

# **A READING OF 1 CHRONICLES 11: 15 – 19 FROM A ‘SA *LE FO*’ PERSPECTIVE**

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Faculty of the Malua Theological College

In Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Theology

by

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## Abstract

This paper aims to produce a contextual reading of 1 Chronicles 11: 15 – 19 using the Samoan *Sa le fo'i* (no return) hermeneutical perspective. The term *Sa le fo'i* is a war cry uttered in a battle that was fought in my village Fusi, Safotulafai in ancient times. *Sa le fo'i* is a call not to retreat but fight to the death. This hermeneutical perspective will be merged with Rhetorical criticism to read 1 Chronicles 11: 15 – 19 particularly to view the deeds of King David and his three warriors. The employment of *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical approach to read a biblical text is made possible by paradigm shifts in biblical studies that put emphasis on the reader and his/her context in the search for alternative meanings that will make the biblical text and its message relevant to the reader.

## **Declaration**

I declare that this work has not used without due acknowledgment of any material that has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in another institution. I also declare that the work has not used any material, heard or read, without proper acknowledgment of the source.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Dedication

To my Family: My parents *Leilua Pouvi & Faamanatu Leilua Pouvi*; Reverend *Tesimeta Afamasaga & Leatuga Afamasaga, Mafifaamoe Taviuni & Lepetiomalo Taviuni*; who prayed endlessly and supported us while we were in Malua, to achieve success. My wife *Faapenu*, and my kids: *Samuelu, Pouvi Jr, Pouane, Maelyn and my new born baby Tafatolu Visesio*;

My brother and his wife, sisters and husbands and their children; in New Zealand and Samoa.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter is very important in understanding this thesis due to the provision of a roadmap to the content of the whole thesis, for the purpose of putting things into perspective and to aid the readability of this work. In doing so, I will first present the aim and purpose of this study. Second, I will make known of the inspiration for this work. My intention here is to present the reasons behind my decision to pursue such an undertaking. Thirdly, I will present a brief literature review of my chosen text. The idea is to highlight the meanings of 1 Chronicles 11: 15 - 19 presented by Old Testament scholars for the purpose of locating my study. Third, is the presentation of the thesis as a whole. Here, I will briefly summarise the content of the chapters that are found after the introductory chapter.

### 1.2 Aim and Purpose of the Study

To commence with, this study aims at producing a contextual reading of 1 Chronicles 11: 15 – 19 from a Samoan hermeneutical perspective which I labelled as *Sale fo 'i*<sup>1</sup> (no return) perspective. To foster the engagement between my context and the text, I will employ Rhetorical criticism as an interpretive tool to lead meaning out of the text. According to Walter C. Kaiser and Moises Silva such a reader-response approach in biblical interpretation was validated by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur's theories of interpretation. For Gadamer, the meaning of a text is not wholly the result of reader's context nor that of the historical context of the text rather it is the critical

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<sup>1</sup> For further clarification see discussion of the phrase in Chapter Two below.

engagement of both worlds to create what he termed as a ‘fusion of horizon’. On the other hand, Ricoeur once a text is written it is freed from the authorial intention and its historical situation, thereby the interpreter may now read his/her own situation into the text opening up a whole new world of meanings that are not any less valid.<sup>2</sup> In other words Ricoeur had redefined the interpretational task as the engagement between the text and the interpreter. This further clarifies the aim of this work as mentioned before. It is therefore an attempt to read 1 Chronicles 11: 15 -19 from my situation as *Sa le fo’i* to develop another meaning.

Furthermore, to simplify the aim of this work I have broken down my endeavour into brief questions that I will focus on and to guide my writing use throughout my quest; What is the meaning of *Sa le fo’i*? How can I use *Sa le fo’i* as a Hermeneutical perspective? Are there elements of *Sa le fo’i* reflected in the passage? What are the meanings of the text yielded from my *Sa le fo’i* perspective? Are the meanings produced from my *Sa le fo’i* of 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19 different or similar to the meanings produced by other Old Testament scholars? What can my *Sa le fo’i* reading contribute to the field of biblical interpretation? How can meanings of 1 Chronicles 11: 15 -19 yielded from my *Sa le fo’i* reading applied to our lives as Christians in our Samoan context today? All in all, it is my hope that by the end of this study I am able to provide answers to the above questions.

