

MATTHEW C. PERCUOCO

The Nature and Function of the Samuel Conclusion

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Matthew C. Percuoco

The Nature and Function of the Samuel Conclusion

2 Samuel 21–24 as *Mise en Abyme*

Mohr Siebeck

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Matthew Percuoco

Hudson, MA
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Abbreviations

AASF	Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae
AB	Anchor Bible Commentary Series
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
AIL	Ancient Israel and its Literature
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentum
<i>BeO</i>	<i>Bibbia e Oriente</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BO	Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BWAT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament
CB	Century Bible
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series

<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CC	Continental Commentaries
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
DSI	De Septuaginta Investigationes
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
<i>ÉBib</i>	<i>Études bibliques</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GTW	Grundriss der theologischen Wissenschaften
<i>HBAI</i>	<i>Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel</i>
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
<i>Hen</i>	<i>Henoch</i>
HerBS	Herders biblische Studien
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IJT</i>	<i>Indian Journal of Theology</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JAAC</i>	<i>Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</i>
<i>JAJ</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
<i>JANER</i>	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
<i>JANES</i>	<i>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBMS</i>	<i>Journal of Book of Mormon Studies</i>
<i>JBQ</i>	<i>Jewish Bible Quarterly</i>
JBS	Jerusalem Biblical Studies
<i>JESOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JHebS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JRH</i>	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
<i>JSem</i>	<i>Journal for Semitics</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period</i>
JSJSup	Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSRC	Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>

<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
<i>LB</i>	<i>Linguistica Biblica</i>
LD	Lectio divina
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LSAWS	Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic
NAC	New American Commentary
NCB	New Century Bible
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
OBO	Orbis Biblicus Et Orientalis
<i>OTE</i>	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
PIBA	Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association
<i>PJ</i>	<i>Palästina-Jahrbuch</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>
<i>Proof</i>	<i>Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History</i>
<i>PTL</i>	<i>PTL: A Journal of Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature</i>
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumrân</i>
RTT	Research in Text Theory
<i>SA</i>	<i>Studia Anselmiana</i>
SAC	Studies in Antiquity and Christianity
SAT	Die Schriften des Alten Testaments
SBET	<i>Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>SBLSP</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers</i>
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>SEÅ</i>	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
<i>Sef</i>	<i>Sefarad</i>
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions
Siphrut	Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SOTSMS	Society for Old Testament Study Monograph Series
SSN	Studia semitica neerlandica
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah

<i>STR</i>	<i>Southeastern Theological Review</i>
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
TB	Theologische Bücherei
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TynBul	Tyndale Bulletin
<i>UF</i>	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
VWGTH	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Tes- tament
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZBAR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschich- te</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview of 2 Samuel 21–24

The final four chapters of the book of Samuel contain a wide variety of material ranging from narratives to poetry to historical lists.¹ These chapters contain six distinct segments: 2 Samuel 21:1–14 (a narrative describing a famine and David’s response to it); 2 Samuel 21:15–22 (several brief anecdotes recounting the deeds of the four giant-killers); 2 Samuel 22:1–51 (a song of deliverance by David); 2 Samuel 23:1–7 (David’s last words); 2 Samuel 23:8–39 (several brief anecdotes depicting the deeds of David’s mighty men and a list of their names); and 2 Samuel 24:1–25 (a narrative describing David’s census and the plague that results from it).

At first glance, the shifting genres and ambiguous chronology may seem to suggest that the arrangement of this material is quite haphazard. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes clear (and has long been recognized) that the six parts that comprise these final chapters have been arranged chiastically.² The unit contains two poetic pieces in the center, two “lists” flanking either side of the poetic sections, and two narrative sections at the outer boundaries (see figure 1.1). In addition, commentators have noticed a number of lexical and thematic connections that seem to coordinate the various “panels” within this chiastic structure.

