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Cómo citar el documento:

The Comparative Function of אלה in 2 Sam 21 and the Unity of the Philistine War Tales[1]

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Summary: The Comparative Function of אלה in MT 2 Sam 21

2 Sam 21:22 contains several linguistic elements which present grammatical difficulty. Investigation of these peculiarities reveals a rare, comparative function of the plural demonstrative pronoun, אלה. This comparative function, the repetition of particular syntax, and the symmetry of both linguistic and thematic elements demonstrate the intricate and purposeful relationships between the three locations of Philistine war tales in 2 Sam 5, 21 and 23. These relationships argue against the common understanding that the material in 2 Sam 21–24 is "haphazard" and part of a miscellaneous appendix. The function of the pronoun אלה in 2 Sam 21:22 also provides a critical literary tool for the author to contrast the successes of the protectors of the Davidic line with the defeats of those enemies who oppose it. Such a tool furthers one of the fundamental themes of the Samuel tradition, that of the decline of the House of Saul and the concurrent rise of the House of David.

Keywords: 2 Sam 21–24 – אלה – Philistine – David – Raphah – Paranomasia

Resumen: La función comparativa de אלה en MT 2 Sam 21

En 2 Sam 21:22 hay diversos elementos lingüísticos con dificultades gramaticales. La investigación de estas peculiaridades hizo evidente una rara función comparativa del pronombre demostrativo plural·אלה. Es decir, que esta función comparativa, junto con la repetición de una sintaxis particular y la simetría de elementos lingüísticos y

temáticos demostrarían relaciones confusas, aunque decididas, entre las tres ubicacio-
nes de los relatos de las guerras filisteas en 2 Sam 5, 21 y 23. Sin embargo, este tipo
de relaciones se contradicen con el modo en el que suele interpretarse el material 2
Sam 21–24, que las considera como un hecho "accidental" y como parte de un des-
enlace de confusión. Por su parte, la función del pronombre אלה en 2 Sam 21: 22 tam-
bién provee una herramienta literaria crítica para que el autor pueda contrastar la vic-
toria de los protectores de la línea davídica con la derrota de aquellos enemigos que
se le opusieron. Esta herramienta, también, permite ampliar uno de los temas funda-
mentales de la tradición de Samuel, como es la declinación de la Casa de Saúl y el
concurrente ascenso de la Casa de David.

Palabras Clave: 2 Sam 21–24 – אלה – Filisteo – David – Raphah – Paranomasia

INTRODUCTION

The second book of Samuel contains three locations in which tales of battle
between the Philistines and David's forces are recounted. These tales exist in
the main narrative, in 2 Sam 5, but also in what is frequently called the
"appendix," 2 Sam 21–24. Though the sophisticated literary quality of 2
Samuel is widely acknowledged, the final chapters of the book contain an
admittedly diverse collection of materials which, in the eyes of many interpreters,
seem to be "accumulated in random fashion."[2] The narratives, poems, and
lists which make up this "appendix" are described alternatively as: derived
from an ancient archive but not fully integrated into the main David story;[3]
meant to be located within the main narrative of 2 Samuel, but have been
dislodged and collected at the end;[4] intentionally situated as part of a theological
commentary on the main David story;[5] compiled and ordered by a single
editor;[6] the left-overs of a compiler who, not knowing where else to put them,
created chapters 21–24;[7] a collection of additions which gradually accumulated
late in the compositional history of the narrative;[8] a "third wave" of David

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[2] On the narrative complexity, see, for example, Jackson 1965; Gunn 1976; Conroy 1978; Gunn
991. On the final chapters, see McCarter 1984: 19.

[3] McCarter 1984: 451.

[4] Budde already attempted to place components of the "appendix" into their appropriate original
locations in the David story. Budde 1890: 256–261 and also Budde 1902: 304, at least with
Philistines of 2 Sam 21.

[5] Childs 1979: 275; Brueggemann, 1988.

[6] Stoebe 1994: 38.

[7] Smith 1899: 373.

traditions which presents a critical and less glorious picture than do the accounts of his rise to power and his "middle years."[9]

One of these "miscellaneous" passages which receives much scholarly attention, 2 Sam 21:15–22, recounts a series of anecdotes in which David's men are said to have killed four particular enemies, who are each noted to have a relationship to "the Raphah in Gath" (2 Sam 21:15–21). This sequence of duels is summarized in 2 Sam 21: 22: את-ארבעת אלה ילדו להרפה בגת ויפלו ביד-דוד וביד עבדיו.The four of these were descended from the Raphah in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his men.

