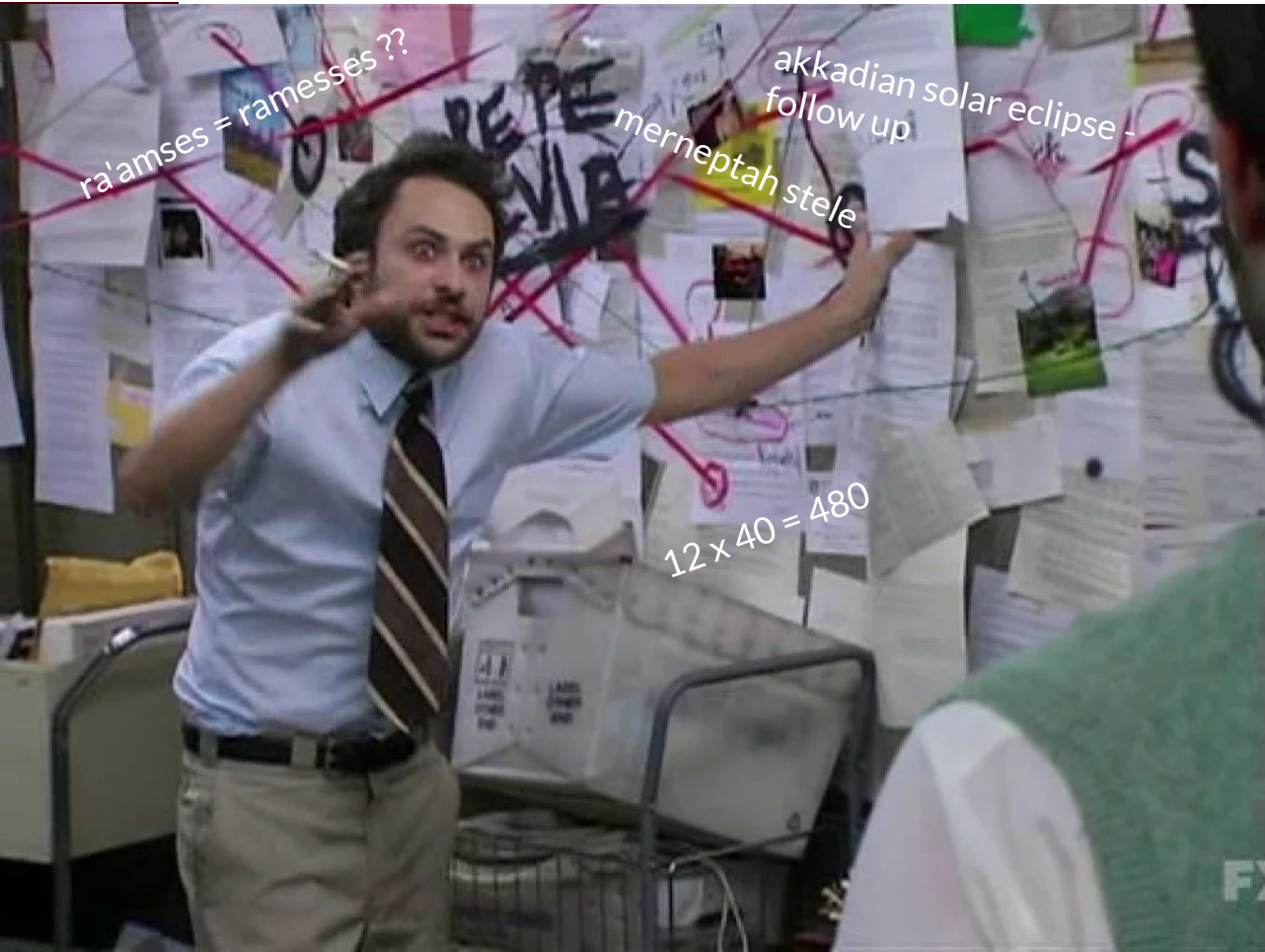
**"Early Date"**

Masoretic 1 Kings 6:1 is taken as the primary data point. Corroborated by Judges 11:26, date converges to the mid-1400s.