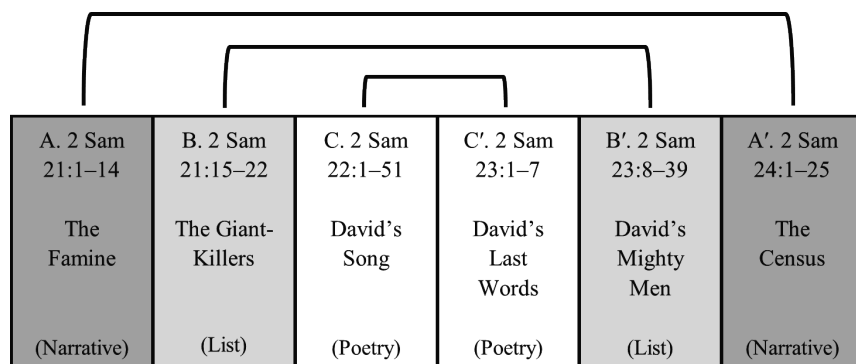
These lexical and thematic connections are especially prevalent in the narratives at the boundaries of the unit. For example: both stories involve the sin of the king, both involve a similar corporate punishment (three-year famine and three-day plague), both involve a choice for the punishment (2 Sam 21:3–6; 24:12–14), in both David must atone for the sin, in both David has relations

¹ Many believe that this block of text was inserted into the so-called “succession narrative” (2 Sam 9–20; 1 Kgs 1–2) and that it displaced the material that would become the first two chapters of the book of Kings. See P. Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes & Commentary*, AB 9 (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 16–18, and A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*. WBC 11 (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), xxxv–xxxvi. Cf. my discussion in section 5.4.7.

² I am using the term chiasm more liberally here. Others would prefer to describe an ABCC’B’A’ structure as “concentric.” See my discussion on chiasm in the Hebrew Bible in section 1.3.4.

with foreigners (cf. also Saul's bad relationship with the Gibeonites and David's good relationship with Araunah the Jebusite), and, of course, both stories end with a strikingly similar line: *and God was entreated for the land* (ויעתר יהוה) (2 Sam 21:14)/*and the Lord was entreated for the land* (ויעתר יהוה) (2 Sam 24:25).³

Figure 1.1 – The Chiastic Structure of 2 Sam 21–24



Alongside these striking similarities, there are other connections between the two “lists” and between the two poems. Both “lists” depict battles with the Philistines (2 Sam 21:15–21; 23:9–17), some of the same (or at least similarly named) characters appear in each (e.g., Abishai [2 Sam 21:17; 23:18] and Elhanan of Bethlehem [2 Sam 21:19; 23:24]), and each one ends with a summary statement that offers a final tally (of the giants killed [2 Sam 21:22]/the mighty men on the roster [2 Sam 23:39]). The connections between the poems include the mention of David (2 Sam 22:1, 51; 23:1), an anointed one (משיח) (2 Sam 22:51; 23:1), “my salvation” (ישעי) (2 Sam 22:47; 23:5), the image of God as a

³ See Robert Polzin, *David and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of the Deuteronomistic History Part 3: 2 Samuel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 207–211. The additions of sackcloth (cf. 4QSam^a) and the mention of the wheat harvest (cf. LXX) in 2 Samuel 24:15–16, 20 may function to add further connections between this narrative and 2 Samuel 21:1–14 (cf. the mention of sackcloth and the barley harvest in 2 Sam 21:9–10). See also Friedhelm Hartenstein, “Solidarität mit den Toten und Herrschaftsordnung: 2 Samuel 21,1–14 und 2 Samuel 24 im Vergleich mit dem Antigone-Mythos,” in *Was ist der Mensch, dass du seiner gedenkst? (Psalm 8,5): Aspekte einer theologischen Anthropologie; Festschrift für Bernd Janowski zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Michaela Bauks, Kathrin Liess, and Peter Riede (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 135–138, for further connections between these narratives.

