Narrative genres in the Old Testament have of late become a problem for form critics. Increasingly, scholars are unsure of presumed sureties: what after all is a narrative? And what terms best describe narratives attested in the Old Testament? The dimensions of the problem are only now emerging fully. This tardy awareness is probably attributable to the vast shadow cast by GUNKEL, when he long ago laid down the main lines of classification for various types of narrative. The effect was to provide a kind of orthodox view of saga, legend, and historical narrative, which still persists substantially unaltered in many standard works.

Yet, ambiguities were always inherent in GUNKEL’s program. Most scholars admit their uneasiness; and the terms have not always been carefully distinguished from one another, in usage or in translation.

The study of narratives about prophets has been largely carried out within this context. Naturally the ambiguities persist here, too. Recently there has been more of a tendency to speak only of prophetic legend, or legends about holy persons. These are stories which seek in some way to glorify the man of God, or perhaps better, the power of God which is operative in him. STECK has abandoned legend

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altogether and called the Elijah stories "didactic narrative" (*lehrhafte Erzählung*), i.e., stories which provided instruction for seeing in the work of Elijah, Yahweh's judgement on one's own times 1). Earlier, Plöger had also sought to specify matters more closely, and refused to rest content with saga or legend 2). Very recently, Rofé, sensing the difficulties at the doorstep of form critics, aligned himself more closely with modern literary critics. Assuming prophetic stories to be simply literary creations, Rofé attempted to describe genres and their histories on the basis of content alone 3).

Exclusive attention to content does not yield a sufficient base for genre analysis, or for answering questions about the history and development of a generic type. After all, structure is an important key to what is essential content and what is not. Moreover, it has become increasingly clear that genre analysis cannot be carried out satisfactorily apart from detailed attention to the history of traditions which are embodied in certain structures. Narratives may function simultaneously at several levels; they may have had various intentions at discrete times in the history of their transmission. It is important, therefore, to learn as much as possible about this history, and its interrelation with visible structures of the material at various stages in its development 4). Finally, if one takes this route, it becomes obvious that *Oberbegriffe* such as legend, saga, and the like, leave the essential descriptive task undone. What is needed are more precise ways of describing narrative genres as they actually appear in the Old Testament.

This is the general context in which I have analyzed 2 Kings iii. The way goes from literary, through tradition, form (structure), and genre analysis 5).

5) An earlier version of that which follows was read before the Task Group on Narratives, of the Society of Biblical Literature, and appeared in pre-publication form in *Seminar Papers*, vol. 1 (Society of Biblical Literature, 1971), 183-205.