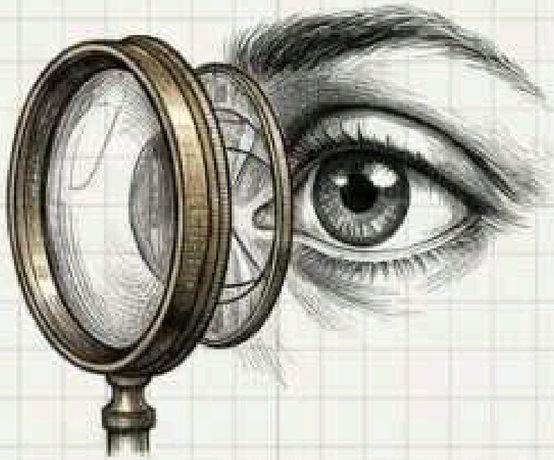
# Three Pillars of Historical Judgment

## The Text



**Genre:**
How writing kind changes expectations

## The Reader



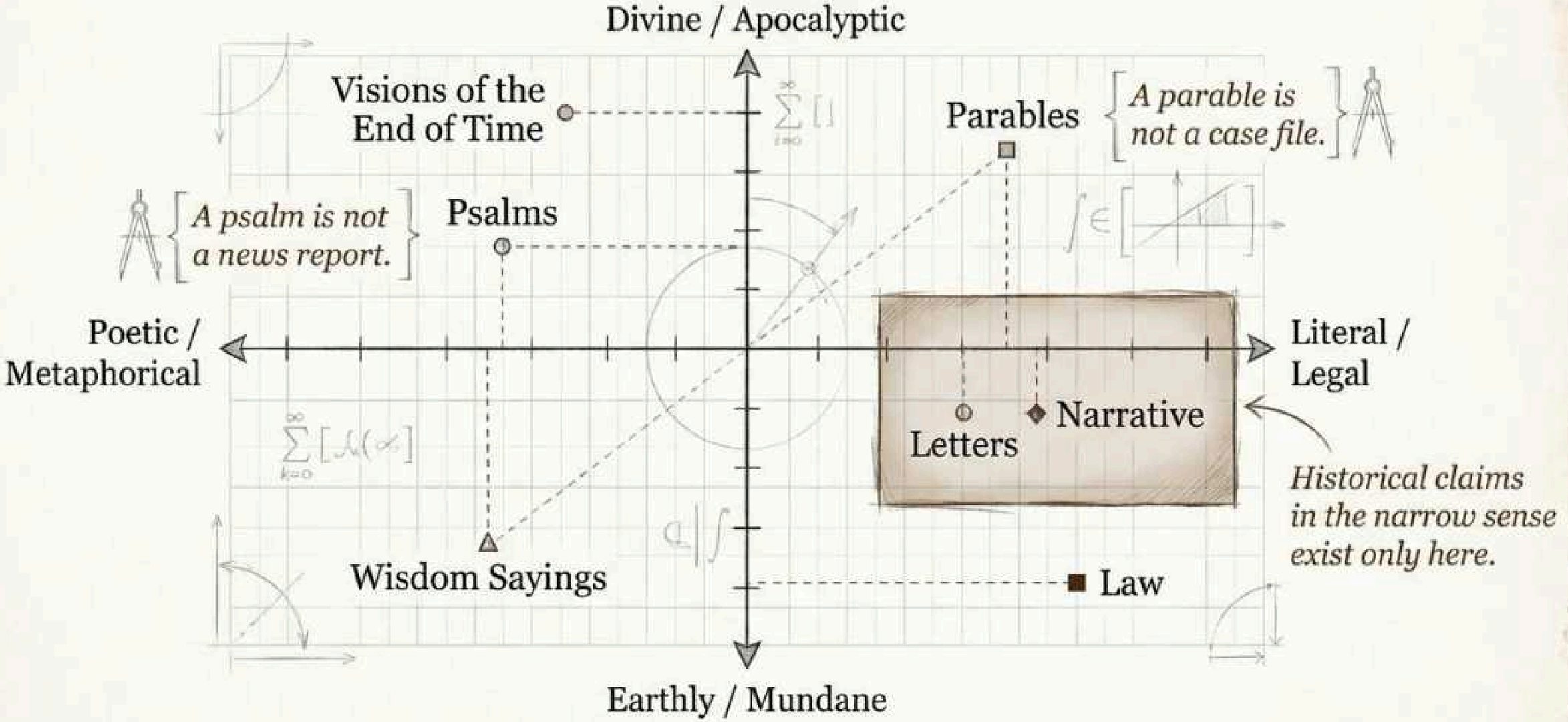
**Convictions:**
How differing views handle difficulties

## The Method



**Habits of Mind:**
How any reader judges historical claims

# Mapping the Matrix of Ancient Genres



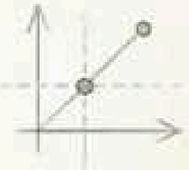
# The Calculus of Ancient Narrative

Speeches = Plausible Intent ≠ Exact Audio



Thucydides: Capturing what a speaker would plausibly say.