Several linguistic elements in 2 Sam 21: 22 are peculiar: the introduction of the subject with אה, the unusual use of the demonstrative אלה as a *nomen rectum*, the complex structure of syntagm concerning lineage, and the expression ילידי הרפה. In particular, the rare use of the plural demonstrative pronoun brings attention to the structural complexity. I argue here that the syntactic chain of construct noun + plural demonstrative pronoun is used to convey an emphatic comparison with an earlier statement. Because this usage requires a referent for its comparative function, 2 Sam 21: 22 demands review of the preceding narrative. The identification of 2 Sam 5: 14 as the specific referent can be made on the bases of parallel syntactic and thematic elements.

Tracing these elements supports the argument for literary continuity in the Philistine war tales found throughout 2 Samuel (5:17–25, 21:15–22, 23:8–22).[10] The assertion that the material in 2 Sam 21 and 23 shares a structural and literary continuity with the earlier narrative stands in contrast to one compositional theory that the Philistine war tales in 2 Sam 21 and 23 have been cut from a separate archival source and strewn throughout the main text and "appendix" (2 Sam 21–24) in a haphazard manner. Both in this assertion and in the types of linguistic and literary elements used, this study follows in the line of Polzin and Auld, who each find certain lexical, grammatical, and thematic continuities between the broader context of the David account and the specific information presented in the "appendix."[11] To dismiss the final

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[8] Noth 1981: 86, n. 3.

[9] Campbell 2005: 185 and 2010: 347–348.

[10] Because these passages contain many personal and geographic names, as well as certain unusual literary details, they are the recipients of a great deal of text-critical scholarship; see McCarter 1984. In this study, I have worked primarily with the final-form Masoretic Text. Many of the elements of narrative structure and composition described here remain valid even with text-critical emendations.

[11] Polzin 1993, see especially 202–214 on 2 Sam 21–24, but *passim* for examples of these

chapters of 2 Samuel as a collection of miscellaneous accounts as yet untreated by an editor ignores the directional clues concerning position, context and meaning which the text, as currently arranged, provides.

The Comparative Function of אלה

Consideration of two elements of the syntax of 2 Sam 21: 22 provide new evidence for understanding the literary continuity of the Philistine war:

      1. The use of את to introduce the first clause.

      2. The construct chain ארעת אלה, specifically, אלה as *nomen rectum*.

The Particle את

את at the beginning of the verse is anomalous and none has offered a convincing explanation for its presence.[12] For example, while Muraoka holds that את is not used as *nota nominative* marking a grammatical subject (i.e.), he is inclined to acknowledge that this verse gives the impression of a genuine nota nominative.[13] Davidson and Joüon and Muraoka are also vague on this verse, also noting that את is not used as a subject marker, but acknowledging that this rule does not take account for the case here (along with the cases of Jer 36.33 and 2 Kg 18:30)."[14] Brockelmann is more inclined to concede that the את here marks a subject, but still notes this verse as an unusual and inconclusive case.[15] In sum, grammarians agree that this verse is exceptional and does not adhere to the common usage parameters of את.

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continuities. Polzin describes numerous examples of wordplay, number play, paranomasia, irony, literary aestheticism, patterns in similes, ambiguity, and confluences of repeated language and related themes. Auld 2002: 69–81.

[12] For bibliography on the particle, see Waltke and O'Connor 1990: 177–178 and relevant notes. The parallel verse in 1 Chronicles omits the anomalous grammatical element, drawing attention to the author's choice of syntax in 2 Samuel.

    את-ארבעת אלה ילדו להרפה בגת ויפלו ביד-דוד וביד עבדיו :2 Sam 21:22

    אל נולדו להרפא בגת ויפלו ביד-דוד וביד עבדיו :1 Chr 20:8

1 Chronicles omission of "the four of these," is explained by the fact that the Chronicler does not have four Philistines represented in his anecdotes, having removed what is the first story in 2 Samuel due to its unflattering portrayal of David; Knoppers 2003b: 42; Campbell 2005: 192.

[13] Muraoka 1985: 156–158.