rock (צור) (2 Sam 22:3, 32, 47; 23:3), and the idea that God will be merciful to David's line forever (עולם) (2 Sam 22:51; 23:5).⁴

However, despite the observations regarding the correspondence between the various panels, scholars remain divided over the nature and function of the final four chapters of the book of Samuel. Although the unit's boundaries and chiasmic structure have long been recognized, there is considerable debate as to whether the unit comprises a miscellaneous appendix or a meaningful conclusion. Throughout the 19th and much of the 20th century, many argued that the chiasmic structure (along with the various links) was subsequently imposed upon the disparate material for purely aesthetic reasons (see Chapter 2). However, this view has been increasingly challenged in the recent decades by those who have sought to articulate some sort of coherence between the arrangement of the final chapters and the rest of the book. Brevard Childs, for instance, argues that the frame of the book (specifically 1 Sam 2 and 2 Sam 22) functions as a hermeneutical key in which the themes of Samuel are placed in these

⁴ Cf. James W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative*, JSOTS 139 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 101–102, and Martin Kleer, “Der liebliche Sänger der Psalmen Israels”: *Untersuchungen zu David als Dichter und Beter der Psalmen*, BBB 108 (Bodenheim: Philo, 1996), 69–70. In addition to the lexical, thematic, and generic connections between these corresponding panels, there are a number of subtle connections that may serve to bind the juxtaposed material together at their respective junctures. 2 Samuel 21:22 notes how the giants fell by the hand (יד) of David and by the hand (יד) of his servants, while the next verse (which begins David's song), notes how the Lord delivered David from the hand (כף) of his enemies and from the hand (כף) of Saul (2 Sam 22:1). Also, the lexical and thematic connections between the two poems that were highlighted above occur in large part at the end of 2 Samuel 22 (particularly in the final verse) and may be seen as anticipating David's last words (2 Sam 23:1–7). In addition, Moshe Garsiel has argued that 2 Samuel 23:6–7, with its reference to “the worthless one” (בליעל), “the man” (איש), and “fire” (אש), may have been designed to midrashically play upon the name of Eshbaal (אשבעל) (which presumably was the original name that began the list of David's mighty men in 2 Sam 23:8) (see Moshe Garsiel, *The Book of Samuel: Studies in History, Historiography, Theology and Poetics Combined – Part One: The Story and History of David and His Kingdom* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass Publishers, 2018), 339–340). It is perhaps also interesting that while the reference to “in the dwelling place” (בשבת) in 2 Samuel 23:7 may be a copyist error (cf. 2 Sam 23:8) (although see Shlomo Naéh, “A New Suggestion Regarding 2 Samuel XXIII 7,” *VT* 46.2 [1996]: 260–265), in its present form, it acts as a sort of lexical “stitch” which connects it to the present form of 2 Samuel 23:8 and its reference to “the one who sits in the seat” (ישב בשבת) (this seems to be a proper name). Finally, as I will argue in section 4.6.2.2, the mention of Uriah's name at the end of the list of David's mighty men serves as an apt transition to the narrative of David's census. See also, Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 102–104, and Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 274, where Childs noted that David's weakness in 2 Samuel 21:15–22 “serves to shift the focus of this summary of David's achievements away from his glorification and forms a transition to the praise of God in ch. 22.” Cf. Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 118.

significant junctures in order to foster a “highly reflective, theological interpretation of David’s whole career as adumbrating the messianic hope.”⁵

Since Childs, many have followed his basic impulse and attempted to articulate their own understanding of the function of the final chapters. However, at the same time, others have continued to reject the idea that the arrangement of this material displays any sense of literary coherence (see Chapter 2). Although I would acknowledge that it is theoretically possible that disparate material which could not be incorporated into the body of the book of Samuel happened to lend itself well to the creation of a six-part chiasm (to which further links were subsequently added), I think this is highly unlikely.