Later Accounts = Source Material + Differing Emphases



Numbers (Armies, Ages) ≈ Rounded or Symbolic

*Example: The Chronicler retelling the books of Samuel and Kings.*

**Scholars read for the point the author intended.**

# History versus Liiterature: The Branching Path

¶ 6.4

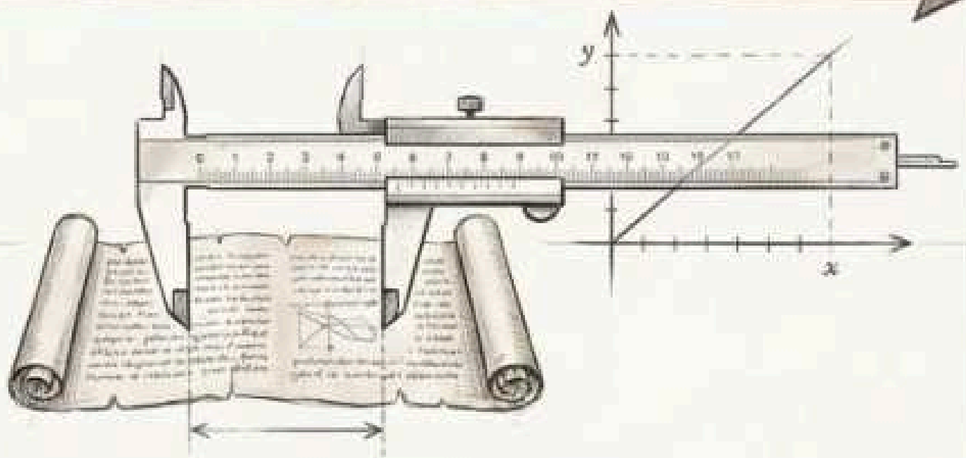
**Texts Under Debate**
Jonah, Job, Genesis 1-3

Path A

Path B

Path A

**Theology Told in Story Form**
*(Literature)*




Path B

**Literal Reporting of the Past**
*(History)*

For a historian, the primary question is whether a text claims to report the past. The answer varies from book to book.

# Approach 1: The Lens of Inerrancy



### Core Belief

The Bible is without error in all it affirms.

### Methodology

Harmonization of apparent conflicts; attribution to copying errors.

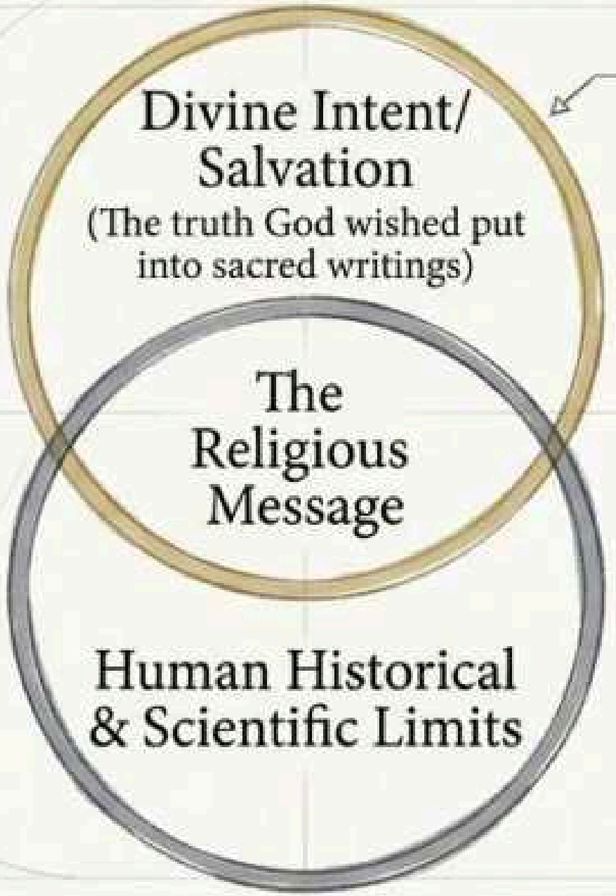
### Key Formulation

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978).

### Relationship to Evidence

Welcomes archaeology primarily as support and confirmation.

# Approach 2: Inspired Yet Human




## Core Belief

Inspired, yet written by people in their own specific times.

## Key Formulation

Dei Verbum (Second Vatican Council, 1965).

## Expectation

Anticipates human limits in history and science while finding truth in the religious message.