[14] Gibson 1994: §95 Rem.1; Joüon and Muraoka 1991: §128b.

[15] Brockelmann 1961: §66bγ Amm.2.

I suggest here that this את operates in conjunction with the succeeding construct chain and serves to emphatically mark the subject, "*these* four," in contrast with some other earlier referent. The referent of the contrast must be determined from the narrative. The following syntactic discussions provide support for this hypothesis.

The Construct Chain ארבעת אלה

The use of the construct chain ארבעת אלה instead of the expected הארבע האלה, or the like, is peculiar. Excluding its special use with כל,[16] אלה occurs elsewhere as *nomen rectum* only in Exod 21: 11 and 2 Kgs 6: 20, and, in one of these cases (2 Kgs 6: 20), this syntax is preceded by the particle את. These parallel syntactic formulae explicate its usage in 2 Sam 21: 22.

In 2 Kgs 6, Elisha is able to avoid capture and turn the tables on the Aramaen king's henchmen with his exceptional power. As the Aramean force surrounds Elisha's encampment, he prays that his cowering servant will see that Elisha's power is greater than their enemy: 2 Kgs 6: 17 וירא והנה ההר פקח-נא את-עיניו מלא סוסים ורכב אש סביבת אלישע: ויתפלל אלישע ויאמר יהוה ויראה ויפקח יהוה את-עיני הנער And Elisha prayed and he said, "Yahweh, open his eyes and let him see," and Yahweh opened the eyes of the young man and he saw —lo!—the mountain filled with horses and chariotry of fire all around Elisha.

In a second prayer, Elisha asks that the enemy be struck with a blinding light. In their half-blind confusion, Elisha convinces them that the man they seek is elsewhere and agrees to escort them. He leads them to Samaria: 2 Kgs 6: 20· ויראו ויפקח יהוה את-עיניהם ויהי כבאם שמרון ויאמר אלישע יהוה פקח את-עיני-אלה ויראו והנה בתוך שמרון: . When they entered Samaria, Elisha said, "Yahweh, open the eyes of *these* (people) and let them see," and Yahweh opened their eyes and they saw—lo!—that they were inside Samaria.

The syntax, את-עיני-אלה (את + construct noun + plural demonstrative pronoun), in v.20 is used to emphasize that Elisha is now requesting that the eyes of these other men be opened, in contrast to the eyes of his servant whose eyes he previously requested be opened in v.17. This parallelism also reveals the disparity in the outcomes of the two parties involved. The servant of Elisha is demonstrably on the side of the successful, divinely-powered

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[16] The use of אלה and כל in the expression "all of these" is a static form acting as a single word. The Masoretes note the close relationship between the two terms by marking almost every occurrence of the chain with a *maqqef*. כל- אלה can be found as the subject of a verb, as in Gen 14:13, a direct object, as in Gen 15: 10, and in non-verbal sentences, as in Gen 25: 4.

Israelites. The other men are the vulnerable enemy forces who are now at the mercy of the king of Israel. That the outcomes of these two paralleled figures are antipodal is at the heart of the semantic value of the syntactic formula.

In Exod 21: 11, we see the comparative use of the demonstrative in a similar semantic context. The law in Exod 21: 2 governs the freedom of male slaves; in the seventh year of servitude they will be set free with no value owed. Exod 21:3–11 concerns the conditions on and exceptions to this rule for male slaves (3–6) and the specific case of female slaves sold into slavery by their father (7–11). Exod 21: 7 states that female slaves sold into slavery by their father will not be released according to the same rules as male slaves. While the law does not mandate that the female in question will go free after six years, with no expense required of her, 21: 8–10 outline three special scenarios which would indeed result in such a freedom. Exod 21:11 summarizes: ואם-שלש-אלה לא יעשה לה ויצאה חנם אין כסף And if three of *these* he does not do for her, she will go out [from her master], free, without any money.[17]

Like the Aramean men and Elisha's servant in the Kings example, the male and female slaves in Exod 21 are parallel, but differentiated, parties. The use of the syntactic arrangement in which the demonstrative pronoun governs the construct chain, ואם-שלש-אלה, serves to cue the reader that an emphatic contrast is depicted.[18] Exod 21: 7 explains the basic contrast; the woman will not be freed as the man in the seventh year. However, Exod 21: 8–10 provide the exceptions, and, if one of these three scenarios develops, a female slave may indeed be emancipated at no cost to her, just as is the regular protocol for male slaves. Thus the syntax ואם-שלש-אלה serves to highlight these specific rules for the female to be freely emancipated in contrast to the automatic free emancipation of males.