I agree with Anthony Campbell (and others) that the chiasmic balance, too schematic to be an accident (or an afterthought), “demands” an explanation.⁶ However, in my opinion, the nature of the relationship between the themes and content of these chapters (2 Sam 21–24) with the rest of the book (1 Sam 1–2 Sam 20) has not been satisfactorily articulated by these scholars. With this in mind, I offer my own proposal explicating the nature and function of 2 Samuel 21–24.

1.2 Proposal

I propose that 2 Samuel 21–24 is a *mise en abyme*, a miniature replica of the book of Samuel which reflects the major themes of the book.⁷ This reflection offers, at the same time, both a theological distillation of the work as a whole and an interpretative lens through which to understand the preceding narrative. It is established through the strategic use of inner-Biblical allusion and analogical correspondence whereby the various episodes of the conclusion are designed to resemble specific sections of the book, while their sequence mirrors the story’s progression (see figure 1.2). Additionally, like others before me, I believe that the concluding unit as a whole (2 Sam 21–24) also parallels the introductory unit of the book (1 Sam 1–8). I offer two models for conceptualizing this relationship. I call the first model “the non-overlapping model” (see figure 1.3). In this model, the first episode of the conclusion (2 Sam 21:1–14) corresponds to the first section of the book of Samuel (following the introduction), namely, 1 Samuel 9–15. Both deal with the sin of King Saul and the

⁵ Childs, *Old Testament Theology*, 118–119. He argues that the final chapters of Samuel in conjunction with Hannah’s Song (1 Sam 2) offer an eschatological, messianic perspective in which God exalts the poor and brings down the proud (119).

⁶ Antony F. Campbell, “2 Samuel 21–24: The Enigma Factor,” in *For and against David: Story and History in the Books of Samuel*, ed. A. Graeme Auld and Erik Eynikel, BETL 232 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 355.

⁷ See section 3.4 for a discussion on the topic of *mise en abyme*.

Figure 1.2 – The Proposed Relationship with the Preceding Narrative

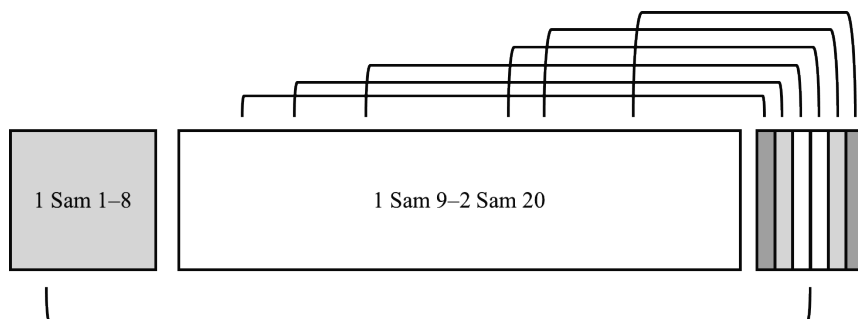
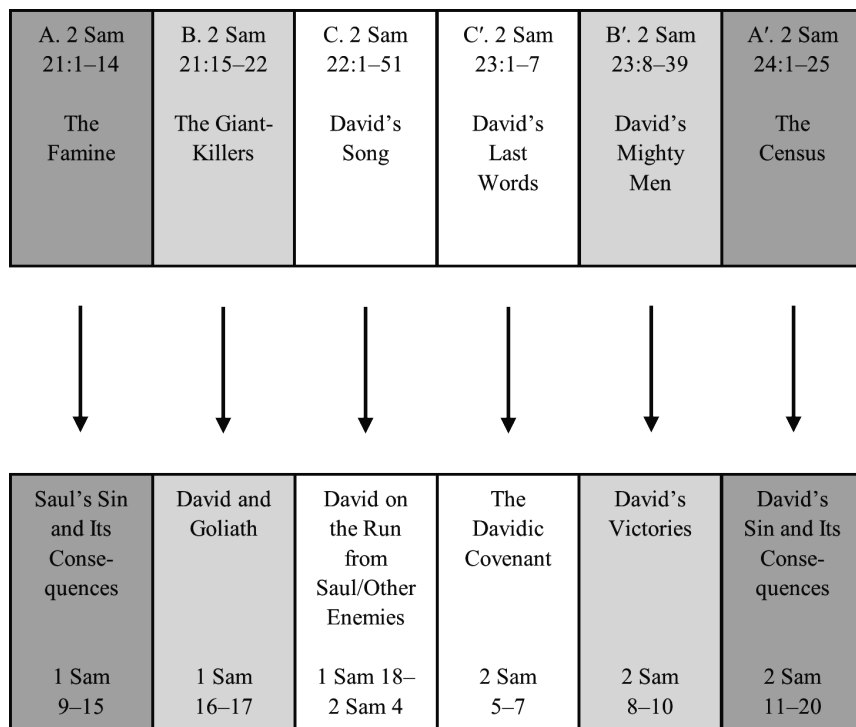