# Approach 3: Literary and Historical Record

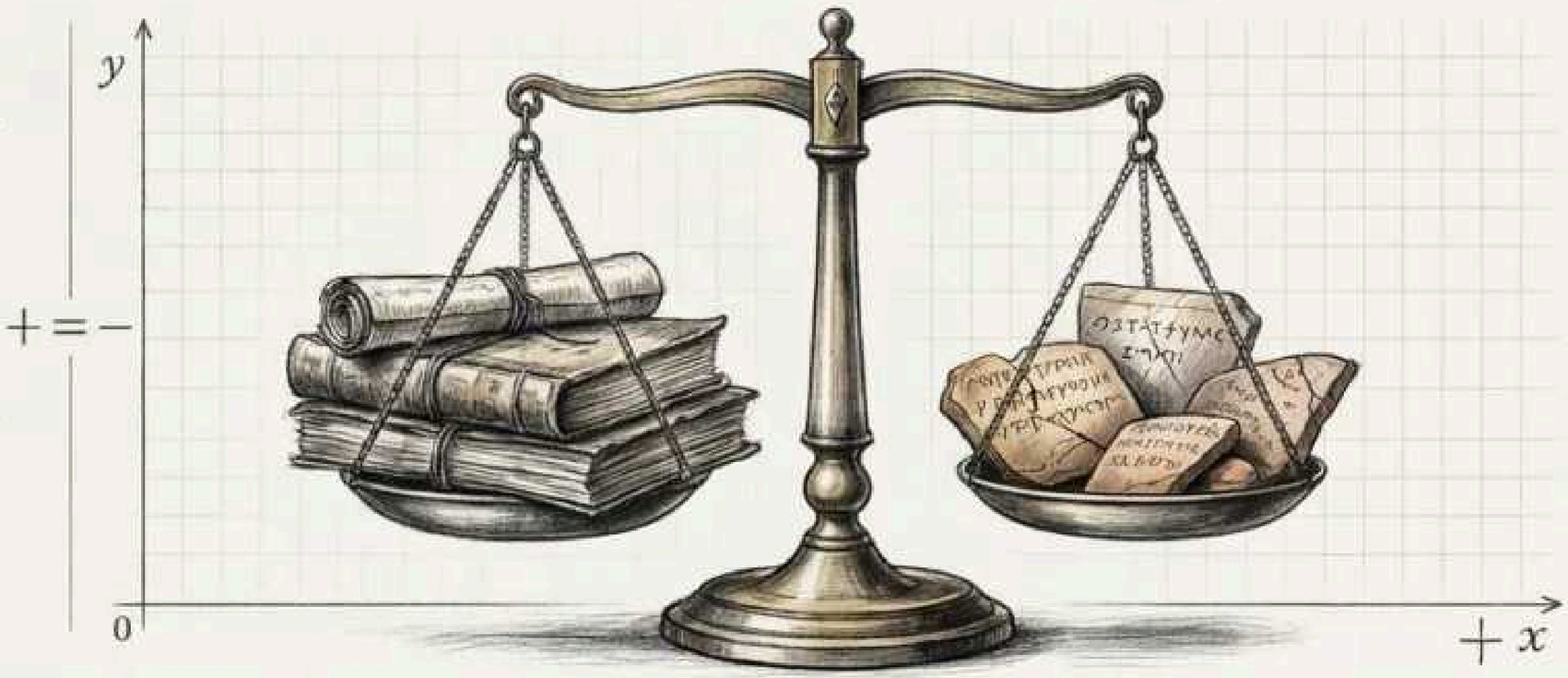
¶ 6.7

## Core Belief

The text must be tested like any other ancient document.

## Conclusions

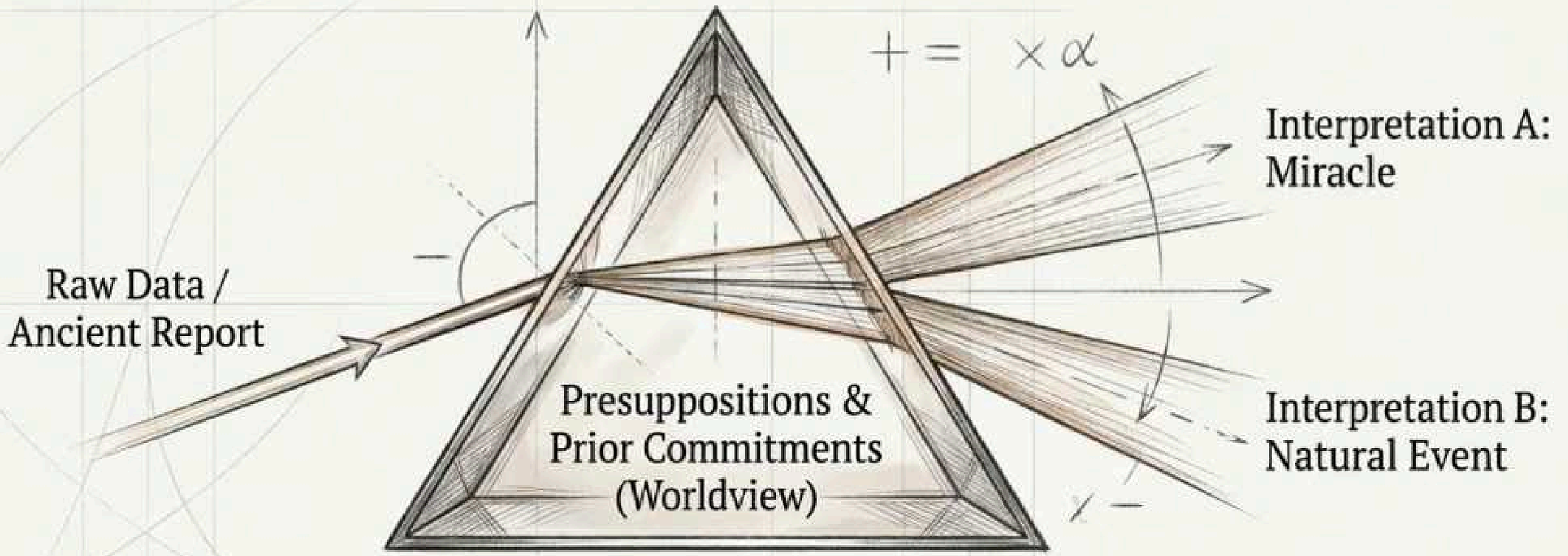
Vary wildly—some find reliable data; others find layers of legend.