The two examples in 2 Kgs 6: 20 and Exod 21: 11 demonstrate the function of this syntactic device (אלה + construct + את): to emphasize the "these" in question; to signal, by this emphasis, that the reader should compare the subject at hand to previously mentioned, comparable personage(s); and to differentiate

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[17] That the three things referred to in v.11 are the three larger scenarios outlined in the passage is by no means an uncontested point. Most rabbinic tradition understands the three to be the three scenarios rather than the three items listed in v.10. Particularly strong support for this interpretation comes from Ibn Ezra and the Rashbam. The Ḥizquni is one notable exception, taking the three things to be the three things listed in v.10. Some modern interpreters, too, support the v.10 reading, including Cassuto and Noth, while others follow the rabbinic understanding: Lockshin: 226–234; Cassuto: 267–269; Noth: 177–179.

[18] The Exodus example does not make use of את as in the Kings example, but this difference appears to be a restriction of the conditional nature of the sentence.

the final outcomes of the subjects.[19] Because of the specific usage of this syntax, the construct chain ארבעת אלה in the 2 Sam account must serve the same function.

Identifying the Referent of ארבעת אלה

We have seen above that the use of אלה as a *nomen rectum* in 2 Kgs 6: 20 and Exod 21: 11 serves a comparative purpose in the narrative. Similarly, in response to the same syntax in 2 Sam 21: 22, we should seek some sort of parallel or referent to fulfill that function. I suggest that the referent to which the comparative אלה in 2 Sam 21: 22 points is found in 2 Sam 5:14 in the list of David's children "born to him in Jerusalem: 2 Sam 5: 14 שמות הילדים לו ואלה: בירושלם שמוע ושובב ונתן ושלמה And these are the names of the ones born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, and Nathan and Shlomo.

The most direct link between 2 Sam 21: 22 and 2 Sam 5: 14 is the use of the syntactic chain expressing the "these born to" formula that appears in both: GN + ב + OBJ + ל + י.ל.ד. + אלה. This syntagm book ends the Philistine tales found in 2 Sam 5: 17-25 and 21: 15–22 and forms the basis for comparison between David's successful royal progeny and the fate of the enemies of Israel. The grammatical peculiarities of 2 Sam 21: 22, at the close of a series of Philistine tales, serve as narrative markers signaling the reader to recall the parallel structure in 5:14, at the opening of a series of Philistine tales. The repetition of the specific syntax cues the reader to recognize this comparison even across a significant distance of text. This technique demonstrates the intentionality behind the construction of the larger narrative. Most importantly, the "born to" bookends convey the most important narrative message of 2 Samuel—the legitimacy of the House of David (i.e. David and those "born to him") over the House of Saul and indeed over any other enemy and his children who seek to challenge David.

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[19] While not discussed as a use of the demonstrative in their work, Waltke and O'Connor (1990) do describe two characteristics of the "true" demonstrative with which this proposed use is consistent. The first characteristic, that the "*z* set" (which includes אלה) can be used for reference both forward and backward, supports the syntactic relationship here over a large span of text. (§17.3d) The second characteristic concerns contrasting pairs (by which Walte and O'Connor mean "this and that"). Only the true demonstrative (as opposed to the marked 3rd person independent pronoun) is used with juxtaposed pairs. (§17.3c) While the juxtaposition proposed here is not the sort of "pair" to which they are referring, the broad concept that the demonstrative is involved in pair comparison is consonant with the use described above.