- Sequence of Judges are overlapping tenures, not sequential.
- Masoretic text has the correct chronology, not LXX
- The store cities were editorially updated from older names.

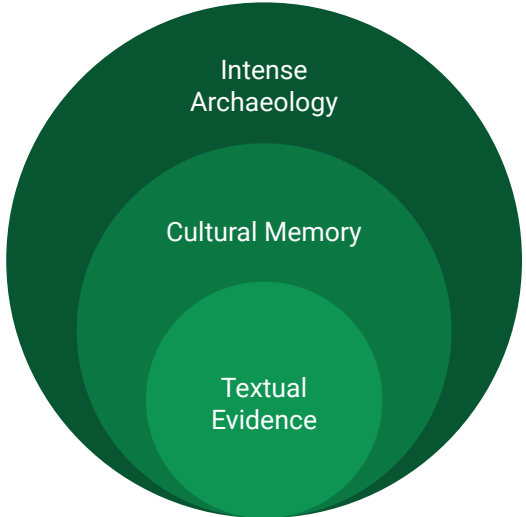
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# Information Overload

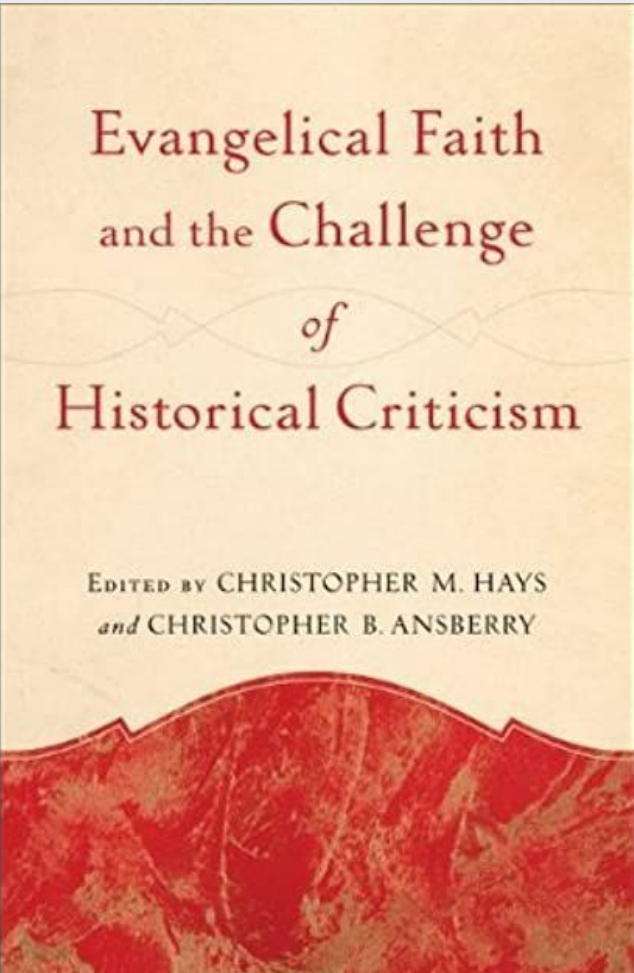


We've gone all of 11 verses and already at an intractable problem.

Is there a way we can discuss this without going into the weeds?







Evangelical Faith  
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Historical Criticism

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"Cultural memory perceives biblical traditions as corporate reflections on the contemporary situation of the Israelite community, rather than as mere reiterations of the community's past...From this perspective, the exodus is not simply an event written and stored in Israel's literary tradition as a 'given'. Rather, it is the subject of continuous remembrance, reconfiguration, and representation in the light of contemporary interests. The concept of "cultural memory" represents a *via media* between the generic classification of biblical narratives as history and myth."