Figure 1.3 – The Non-Overlapping Model



consequences of that sin. The second episode in the conclusion recounts the heroic deeds of the men who killed the four Philistine giants (2 Sam 21:15-

22). This section parallels⁸ David's anointing and victory over the Philistine giant, Goliath (1 Sam 16–17). The words of David's song, the third section of the conclusion (2 Sam 22:1–51), are sung "on the day the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul" (22:1). This poem lines up with the next section of the book, in which David is on the run from Saul and has to deal with various other enemies (e.g., the Philistines, the Amalekites, and Nabal) (1 Sam 18–2 Sam 4). The next poetic piece, David's last words (2 Sam 23:1–7), with its reference to the virtues of a just ruler and the everlasting covenant with David, parallels 2 Samuel 5–7, in which David's throne has been established in Jerusalem and God promises to establish his dynasty forever. The fifth section (2 Sam 23:8–39), the list of David's mighty men (which contains anecdotes of their victories over their enemies), corresponds to David's victories over the surrounding nations (2 Sam 8–10).⁹ David's census, the final episode of the conclusion (2 Sam 24:1–25), parallels the final section of the David story proper, where David commits adultery with Bathsheba, murders her husband Uriah, and deals with the aftermath of these deeds (2 Sam 11–20).¹⁰

While a bit more difficult to conceptualize, the overlapping model (see figure 1.4) offers the same basic points of correspondence, but without hard and fast boundaries between the sections. This conceptual model affords the author/editor of 2 Samuel 21–24 a greater degree of freedom in establishing particular connecting links with the prior narrative. In this model, the correspondences of the inner panels of the conclusion (i.e., B: The Giant-Killers; C: David's Song; C': David's Last Words; and B': David's Mighty Men) bleed into one another, overlapping slightly. Thus, in addition to mirroring 1 Samuel 16–17, panel B also mirrors elements in 1 Samuel 18. In addition to mirroring 1 Samuel 18–2 Samuel 4, panel C also mirrors elements in 2 Samuel 5–7. In addition to mirroring 2 Samuel 5–7, panel C' also mirrors elements in 2 Samuel