Unifying Characteristics of the Philistine War Tales

The unusual grammatical elements enumerated in the previous sections, direct our attention to the structure of the Philistine tales (in 2 Sam 5: 14–22, 21: 15–22 and 23: 8–20) and the intricate textual relationships between each account. Supporting the grammatical connection between 2 Sam 21: 22 and 5: 14 is a constellation of features of the language which are embedded in the larger context of the Philistine tales (and surrounding material) and which comment on the larger thematic message of 2 Samuel.[20]

Paronomasia

Word play is evident in the pericopes introduced by the "born to" syntax described above (2 Sam 5: 14–22 and 21: 15–22), as well as a third pericope of Philistine tales in 2 Sam 23: 8–20 (Table 1). This paronomastic group makes use of the homophonic lexical choices of חרף/רפאים/הרפה. In 2 Sam 5: 18 and 5: 22, the Philistines "spread out" in the Valley of Rephaim (אמק רפאים) as prelude to an encounter with David. The sound of this root is reprised in the 2 Sam 21 tales as the warriors are described as descendants of the Raphah (ילד להרפה\בילדי הרפה) in 21:16-22. This pericope also includes the verbal root ח.ר.פ. in 2 Sam 21:21, furthering the pun. Finally, in the 2 Sam 23 tales, the play on "taunting" or "defying" reappears with the use of the ח.ר.פ. root (2 Sam 23:9) and in 23:13 we again find the Philistines in the Valley of Rephaim. It is possible that these terms and roots are repeated because they are necessary to the plot or are simply details in the author's historiography. The choice of ח.ר.פ. in the telling of the Philistine war tales, however, is not mandated as a geographic or deific name, and helps to persuade us that there is word play in the lexical choices presented in the three Philistine pericopes.

Arguably, the idols, עצביהם, of 2 Sam 5: 21 and the digits, אצבעת, of 21: 20 may also reflect the wordplay which spans these sets of tales.

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[20] See Polzin 1993: 205, where he introduces his section on 2 Sam 22: "The following is a catalogue of the more obvious ways in which David's song comments on the larger story line— a list of reasons why 2 Sam 21–24 is more than a haphazard appendage to 2 Samuel". I follow his methodology here by providing a list of elements which support the comparison as well as the continuity between the larger David story and the "appendix."

Structure of Tales

Table 1 outlines some of the structural features of the three Philistine pericopes which highlight the compositional unity of the tales. Specifically, two sets of six tales can be identified, A and B. Both Unit A and Unit B are introduced with the phrase "these are the names" (2 Sam 5: 14 and 23: 8), and both Units conclude with a use of the plural demonstrative in 2 Sam 21: 22 and 23: 22. There are six Philistine tales in Unit A, between the "born to" announcements of 5: 14 and 21: 22, and there are six tales in Unit B, concerning David's warriors in 2 Sam 23: 3–22. Whereas the first six tales conclude with the summary verse about the four Philistine warriors of the Raphah in Gath, the second six tales conclude with Benaiah's exploits and his name among the Three (Warriors).[21]

In addition to the paranomastic elements detailed above, the table depicts the verbal punctuation that permeates the sequence of tales. Each of the tales in Unit A concludes with a form of the verbal root נ.כ.ה. This pattern is augmented in Unit B set of tales with the root ח.ל.ל which serves not only to demonstrate the prowess of the warriors, but also functions paronomastically with David's tale in 2 Sam 23: 13ff.

The tales of the four Raphah-men in 2 Sam 21 and those of David's warriors in 2 Sam 23 also share a basic internal structure (not outlined in the table). The tales in 2 Sam 21 open with an introduction to war (e.g. 21: 15), followed by the name of the Philistine hero and his ancestry (e.g. 21: 18), and include an unusual detail about the hero's prowess (e.g. 21: 19). Rounding out the information in each tale is the name and family of the warrior who killed (always with the verbal root נ.כ.ה) the Philistine hero. In the first and last tales in 2 Sam 21 the sequence is as described here. In the middle two tales the victor, his family, and his verb of killing precede the name of the Philistine, his ancestry and his prowess. This difference coincides with the fact that David is explicitly mentioned in the first and last tale (2 Sam 21: 15-17 and 21:20-22), and each of these tales is actually about how David *himself* does not vanquish the Philistine opponent. In point of fact, the summary in 2 Sam 21: 22 which states that the four were defeated by David and his men is not quite corroborated by the preceding narrative.

The internal structure of the six tales in 2 Sam 23: 8–22 closely mirrors that of the tales in 2 Sam 21. Most of them open with either the pronoun אלה or the preposition ואחריו as part of an introductory comment (e.g. 23: 8). This is

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[21] Or, that he was not placed in the Three, but either way, the verse is about a warrior of David's force and a numerical detail.

followed by the name and ancestry of each hero (e.g. 23: 9) and a particular
detail about his prowess (e.g. 23: 12). Concluding each tale is who (or what)
he most victoriously defeated and with what verb, in these cases either the root
נ.כ.ה or the root ח.ל.ל.[22] Both the sequence and the content of these elements in
2 Sam 23 parallel the narrative elements of the Philistine tales in 2 Sam 21.
By organizing the substance of these two sets of tales according to the same
basic literary outline, the author forces the comparison between the triumphs
of David's heroes and the defeats of the Philistine combatants.