Notice: All groups use the same manuscripts, inscriptions, and excavations.
The disagreement lies in the weight given to the evidence and in prior commitments.

¶ 6.8

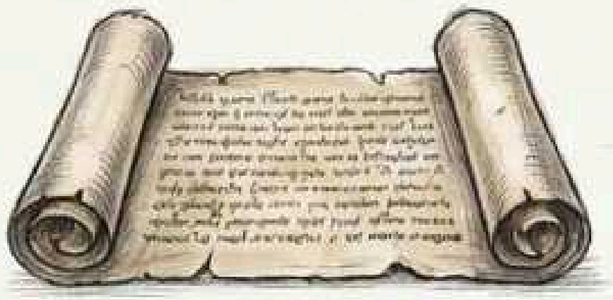
# The Refraction of Presuppositions

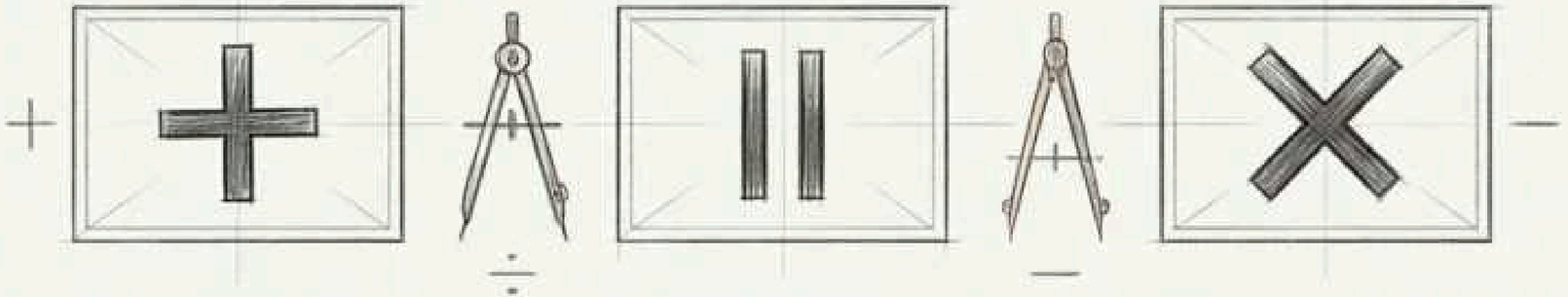



Good scholarship does not pretend to have no views. It states its assumptions, shows its evidence, and welcomes criticism from those who think differently.

# Reconciling Differences in the Accounts

¶ 6.9





Reconciled by a reasonable reading.

Reflect different sources or purposes.

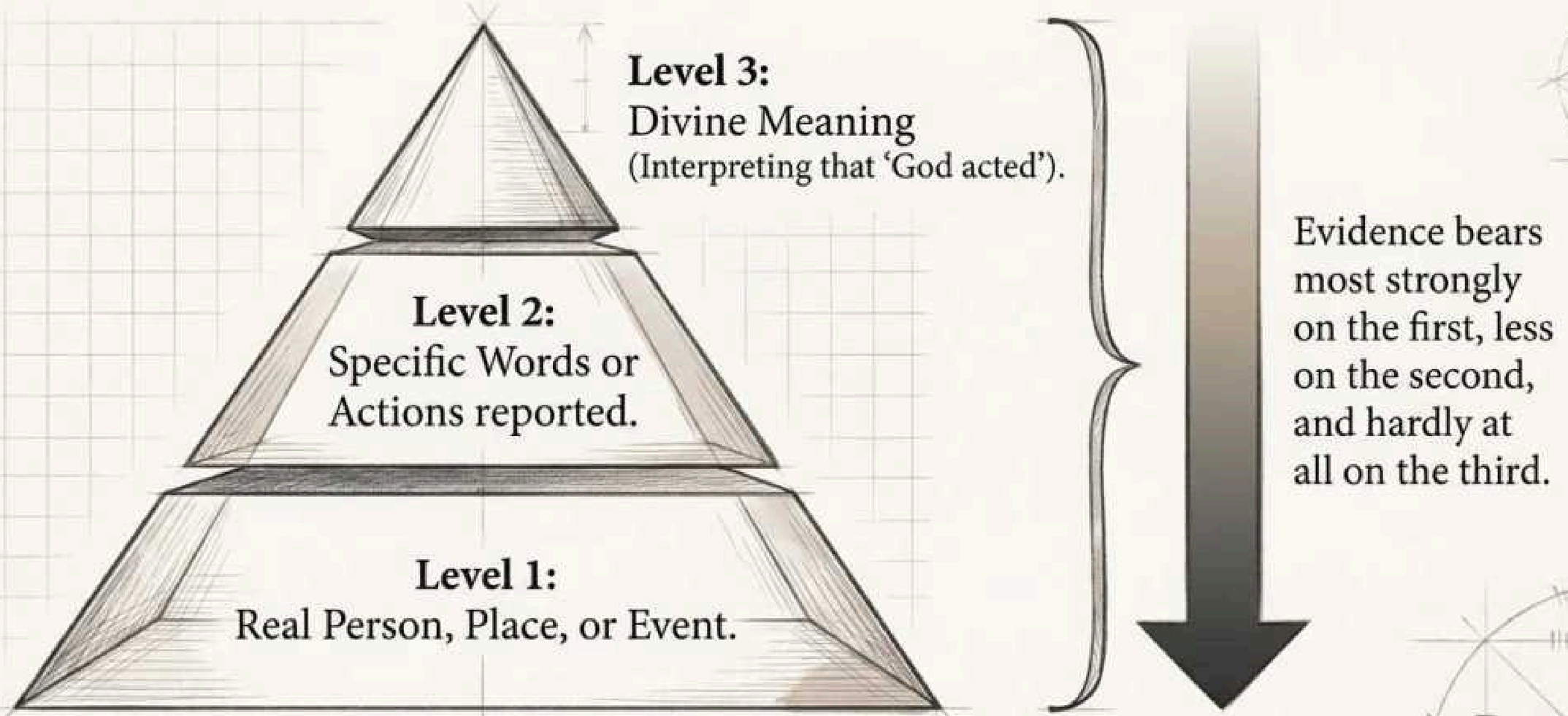
One account is mistaken.