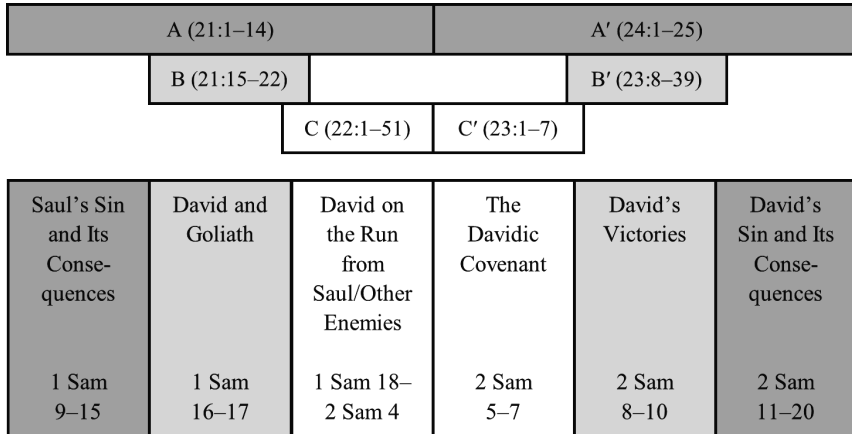
⁸ In speaking of these sections as paralleling each other, I am referring to the fact that the corresponding sections contain a number of specific similarities with respect to the lexical and thematic content which function to create associative links that shape the meaning of the texts. I agree with Moshe Garsiel that, quite often, these links are the result of "a conscious artistry working upon written documents." See Moshe Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel: A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies and Parallels* (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Revivim Publishing House, 1985), 98–99. Garsiel claims that in establishing these connections, the Biblical authors are "intent upon setting up resemblances that can give rise to analogies and comparisons between the literary materials" (99).

⁹ This section also includes the episode of David's mercy to Mephibosheth (2 Sam 9), which does not contain direct parallels to the victories of David's mighty men.

¹⁰ The aftermath of David's sin includes the death of his newborn son (2 Sam 12), the rape of Tamar by Amnon and the murder of Amnon by his brother Absalom (2 Sam 13), Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam 15–19), and Sheba's rebellion (2 Sam 20).

8. And finally, in addition to mirroring 2 Samuel 8–10, panel B' also mirrors elements in 2 Samuel 11.

Figure 1.4 – The Overlapping Model



While the correspondences of the inner panels of the conclusion offer a slight degree of overlap with one another, the degree to which the correspondences of the narratives on the boundaries of the conclusion (i.e., A: The Famine; and A': The Census) overlap with the rest of the material is much more extensive. In fact, taken together, the narratives may be seen as mirroring a number of elements throughout the whole book of Samuel. Thus, in addition to mirroring 1 Samuel 9–15, panel A also mirrors elements in 1 Samuel 16–2 Sam 4. Likewise, in addition to mirroring 2 Samuel 11–20, panel A' also mirrors elements in 2 Samuel 5–10. Seen in this way, the dividing lines between what is being reflected in each panel of the conclusion become a little blurry. With that said however, in the overlapping model, the sequence of the panels in the conclusion still continues to mirror the progression of the preceding narrative as it reflects the story in its transposed form. 2 Samuel 21–24 still clearly functions as a *mise en abyme* of the book, but in the overlapping model, the panels of the conclusion exhibit a greater degree of freedom in the scope and the range of textual links it establishes with that narrative.

In the end, the conclusion functions in a very similar manner with respect to both models. In both models, the sequence of the story of Saul and David is reflected by the sequence of the various narratives, lists, and poems that make up the conclusion. Like the earlier sections of the book, the conclusion to Samuel sets up a comparison between the characters of Saul and David through its chiasmic structure and various textual links. Although both kings commit serious sins which have grievous consequences, David confesses his sin and is

willing to die on behalf of the people. David's reliance on God – as well as God's covenant with David – is further highlighted by the poetic material at the center of the conclusion. God's faithfulness to his covenant, despite the king's failings, is a major theme in the conclusion as well as in the rest of the book.

In addition to rehearsing many of the major themes of the book, the conclusion – to a certain degree – is designed to shape the way that the prior material is read. For example, in 2 Samuel 24:1, God clearly incites David to commit a sin because he is angry with the people. However, in the end, he uses the situation to bring about David's purchase of the threshing floor of Araunah (the site on which the temple will later be built). Although David is part of the problem in 2 Samuel 24, he also becomes part of the solution as he plays the role of intercessor for the people (2 Sam 24:17). By virtue of the analogy with David's previous sin (in 2 Sam 11), when one rereads the earlier narrative (2 Sam 11–12), the king's culpability is mitigated, the people's increased, and God is assumed to have a central role in the unfolding events that result in the birth of Solomon (i.e., the temple builder) from the union of David and Bathsheba (see section 4.7.2.2 for further discussion on these matters).