Repetition of Uncommon Elements

One structural element found in the Philistine tales from 2 Sam 21 and 23 is
the frequent inclusion of a seemingly unusual narrative detail. These inclusions
seem to cement one account to another by spanning the entirety of the
Philistine tales to recall an account from the earlier material. David longs for
a drink מבאר בית-לחם; Benaiah kills the lion בתוך הבאר. The appearance of a
well functions internally in the 2 Sam 23 tales, but it also has a referent in the
2 Sam 5 Philistine accounts as it recalls the curious etiology of Baal-Perazim.
The repetition of the word "water" playing a role in these tales may signal
some link between the two, but there is an additional thematic connection.
Not only are the Philistines routed at Baal-Perazim, but they also abandon
their idols there. Such a symbol of cosmic defeat is contrasted with the piety
of David in 2 Sam 23:16 when he pours out his coveted drink of water to
Yahweh.

The "stronghold" (מצודה) appears in both 2 Sam 5: 17 and 23: 14.
Elsewhere in 2 Sam we hear of the "stronghold of Zion" (5: 7, 9) and a poetic
"stronghold" in Yahweh (22: 2), but these two occurrences, in two of the
Philistine tale sections, seem to refer to the same location. That these two tales
mention the detail of the מצודה further illustrates the interconnectedness
already indicated with the repetition of the role of water.

Other details preserved in the structure of the Philistine accounts support the
overall message of David's victories and the continuity of the composition,
even if they are not repeated in multiple tales. Lentils, עדשים, are one such
noteworthy inclusion. Lentils occur only four times in the entire biblical
corpus and twice in 2 Sam.[23] We are obliged, then, to associate this peculiar

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[22] Each tale that relates a hero who kills with ח.ל.ל also describes an extravagant number of
enemies who themselves are not identified.
[23] Lentils appear famously in Gen 25: 34, but also in Ezekiel 4: 9 in a list of foodstuff not dissimilar
to the list in 2 Sam 17: 28.

detail of Shammah's tale with the list of provisions given to David's men in 2 Sam 17: 28 by Shobi son of Nahash and Barzillai at Mahanaim. Just as Shammah defends the House of David by defeating Philistines from his lentil patch, so too does Shobi's succor protect David's quest for the throne.

The Raphah-in-Gath

Even the small way in which the "born to" formula varies in 2 Sam 5: 14 and 21: 22 can be understood as supporting the contrast between the success of the House of David and the suppression of its enemies. David's children are the ones born *to him* in Jerusalem (הילדים לו). The repetition of the formula in 21: 22 is very similar and, as we have seen above, communicates the comparison between David's progeny and his enemies'. However in the formula in 21: 22 we do not find a pronominal object suffix on the preposition -ל, but rather the phrase להרפה בגת. McCarter, who understands the warriors of 2 Sam 21 to belong to a cultic association, has suggested that this phrase should be taken as the full name of the diety, the "Gittite Raphah," which he compares with Yahweh-in-Hebron or Yahweh-in-Gibeon.[24] If he is correct, then this adds a further dimension to the level of contrast: the patron deity of David and his allies is superior to the Philistine god, Raphah-in-Gath.

Conclusions

The peculiar points of language in 2 Sam 21: 22 and all of the related passages discussed here are textual "irritants" precisely because they challenge our lexical, grammatical and syntactic expectations. In rabbinic literature, the midrashic authors sought out these sorts of textual anomalies as foundational material from their exegetical stories—the "pearls" which they crafted around the bothersome elements. In the case presented here, the textual "irritants" of 2 Sam 21: 22 point to something about the compositional structure of the text. The "pearl" is insight into the literary continuity of the Philistine war tales of 2 Samuel.

