

Shayla: Who killed Goliath, David or Elhanan?

Midrash:

One passage indicates David did.

- **1 Samuel 17:4-8 HCSB** Then a champion named Goliath, from Gath, came out from the Philistine camp. He was nine feet, nine inches tall (5) and wore a bronze helmet and bronze scale armor that weighed 125 pounds. (6) There was bronze armor on his shins, and a bronze sword was slung between his shoulders. (7) His spear shaft was like a weaver's beam, and the iron point of his spear weighed 15 pounds. In addition, a shield-bearer was walking in front of him. (8) He stood and shouted to the battle formations: "Why do you come out to line up in battle formation?" He asked them, "Am I not a Philistine and are you not servants of Saul? Choose one of your men and have him come down against me.
- **1 Samuel 17:49-50 HCSB** David put his hand in the bag, took out a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground. (50) David defeated the Philistine with a sling and a stone. Even though David had no sword, he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

Other passages state that Elhanan did.

- **2 Samuel 21:19 HCSB** Once again there was a battle with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan son of Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam.

The answer lies in 1 Chronicles.

- **1 Chronicles 20:5 HCSB** Once again there was a battle with the Philistines, and Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam.

The short answer is that Elhanan killed Goliath's brother. Then why does 2 Samuel 21:19 state that it was Goliath Elhanan killed and not Goliath's brother Lahmi? According to Gleason Archer's Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties on p.179 it was a copyist's error. Mr. Archer wrote:

1. The sign of the direct object, which in Chronicles comes just before "Lahmi," was *'-t*; the copyist mistook it for *b-t* or *b-y-t* ("Beth") and thus got *Bet hal-Lahmi* ("the Bethlehemite") out of it.
2. He misread the word for "brother" (*'-h*) as the sign of the direct object (*'-t*) right before *g-l-y-t* ("Goliath"). Thus he made "Goliath" the object of "killed" (*wayyak*), instead of the "brother" of Goliath (as the Chronicles passage does).
3. The copyist misplaced the word for "weavers" (*'-r-g-ym*) so as to put it right after "Elhanan" as his patronymic (*ben Y-'-r-y'-r--g-ym*, or *ben ya^arey 'or^e -gim* -- "the son of the forests of weavers" -- a most unlikely name for anyone's father!). In Chronicles the *'or^e grim* ("weavers") comes right after *m^enor* ("a beam of") -- thus making perfectly good sense.