## Case Study: Tatian's Diatessaron (2nd Century)

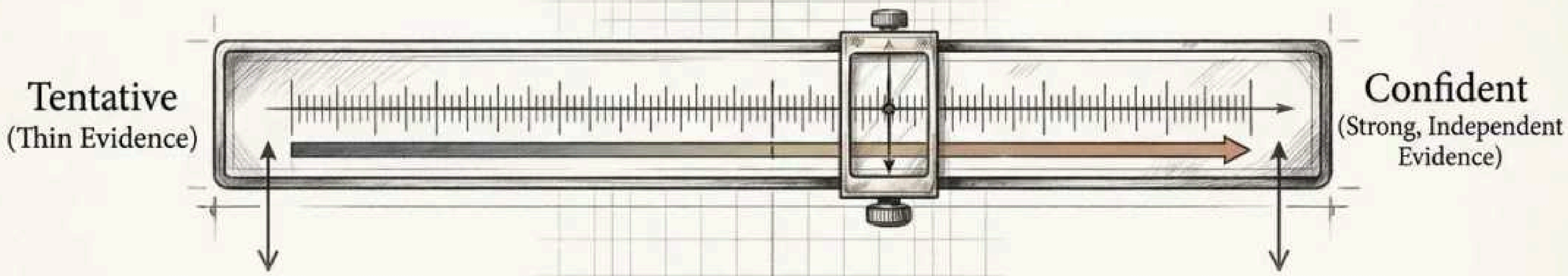


Tatian wove the 4 gospels into 1 to resolve differences, yet the church ultimately kept all 4 separate.