- Christopher Ansberry

*Evangelical faith and the challenge of historical criticism (2013)., pg. 67*

Quantitative Methods in the Humanities  
and Social Sciences

Thomas E. Levy  
Thomas Schneider  
William H.C. Propp *Editors*

## Israel's Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective

Text, Archaeology, Culture, and Geoscience

 Springer

"This is not to say that there is no historical background at all behind the story of the Exodus from Egypt and that it is futile to investigate all possible sources. **On the contrary, it is quite probable that a great many historical experiences and memories lie behind and went into the Biblical story** though certainly not this one gigantic and miraculous event of liberation, election, and revelation." - Jan Assmann (2015)

"The storyline of the Exodus, of a **people fleeing from a humiliating slavery, suggests elements that are historically credible. Normally, it is tales of glory and victory that are preserved in narratives** from one generation to the next. The salvation from this servitude and misery created a bond among this people of Israel." - Manfred Bietak (2015)

"That Israel was in Egypt under one form or another no historian could possibly doubt; a legend of such tenacity representing the early fortunes of a people under so unfavourable an aspect could not have arisen save as a reflexion, however much distorted, of real occurrences." - Sir Alan Gardiner (1922)

**Can we formulate these somewhat vague considerations into an argument?**

# The Kuzari Principle

or "How I Learned to Stop Worrying about Chariot Wheels and Love the Text"

**The Kuzari Principle:** A tradition is true if it is

- (1) accepted by a nation; and
- (2) describes a national experience of a previous generation of the nation; and
- (3) the national experience would be expected to create a continuous national memory until the tradition is in place.

Essentially, this a precise formulation of the *Principle of Testimony*.



Tyron Goldschmidt

"A Proof of Exodus: Yehuda HaLevy and Jonathan Edwards Walk into a Bar" in S. Lebens, D. Rabinowitz and A. Segal (Eds.), *Jewish Thought in the Age of Analytic Philosophy: New Essays in the Philosophy of Judaism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (2019)

# Song of the Sea (Exodus 15:1-18, ESV)

Dated as early as 12th c. BC!



“I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;

the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and my song,

and he has become my salvation;

this is my God, and I will praise him,

my father's God, and I will exalt him.

The Lord is a man of war;

the Lord is his name.

“Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea,

and his chosen officers were sunk in the *Yam Suph*.

The floods covered them;

they went down into the depths like a stone.

Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power,

your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy.

In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries;

you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble.

At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up;

the floods stood up in a heap;

the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea...

# Kuzari Principle Applied to the Exodus

1. The exodus event permeates the cultural memory of the Hebrew people in festival, song, and worship.
2. This permeation extends through all strata of the text (e.g. law, psalm, history, myth, prophecy, lament, wisdom, etc).
3. This earliest stratum is extremely early
  - a. Song of the Sea dated to ~12th c. BC (Russel 2009, Kitchen 2003)
4. Bonus: the story is itself rather embarrassing and hard to embrace.
  - a. Torah observance is enormously difficult.
  - b. The exodus (and conquest) story is a mixed multitude of slaves, not a glorious conquering nation.

**Conclusion:** We have rather strong *a priori* reason for accepting the broad outline of the exodus tradition at face value, i.e. justification for maximalist approach.