### 1.3 Inspiration for this Study

In brief, the term *Sa le fo’i* is a war cry uttered in a battle that was fought in my village in ancient times. It is a call not to retreat but fight to death.<sup>3</sup> In my upbringing as

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<sup>2</sup> Walter C. Jr Kaiser & Moises Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*; (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 29 -30.

<sup>3</sup> Leilua Pouvi Puipufatu, (interview with author, 20 October, 2020).

a child in Fusi Safotulafai, one of the main concepts that was well known in the village was *Sa le fo'i*. Some families use the phrase as a proper name to name their children with, while other families use it to name their farmlands. Even our sporting teams like rugby, cricket, soccer and boxing clubs are named after the phrase. It can be seen as an attempt to awaken the spirit of no retreat in the sporting arena. Wherever I go, when people found out that I am from Fusi, they will address me as a '*tama o le Sa le fo'i*' meaning a 'lad from the no return clan'. For me when people call me *Sa le fo'i*, it can have a dual meaning; either they are praising me or ridicule me. As a member of the *Sa le fo'i* clan, I am eager to find out more about the phrase. That is to find out its origin and true meaning to resolve my suspicion of the phrase whether it can be used as a tribute to my village and me as its resident or as a mockery towards me or my village.

In addition, my upbringing as a Christian in a Christian family has prompted me to study the Bible and its messages. This dream is now realised as I pursue further theological education here in Malua Theological College with special interest in biblical interpretation. It is my hope that one day I will be a servant of God to preach and relay His message to the world. As I would be a preacher of God's world to my Samoan people in my Samoan context, it is therefore a prerequisite to foster biblical interpretations that are relevant and meaningful to my Samoan audience.

These two interests of mine inspired this work. As I see this work as a space for me to pursue both my interests; in studying the phrase *Sa le fo'i* and use it as a hermeneutical perspective in biblical interpretation. In the process, I surely will gain further understanding of the term or phrase *Sa le fo'i* and at the same time enhances my knowledge of biblical interpretation by devising interpretational methods and tools which can assist me in making sense of biblical texts. Hence it strengthens and faith in the Christian God whose work I am called to serve.

#### 1.4 Text Selection and Literature Review

My selected text 1 Chronicles 11: 15 -19 is part of a larger whole 1 Chronicles 11: 10 – 47, that presented a list of King David's heroes and mighty men. I deliberately chose this text because there are correspondences between the narrative of the three heroes and my preliminary findings concerning the phrase *Sa le fo'i*. In this sense, 1 Chronicles 11: 15 -19 is the ideal text for me to view from a *Sa le fo'i* perspective. It is my hope that such an engagement will shed new light on the three nameless heroes in this short narrative unit to produce alternative meanings of 1 Chronicles 11: 15 -19 that are meaningful to my Samoan context.

I choose the Chronicler's account over the Deuteronomist's account of the similar event in 2 Samuel 23: 13 -17 even though the Deuteronomist's version was the original one. The decision to limit my analysis on the Chronicler's account is part of an effort to stay within the scope and the word count of this thesis. A synoptic analysis of the two passages revealed that the two accounts are identical; considering the sequence of events, wording and literary formulations. For this reason, I therefore see the Chronicler's account as a direct copy of the Deuteronomist's version of the narrative. Thus make my choice of text and version unpretentious since my chosen methodology for this study obliged me to focus on the literary aspects of the text rather than its historical background.