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[24] McCarter 1984: 451. See also 1 Sam 17: 45 where David explicitly fights his Philistine enemy "in the name of Yahweh Sabbaoth." McCarter follows L'Heureux, 1976: 84. L'Heureux affirms the phrase's sense of group affiliation, and offers a possible Ugaritic connection to hero/deity, Rapha. For additional discussion of the meaning of ילידי הרפה\ילדו להרפה see Willesen 1958a and 1958b.

Careful grammatical and contextual examination of the unexpected use of the plural demonstrative pronoun, אלה, revealed its comparative function. Recognition of the function of 2 Sam 21: 22 and its referent in 5: 14 led to the identification of additional textual patterns through a series of narrative units spanning the entirety of the work (in each Philistine tale pericope in chapters 5, 21 and 23). These patterns of certain language, syntax, theme and literary motifs demonstrate a continuity which begins early on in the book and extends well into the so-called miscellany of the concluding chapters. The rare comparative use of אלה in 2 Sam 21: 22 and the constellation of related textual elements plot a course which links together all of the Philistine tales in 2 Sam 5, 21 and 23, as well as a certain amount of immediately related information. This unity of language includes shared specific terminology,[25] common syntactic arrangements, and word play, demonstrating a continual concern throughout the text—the preservation of the Davidic house over and against any of its enemies.

Considering the earnestness of this concern, the fear of the extinguishing of the "lamp of Israel" in 2 Sam 21: 17 is perhaps not as random as some scholars have supposed.[26] Rather, I would suggest that the "lamp of Israel" is strategically placed within a series of supporting materials and it is the evidence of the language throughout these materials that leads to the conclusions above in which the "lamp" remains victoriously lit.[27]

Returning to that original "irritant" in 2 Sam 21:22, we can now see that the "four of these" Raphah-men, engendered in Gath, the Philistine center, stand in contrast to "these," the children born to David in Jerusalem, his center. The message, of course, is that these Philistine warriors are all killed, defeated by the fighting men loyal to David. The ones "born to David" are safe and spared; the "lamp of Israel" is not extinguished. By extension, the tales celebrate Jerusalem as a fruitful, royal capital, while Gath presumably awaits the same fate as its most famous sons.

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[25] The orthography of some of these key terms also shares certain characteristics. Note for example that הַיְלִדִים in 2 Sam 5: 15 and הַגִּבֹּרִים of 2 Sam 23: 15 are pointed in an identically defective manner. Similarly, the יֻלַּד of 2 Sam 21: 20 and the יֻלְּדוּ of 21: 22 also reflect the same internal defective vowel.

[26] See, for example, Brueggemann 1988: 387, who see the "lamp of Israel" as a "royal slogan suspended without any supportive statement or evidence …where it appears ludicrous." Although I am not in agreement with his suggestion that the final chapters of Samuel serve to "deconstruct" the royal ideology set forth by the preceding texts, he does affirm the purposeful arrangement and language of chapters 21–24.

[27] See Polzin 1993: 213–214, where he also argues that this phrase is part of a sweeping and integrated "seriousness of purpose."

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	A						B					
	Ch. 5 Pericope		Ch. 21 Pericope				Ch. 23 Pericope					
	1st tale 5:15 ff	2nd tale 5:22 ff	3rd tale 21:15ff	4th tale 21:18	5th tale 21:19	6th tale 21:20 ff	1st tale 23:8	2nd tale 23:9 ff	3rd tale 23:11 ff	4th tale 23:13 ff	5th tale 23:18	6th tale 23:20 ff
Introduction or Conclusion with אלה	ואלה שמות הילדים					את־ אברעה אלה ילדו	אלה שמות הגברים					אלה עשה בניהו
Paronomasia	עמק מאסף	עמק מאסף	הילידו הרפה	הילידו הרפה		ה.ר.פ. הוה ילד להרפה		ח.ר.פ.		עמק מאסף		
Paronomasia	עצבים					אצבעת						
Verbal Punctuation	ה.כ.ה	ה.כ.ה	ה.כ.ה	ה.כ.ה	ה.כ.ה	ה.כ.ה	ה.ל.ל	ה.כ.ה	ה.כ.ה	ה.כ.ה	ה.ל.ל	ה.כ.ה
Paronomasia							ה.ל.ל			החללי לו	ה.ל.ל	
Repeated Element	הרפעגה									החרצמה		
Repeated Element	מים									מים		
Repeated Element										מבאר מים מים		החתה הבאר

Figure 1. Structural details of the three Philistine pericopes