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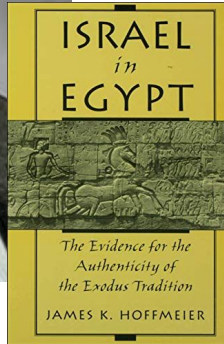
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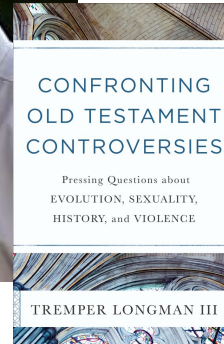
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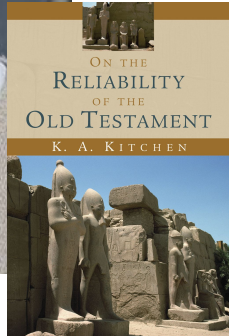
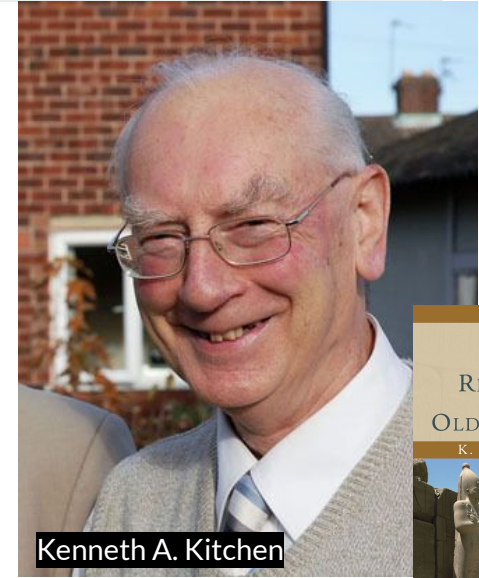
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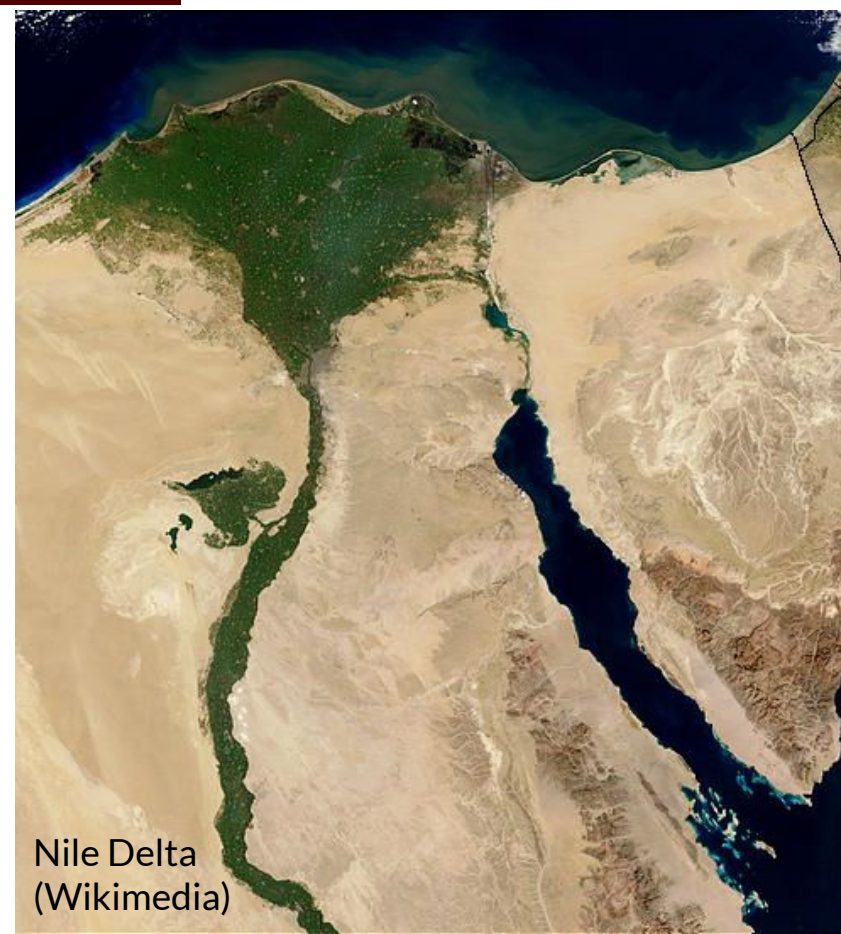
- **How many people were involved in the exodus?**
  - So all those listed of the people of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war in Israel— all those listed were **603,550** (Num. 1:46). But, 600k men entails millions of Israelites.
  - The debate over *'eleph*
- **What route did the Hebrews take?**
  - North, South, Central?
  - Wadi Tumilat



1. Why is there no direct evidence?
2. The Merneptah Stele
3. Asiatic slaves during the Middle Kingdom
4. Ecological reality of the plagues
5. Egyptianisms in the Hebrew text

1. Why is there no direct evidence?
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# Why is there no direct evidence?

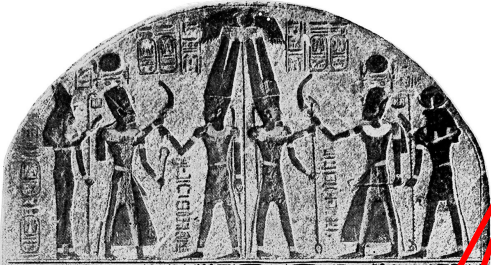


Nile Delta  
(Wikimedia)

- Delta region is marshy, not many things expected to survive in the archaeological record.
  - Annual flooding with no source of stone
  - 99% of New Kingdom papyri estimated to be lost forever
- Monumental texts are minimal
  - Egyptian pharaohs not really inclined to memorialize their defeats
- Theological point of exodus narrative is to know who YHWH is, not pharaoh.