# Separating the Three Levels of Claim



# The Calibrated Reliability Gauge

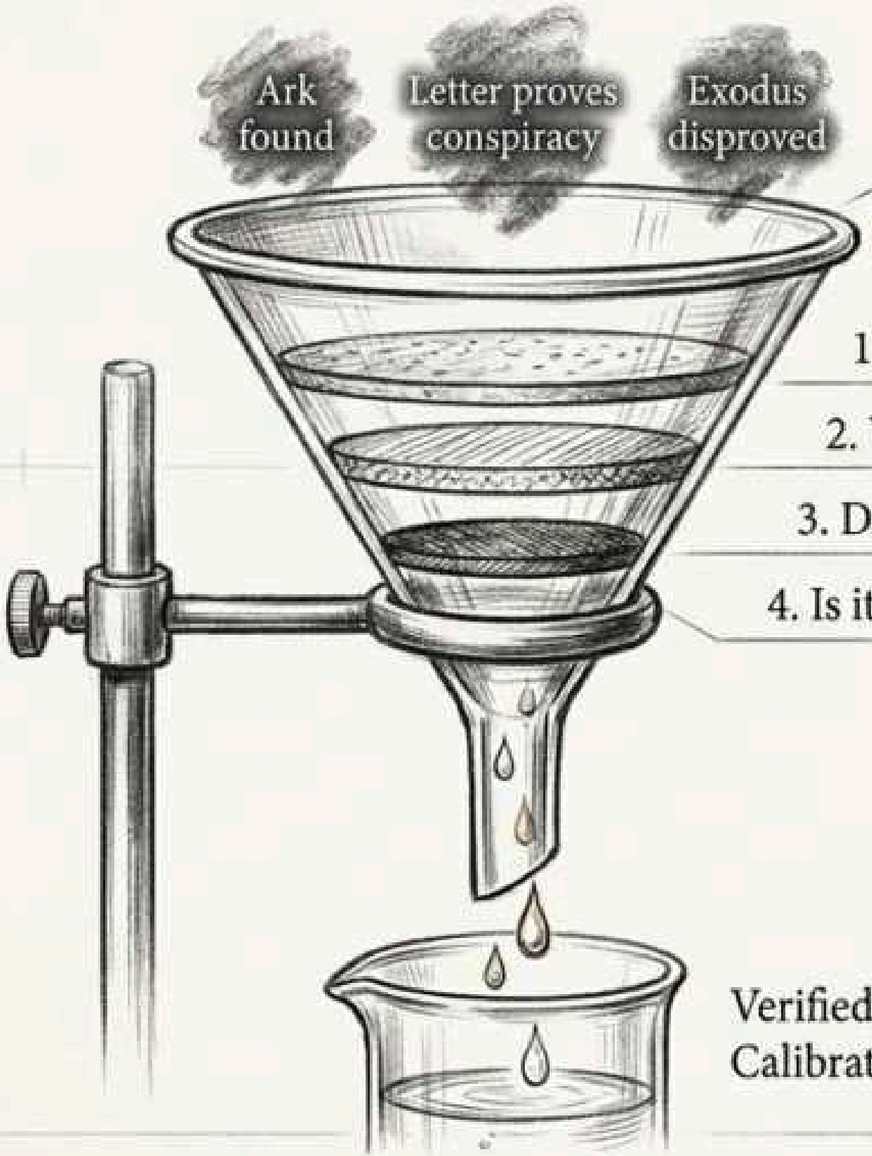



Reliability is a matter of degree, varying by book and period.
The right conclusion is a calibrated one.

# Navigating the Mixed Library: Two Shortcuts to Avoid



# Filtering Sensational Headlines



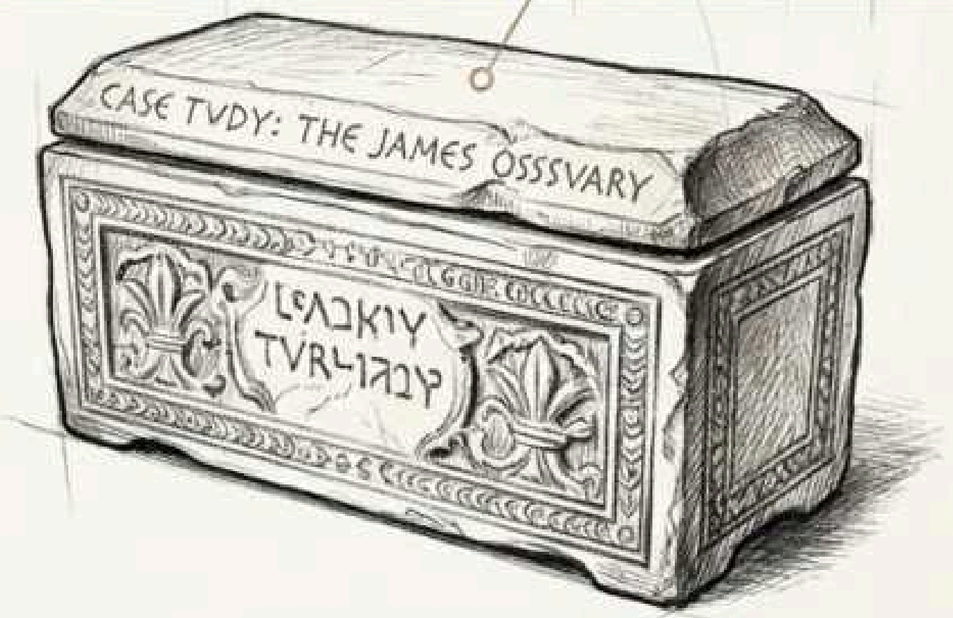

Sensational Claims

1. Who made the claim?
2. Was it excavated in context?
3. Do other experts agree?
4. Is it peer-reviewed?

Verified Fact / Calibrated Probability

Case Study: The James Ossuary

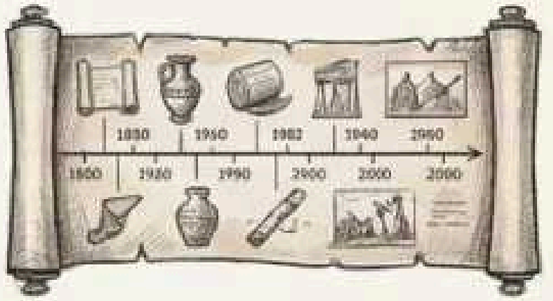
Disputed objects prove why claims require independent checking.



# The Vectors of Faith and History

Faith

A. Relies on historical events.



History matters deeply;
historical doubt is highly disruptive.