Finally, in diachronic terms, I will make the case that the addition of 2 Samuel 21–24 occurred at a final stage of the composition of the book (not including subsequent minor editing) in the post-exilic period.¹¹ While I believe that the author/editor used available literary and historical sources to fashion his six-part conclusion to the book, I think that the narratives on the outer boundaries were likely composed, or (at least) heavily reworked, by the author himself.¹²

In my opinion, the same sorts of compositional techniques employed in the creation of this conclusion were already operative in the prior material that would come to make up the book of Samuel. I believe that Moshe Garsiel's comments on the composition of the book of Samuel in general can also be quite appropriately applied to the specific composition and arrangement of 2 Samuel 21–24. Garsiel wrote that:

...the author of the book of Samuel, so it seems to me, reworked his material with such genuine creative artistry that he cannot be regarded as an 'editor' in the restricted technical sense of collecting and arranging together material and providing editorial links and glosses; rather, he seems to have been a skilled creative artist – an author in the full sense of the word. He certainly made use of ancient material of all types, but he elaborated, adapted and

¹¹ I believe that this block of material (2 Sam 21–24) was added onto an existing text of 1 Samuel 1–2 Samuel 20, and that during this process, the new conclusion also displaced what is now the first two chapters of the book of Kings. See section 5.4.7 for further discussion on these matters.

¹² On the other hand, I believe that some of the author's sources (such as 2 Sam 22 [cf. Ps 18]) were left relatively untouched.

shaped it in accordance with a historiosophical and literary conception which formed his guiding principle of composition.¹³

In addition to my proposal for the diachronic relationship between the Samuel conclusion and the book as a whole, I will also argue that 2 Samuel 21–24 formed an important unit in what I believe was an emerging Enneateuchal corpus. More details regarding the possibilities of the text's development will be discussed in section 5.4.7.

1.3 Further Introductory Matters

1.3.1 Major Textual Witnesses to 2 Samuel 21–24

The received Hebrew text of 1–2 Samuel has been passed down through the Masoretic Text (MT) (although the early transmission of this text was not without its problems).¹⁴ Despite this fact, the MT harkens back to a short textual tradition that was free of expansionistic tendencies that are characteristic of some of the other versions.¹⁵ Many of the major versions – including the Targum (Aramaic), the Vulgate (Latin), and the Peshitta (Syriac) – reflect a Hebrew *Vorlage* that seems to be similar to the MT.¹⁶

In addition (and especially given the problematic nature of the MT), the Greek translations serve as an important witness to the text. Although the Old Greek (LXX) of a sizable portion of 1–2 Samuel has been preserved in the *Codex Vaticanus* (LXX^B), in this codex, the text of 2 Samuel 10:1–1 Kings 2:11 represents the so-called *Kaige* recension.¹⁷ For this reason, the Lucianic manuscripts are important for the study of 2 Samuel 21–24 (since they offer one of the best witnesses to the Old Greek for this text).¹⁸

¹³ Garsiel, *First Book of Samuel*, 15.

¹⁴ McCarter notes that the MT of Samuel is a “defective text” that has “suffered extensively from haplography” (P. Kyle McCarter, *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes & Commentary*, AB 8 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980], 8).

¹⁵ See McCarter, *I Samuel*, 8–9.

¹⁶ See McCarter, *I Samuel*, 10. The standard Jewish Aramaic version of the Former (and Latter) Prophets is the Targum Jonathan.

¹⁷ McCarter, *II Samuel*, 3. The *Kaige* recension was an early Jewish attempt to bring the LXX into conformity with the Proto-MT. See Frank Moore Cross, “The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judaean Desert,” *HTR* 57.4 (1964): 283.