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2. **The Merneptah Stele**
3. Asiatic slaves during the Middle Kingdom
4. Ecological reality of the plagues
5. Egyptianisms in the Hebrew text

# Victory Stele of Merneptah (1208 BC)



"Israel is wasted [his] seed is not"

"The mention of Israel in the Merneptah stela (ca. 1208 BC) suggests that tribal Israel was already a significant presences in the Levant prior to the sedentarization described in Finkelstein's study." - Hoffmeier 1996, pg. 33

This implies the latest date for an exodus is in the late 1200s.

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- Egypt was frequented by the peoples of the Levant, especially in response to famine from the Old Kingdom (2190 BC) through the Second Intermediate Period (1550 BC).
  - This accords nicely with the patriarchal period describing Abraham, Israel, and Joseph visiting Egypt during famine.
- A significant Semitic population was present in Egypt during the New Kingdom (1550-1100 BC)
- Scenes of laborers in the tomb of Rekhmire, vizier of Thutmose III (ca. 1479-1425 BC) indicate workers taken as prisoners of war from numerous campaigns into Canaan and Syria.
- Brick making activities fits neatly with the activities described in Exodus 1.

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# Ecological Reality of the plagues

Turning Water to Blood: Ex. 7:14–24  
 Frogs: Ex. 7:25–8:15  
 Insects: Ex. 8:16–19  
 Wild animals or flies: Ex. 8:20–32  
 Pestilence of livestock: Ex. 9:1–7  
 Boils: Ex. 9:8–12

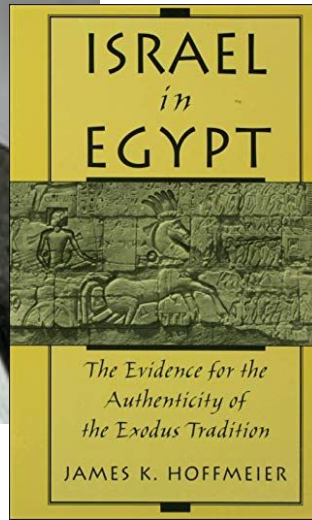
Per Hort (1957), potential chain reaction following the inundation of the Nile. Red dirt, bacteria provide red color, stimulate frog activity, create breeding ground for insects, fly larvae that burrow into the skin.

Thunderstorm of hail and fire: Ex. 9:13–35  
 Locusts: Ex. 10:1–20  
 Darkness for three days: Ex. 10:21–29

Hailstorms rare, but not impossible in Egypt (incidents in 1999, 2010). Wind currents bring up locusts from the south. Darkness could be sea fog, sandstorm, etc.

Death of firstborn: Ex. 11:1–12:36

**Note:** This is *not* a rationalization of the plagues as something other than divinely providential occurrences. Rather, that the plague narratives reflect plausible and relevant ecological catastrophes in the East Delta region.



"The first six plagues in the series of nine neatly fit the setting of the Nile's annual inundation season, and the seventh through ninth plagues are **not out of place in the Nile Valley**. These created havoc for Egypt, especially the institution of the kingship. **Pharaoh, the incarnation of Horus and the one responsible for maintaining cosmic order and fertility of the land, proved impotent against Yahweh and his agents Moses and Aaron.**"

- Hoffmeier (1996), pg. 224

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"Basket" (*tebat*)- תֵּבָה noun feminine - ark (properly chest, box (compare Late Hebrew תֵּבָה); probably Egyptian loan-word from T-b-t

