

Anderson, G. W., The History and Religion of Israel (Oxford University Press) 1966
The New Clarendon Bible, Old Testament, Volume I.

p. 3 The books of the Old Testament are by far the most important sources for our knowledge of ancient Israel. . . .

But the Old Testament records need to be handled with discrimination. They come from widely different periods; and most of them are complex works composed of different strands. It is, therefore, necessary to attempt to analyse them and to date their several parts. We may even venture on the more delicate enterprise of tracing the influences by which the various strands were fashioned before they were combined, or during the course of oral transmission before they were written down.

Further, it is important to recognize that the different elements in the material do not all have the same literary character. For example, the stories about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob do not belong to the same literary class as either the stories about Adam and Eve on the one hand, or, on the other, the chapters in 2 Samuel about the history of David's court. The stories about Adam and Eve are not based on historical reminiscence or record, but are intended to depict and interpret man's relationship to his environment and to God; the patriarchal narratives are based on historical reminiscence and have a historical core which has been overlaid and in part transformed in the long process of transmission; the account of David's court may safely be regarded as a historical record,^{p.4} contemporary or nearly so with the events which it describes. The test of literary character is a necessary preliminary to the evaluation of historical reliability.

p.4 There are in the Old Testament three main blocks of narrative material which are relevant to the task of historical reconstruction. The first is the sequence of stories (interspersed with codes of law) relating to early times, which we find in the first few books of the Bible. Although there are strong traditional and other reasons for treating the first five books (The Pentateuch) as a coherent group, the book of Deuteronomy is^{p.5} probably best taken not as the coda to what