¹⁸ McCarter, *II Samuel*, 3. Cf. Natalio Fernández Marcos, “The Lucianic Text in the Books of Kingdoms: From Lagarde to the Textual Pluralism,” in *De Septuaginta: Studies in Honour of John William Wevers on His Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. Albert Pietersma and Claude Cox (Mississauga: Benben Publications, 1984), 161–174; idem, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 223–238; Sebastian P. Brock, *The Recensions of the Septuagint Version of I Samuel*, Quaderni di Henoch 9 (Torino: Silvio Zamorani, 1996), 177–296; and Philippe Hugo, “Text

Finally, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has revealed additional ancient fragmentary Hebrew witnesses to the text of 2 Samuel 21–24. 1QSam (1Q7) preserves 2 Sam 21:16–18; 23:9–12, while 4QSam^a (4Q51) contains 2 Sam 21:1, 3–6, 8–9, 12, 15–17; 22:17, 19, 21, 24, 26–28, 30–31, 33–51; 23:1–6, 14–16, 21–22, 37–39; 24:16–22.¹⁹

In this study, I will not be using these witnesses in an attempt to reconstruct an “original text” of 2 Samuel 21–24. Instead, in the course of my arguments, I will discuss the implications of relevant textual variants to my proposal. The starting point for my examination then, is an analysis of the final forms²⁰ of the book as it has been received in the Masoretic Text, the recensions of the Septuagint, the manuscripts at Qumran, and the other versions (see Chapter 4). It is only after this final form(s) examination, that I will offer remarks concerning the process of the text’s development (see Chapter 5).

1.3.2 Parallel Texts

There are a number of parallel texts to the material of 2 Samuel 21–24 (which may serve as textual witnesses to 2 Sam 21–24 to a certain extent, but also function as separate texts in their own right). One such text is Psalm 18 (which is nearly identical to 2 Sam 22). In addition, the book of Chronicles (a rewritten account of much of Sam–Kgs) contains a number of passages which parallel several sections of the conclusion to Samuel. These include 2 Samuel 21:18–22 (cf. 1 Chr 20:4–8), 2 Samuel 23:8–39 (cf. 1 Chr 11:11–41), and 2 Samuel 24:1–25 (cf. 1 Chr 21:1–30). Another account which rewrites material from 2 Samuel 21–24 is Josephus’ *Antiquities of the Jews*. In book 7 of the *Antiquities*,²¹ Josephus rehearses the events of the famine (cf. 2 Sam 21:1–14), the actions of David’s heroes against the giants (cf. 2 Sam 21:15–22), the deeds of David’s mighty men (2 Sam 23:8–39),²² and the events of the plague (cf. 2 Sam 24:1–25) all in the same sequence as they were laid out in the text of Samuel.

History of the Books of Samuel: An Assessment of the Recent Research,” in *Archaeology of the Books of Samuel: The Entangling of the Textual and Literary History*, ed. Philippe Hugo and Adrian Schenker, VTSup 132 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 6. The Old Latin translations also serve as witnesses to the Old Greek (McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 10; Hugo, “Text History of the Books of Samuel,” 6–7).

¹⁹ Ariel Feldman, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Rewriting Samuel and Kings: Texts and Commentary*, BZAW 469 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 5–6.

²⁰ By using the term “final-form(s) of the text,” I do not mean to indicate that I am attempting to conduct a reader-response approach to the interpretation of this literature. Instead, I am attempting to be sensitive to what the authors/editors of this material sought to communicate through the text in its final design.

²¹ Josephus, A.J. 7.12–13.

²² Although Josephus recounts the heroic deeds that are mentioned in 2 Samuel 23:8–23, he does not enumerate the whole list of names (2 Sam 23:24–39). Instead, he simply notes the number of the men (38, according to him).

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