One of these scholars is Martin Selman.<sup>4</sup> He sees the work of the Chronicler from a historical perspective, with a message of divine healing to provide hope for restoration of Judah in the post exilic period. For Selman such hope is grounded in the Chronicler's message that God revealed in the covenant with David is a trustworthy God who can be

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<sup>4</sup> Martin J Selman, 1 Chronicles, *An Introduction and Commentary* (England: Inter Varsity Press, 2016), 136-140.

trusted at all times. In this light, Selman perceives David's pouring of Bethlehem's precious water on the ground in a threefold manner. Firstly, is to highlight the bravery of the three heroes. Also it is to inspire extraordinary loyalty from the men towards David. Lastly, it is an act of worship and thanksgiving to God. Apparently, from Selman's analysis of the pouring of the water to the ground he sees the exploits of the three men as an act of heroism to showcase extraordinary loyalty to their king.

Furthermore, Moshe Garsiel in his study *David's Elite Warriors and their Exploits in the books of Samuel and Chronicles*, adds another dimension to the meaning of the three men's exploits in 1 Chronicles 11: 15 -19. Garsiel's study is an inter-textual reading of 1 Chronicles 11: 10-47 and 2 Samuel 23: 8-39.<sup>5</sup> He draws correspondence between the two texts, highlighting correspondence in their historical, social, political and theological contexts. These led Garsiel to assume that there are overtones from the 2 Samuel account of the three heroes apparent in the Chronicler's account particular with the Deuteronomist theology of retribution. In light of the theology of retribution Garsiel sees the exploits of the three men as an act of sacrifice in order to display an obedient response for them to gain favour in the sight of God.

Benjamin Mazar in his book known as *The Military Elite of King David* also offers a negative view of what the three heroes attempted.<sup>6</sup> Mazar views the narrative from a military perspective, with reference to organisation and structure within the military ranks. Mazar sees the exploits of the three elite warriors as an act of foolishness breaking organisational protocols for war preparations thus putting the lives of the other three hundred men at risk. Mazar's attempt of viewing 1 Chronicles 11: 15 -19 from a military perspective is value to my work here. It validates my attempt at viewing the

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<sup>5</sup> Moshe Garsiel, "David's Elite Warriors and Their Exploits in the Books of Samuel and Chronicles;" *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures: ARCHIVES* 11 (2011), 25-26.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Mazar, "The Military Elite of King David;" *Vetus Testamentum* 13, no. 1 (1963), 10-20.

text from a whole new perspective alien to the historical context of the post exilic Judea emphasised in the studies of Saleman and Garsiel.

In summation, the works of the three mentioned scholars highlight both positive and negative insights and meanings to the adventures of the three elite warriors. On a positive note, the deeds of the three men are seen as an act of extraordinary loyalty, an act of obedience, an act of worship, a heroic act and an act of self-sacrifice to gain God's favour. On the other hand, the acts of the three men are perceived as a foolish act that endangered the lives of their king and fellow kinsmen. In due time, this study will present a reading that could side with any of the two sides of the scholarly discussion.

### **1.5 Chapter Outline**

Following this current chapter will be chapter two. In Chapter Two I will present my approach to the biblical text. In such attempt I will firstly explore my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutics. In its course I will be conducting an etymological and mythological search of the phrase. The idea behind such an endeavour is to reveal the phrase's numerous meanings and nuances that could assist in formalising a systematic reading lens that can be used in reading biblical texts. In addition, is an attempt to explain my chosen reading apparatus; the so-called rhetorical criticism. Rhetorical Criticism is a literary tool that will be employed in this study to decipher the text's literary structures and language to unravel its meanings. This meaning will later on viewed from my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical lens.

The third chapter contain the exegesis of 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19. Here I will use rhetorical criticism to decipher the various meanings of the text and applied my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutics to make sense of the deciphered meanings of the text. The whole purpose behind such an undertaking is to re-package the text's meaning in a way which is relevant to my Samoan context and my Samoan audience.



Chapter four is my conclusion in which I will link all the summaries of each chapter. I will then compare my findings in the exegesis against the scholarly opinions in the literature review. Finally, I will make relevant comments to acknowledge the relevancy of my work in regards to our church as a whole.

## **1.6 Summary**

In summation, this introductory chapter has provided us with a roadmap to understand this work and I have highlighted the aims and objectives of this thesis. In addition, I have also provided a brief literature review highlighting the scholarly discussion on the meanings of my selected text. Not only that but I have also provided chapter summaries for the subsequent chapters. All these features are for the purpose of making this thesis readable and easy to follow.

