

Definitions

Britannica World Language Edition of Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary, 1962, Vol. I

- historicism - the conception that the history of anything sufficiently accounts for its nature or values. p. 599
- higher criticism - The scientific and historical study of literature, especially the Bible. Compare Lower Criticism. p. 596
- lower criticism - The method of critical investigation which seeks to determine the original wording of a text; also called textual criticism. Compare Higher Criticism. p. 736

Webster's New International Dictionary, 2nd edition, unabridged

Higher Criticism. Scientific study of literature, and especially of the Biblical writings, aiming to ascertain their authorship, dates, and general character, primarily by means of internal evidence (style, historical allusions, dominant ideas, etc.), but also by external historical evidence. The term is variously used as the equivalent of literary criticism, or historical criticism or both.

A New English Dictionary of Historical Principles, Vol. II, 1893, p. 1181

1881 Robertson Smith Old Testament in Jewish Church (1892) A series of questions affection the composition, editing, and the collection of the sacred books. This class of questions forms the special subject of the branch of critical science which is usually distinguished from the verbal criticism of the text by the name Higher or Historical Criticism.