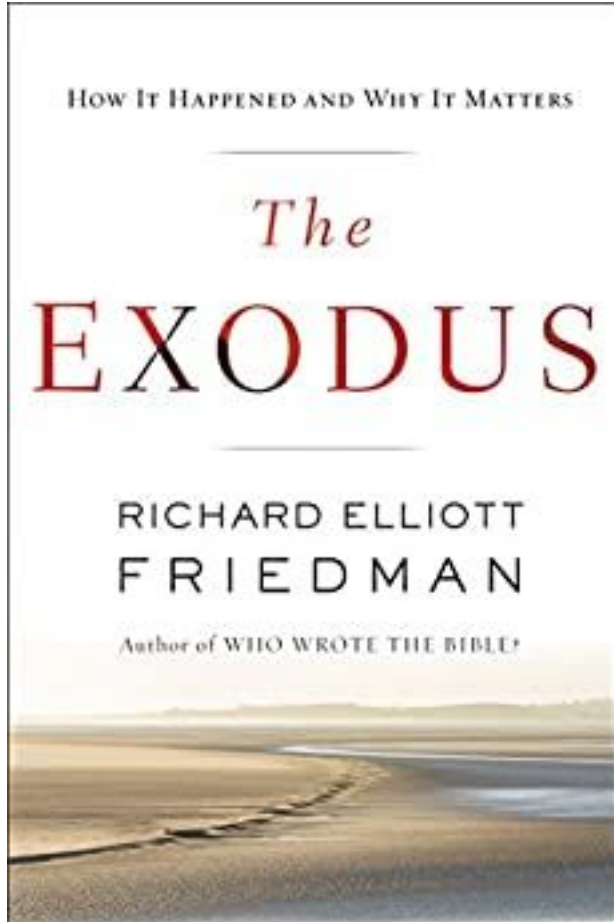
"Bulrushes" (*gome'*) - גֹּמֵאָ noun masculine- rush, reed, papyrus loan-word (Egyptian or Ethiopic)

"Pitch" (*zapet*) - זָפֶת noun feminine - pitch; on Egyptian derivatives compare CookSpeaker's Comm. i. 484;

"Reeds" (*suph*) - סוּפִי noun masculine - reeds, rushes (collective) (probably loan-word from Egyptian *twfy*, reeds, SteindBAS i. 603

"River" (*yeor*)- יְאוֹר, יַאֲרָ noun masculine - stream of the Nile, stream, canal (Egyptian loan-word = Egyptian °iotr, °io°r, watercourse. Importantly, the typical *nahar* is not used.

# Egyptianisms in the Hebrew Text - Levite Names



**Hophni**

**Hur**

**Phinehas**

**Merari**

**Mushi**

**Pashur**

**Moses**

Only Levites have Egyptian names in the Bible; not one person from any of the rest of Israel has an Egyptian name. We must ask if perhaps the Bible's authors invented these Egyptian names precisely to help make the story of Egypt and the exodus look believable. But (a) this still begs the question of why all the named figures are Levites; nobody invented an Egyptian name for a non-Levite. (b) The Egyptian names appear in texts from at least 20 different authors and editors, spread out over 500 years.

- Richard Elliott Friedman *The Exodus* (2017)



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1. The exodus from Egypt is a central historical touchpoint in the theology of ancient Israel.
2. There is no direct evidence of the exodus. While unnerving, we must resist the urge to resort to sensationalistic apologetics.
3. There is strong *a priori* reason to take the broad outline at face value (Kuzari principle).
4. What little of the broad outlines of the story that can be corroborated by the archaeological data fits nicely in the overall scheme.
5. The Egyptian influence on the text is inexorable - "There's little evidence of Israel in Egypt, but much evidence of Egypt in Israel".