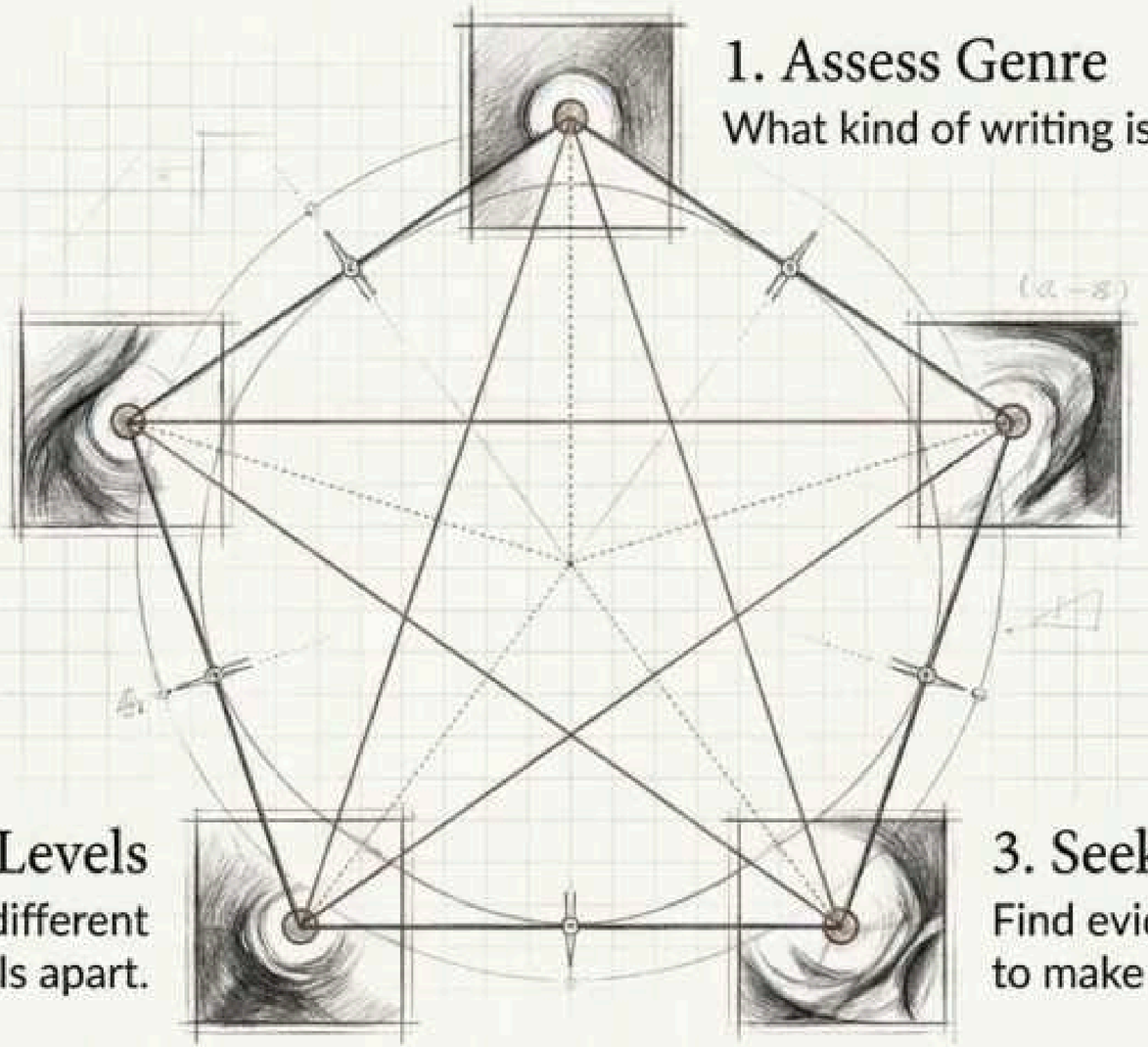
B. Concerns meaning and practice.



Independent of strict
historical doubt.

Historians do not decide between these views.
They offer *evidence*, and each *person* decides the weight it carries.

# Five Habits of Mind for Judgment



## 1. Assess Genre

What kind of writing is this?

## 2. Identify Proximity

Who wrote it & how close were they?

## 3. Seek Independence

Find evidence not written to make a point.

## 4. Separate Levels

Keep claims of different levels apart.

## 5. Match Confidence

Confidence must match the evidence, no more, no less.

# The Scholar's Bookshelf: Read Widely on All Sides




Read the arguments each side makes for itself.

