

The variety and extent of written historical sources before and about 1000 B.C.

The literature more extensive for Saul, David, Solomon than for subsequent periods, until we have the Elijah and Elishah cycles, The history of Jehu's revolt, of Hezekiah, of Josiah's reformation.

Such literary following is epochal, dependent upon national crises.

The literature preceding annalistic sources, which are preserved only in the minimum in the original form. Annals first appear with David and Solomon.

The literature in Ju., Sa., Ki. preceded the Yahwist (9th cent.?) and Elohist (8th cent.?) of the Pentateuch.

The historiographical process worked backwards, from more or less contemporary history to more remote; e.g. 1, David; 2, Saul; 3, Samuel.

The epical codifications in J and E are later, more distinctly based on tradition and legend. The historical literature induced the interest in these codifications.

The historical anecdote the earliest prose genre, e.g. the Gideon-Jephthah story, culminating in the masterpiece of the Davidic Court History. Similar anecdotes recur later in Ki.

The continuative character of this historiography:

These anecdotalists arose at successive epochs under the stimulus of heroic personalities and political crises. The writers were independent and original, but were connected by a literary tradition; they received the earlier material, went to school to it, probably assimilated it to their own compositions. The David stories in 1 Sa. are from other hands than the Court History; there is recurrence of such history for the rise of the schism between North and South. Then a lull until the middle of the 9th cent. The editor of Ki. depended upon earlier compilations (Chronicles of Judah, of Israel); these again upon compilations, or accretions of literary material, indefinitely; thus a process of slow stratification, and it is impossible to identify the manifold editorial processes.

Compare the compilatory, continuative character of Arabic and Syriac, as well as of Greek historiography.

The Writers and their Schools.

Annals.

The ancient civilizations only slightly parallel Hebrew historiography. For Babylonia, Assyria, the Hittite empire we possess hardly more than official annals. (Only with Ashurbanipal does there come something like autobiography.) For Egypt the only historical document, in true sense of the word, is the remarkable diary of Thutmosis' wars. A few anecdotal historical stories are found in the Egyptian. But the literature developed romance, the story, not history. Historical recording was the interest and perquisite of the monarchs.

We have Hebrew annals presented in Ki., but they are a small, often unrecognizable part of the history. The Hebrew anecdotal historical story and its development into biography and political history are unique in the ancient Oriental world.