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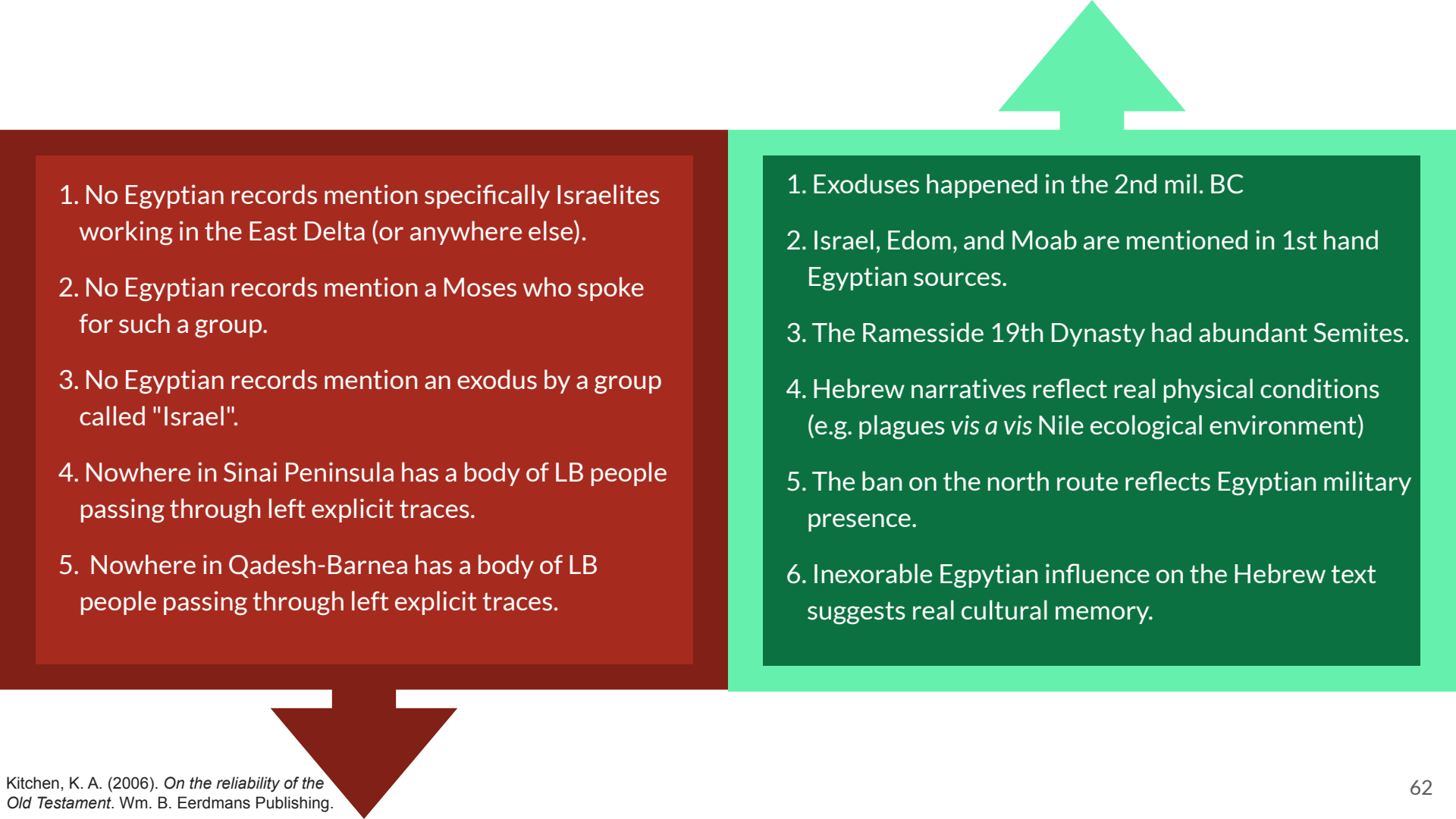
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# Appendix

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1. No Egyptian records mention specifically Israelites working in the East Delta (or anywhere else).
  2. No Egyptian records mention a Moses who spoke for such a group.
  3. No Egyptian records mention an exodus by a group called "Israel".
  4. Nowhere in Sinai Peninsula has a body of LB people passing through left explicit traces.
  5. Nowhere in Qadesh-Barnea has a body of LB people passing through left explicit traces.

1. Exoduses happened in the 2nd mil. BC
2. Israel, Edom, and Moab are mentioned in 1st hand Egyptian sources.
3. The Ramesside 19th Dynasty had abundant Semites.
4. Hebrew narratives reflect real physical conditions (e.g. plagues *vis a vis* Nile ecological environment)
5. The ban on the north route reflects Egyptian military presence.
6. Inexorable Egyptian influence on the Hebrew text suggests real cultural memory.