# The Evolution of Archaeological Methodology

## Mid-20th **Century:** William Albright & Students

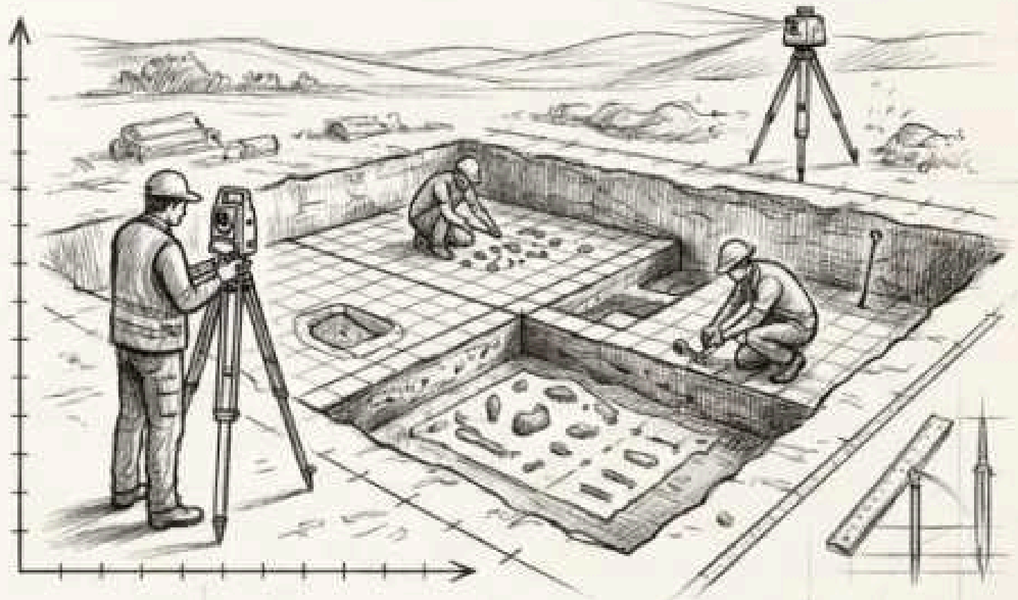
- **Key Focus:** Confirming the biblical account.



Rested on weak dating or reading finds through the text.

## **Modern Era:** Syro-Palestinian Archaeology

- **Key Focus:** Studying the region on its own terms.

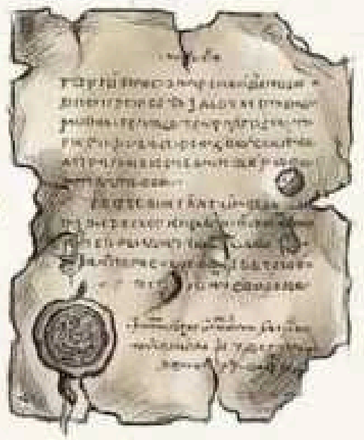


Today the field is more careful: it asks the evidence first.

# The Translation Spectrum

**Thought-for-Thought**
(Aiming at natural English).

**Word-for-Word**
(Following strict Hebrew/Greek syntax).

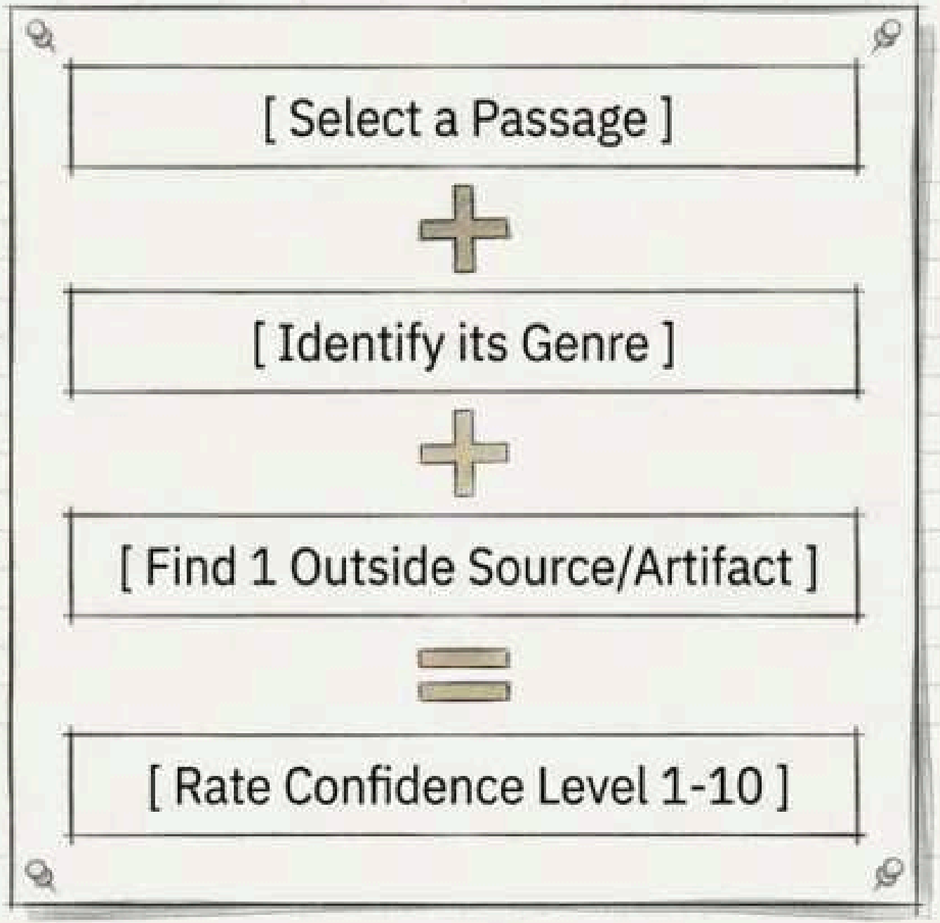


**Manuscript Variations:**
Translators choose a reading and note alternatives.

Compare two or three translations from different traditions to see where texts are secure and where choices were made.

# Final Exercise: Weighing the Evidence

¶ 6.19




May the habit of weighing evidence serve you in every field.

Questions or feedback:
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