## Chapter 2

### Approach to the Text

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter will be divided into three sections. First, is an attempt to locate my *Sa le fo'i* reading among other contextual approaches. Second, is an attempt to define the phrase *Sa le fo'i*. My intention here is to draw out its different connotations and implications that are relevant to the development of a Samoan hermeneutical framework for interpreting biblical texts. To achieve this objective, I will first conduct an etymological analysis of the term to identify the multiple meanings attached to the phrase that are significant in developing my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical perspective. This will follow by a mythological analysis of the phrase. The intention is to revisit the myth in which the phrase has been originated from. The idea is to draw out the meaning of the term in its original context. Afterwards, I will highlight current usages of the term in different contexts to illustrate its practicality. These analyses will not only identify the implications of the phrase *Sa le fo'i* but will also identify its various meanings and nuances, which are relevant to developing my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical reading strategy. Third, is an attempt to define my chosen interpretive tool which is Rhetorical Criticism. My intention here is to clearly outline why I chose Rhetorical Criticism and how I am going to apply it together with my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical perspective to read 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19.

#### 2.2 Contextual Reading Approach

As I have mentioned above, my *Sa le fo'i* reading is a contextual reading approach. Such an approach was made possible by accentuation of the reader and his/her location in the interpretive process. Such an interpretive approach is taken up by

Pacific Island biblical scholars including Samoan biblical scholars. The shift to reader oriented approach allows Samoan biblical scholars to bring our local contexts into engagement with biblical texts. It allows them to employ aspects of Samoan island life such as experiences, worldviews, cultural and religious beliefs within their biblical interpretation. This mode of biblical interpretation has been given prominence by Samoan biblical scholars such as Peniamina Leota,<sup>1</sup> Frank Smith,<sup>2</sup> Iutisone Salevao,<sup>3</sup> Vaitusi Nofoaiga,<sup>4</sup> Arthur Wulf<sup>5</sup> and so forth. However, due to limitations given in space and time for this project, I wish to mention a few Samoan Old Testament scholars and students within this study.

The first study I wish to draw upon is that of Leota. In his study of “Ethnic Tensions in Persian-Period Yehud” he uses an analogical approach in his engagement with the biblical text. His study is a contextual reading of Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles using elements of historical criticism as an interpretive tool to lead meanings out of the biblical text. Leota investigates the issues between ethnic groups in Persian-Period Yehud in light of the existing issues relating to land tenure and human rights in Samoan society. That is, Leota explores the analogies between contemporary Samoa and Persian Yehud. In such a process Leota allows the biblical world to inform current concerns of culture and rights in Samoa and vice versa. Leota, concludes his study by

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<sup>1</sup> Peniamina Leota, *Ethnic Tensions in Persian-Period Yehud: A Samoan Postcolonial Hermeneutics* (PhD diss., Melbourne College of Divinity, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Frank Smith, *The Johannine Jesus from a Samoan Perspective: Toward an Intercultural Reading of the Fourth Gospel* (PhD Thesis: University of Auckland, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Salevao, Iutisone Salevao, “Burning the Land: An Ecojustice Reading of Hebrews 6:7-8,” in *Readings from the Perspective of Earth, of The Earth Bible*, vol 1, ed. Norman C. Habel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 222-231.

<sup>4</sup> Vaitusi Lealaiauloto Nofoaiga, *Towards a Samoan Postcolonial Reading of Discipleship in the Matthean Gospel* (University of Auckland, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Arthur John Wulf, *“Was Earth Created Good? Re-appraising Earth in Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a from a Samoan Gafataulima Perspective”* (University of Auckland, 2016).

proposing recommendations for a Samoan hermeneutic and the responsible use of the Bible in the Samoan context.<sup>6</sup>

The next work I would like to take in to consideration is that of Wulf.<sup>7</sup> Wulf in his work offers a reappraisal of Earth as presented in Gen. 1:1-2:4a from a Samoan *gafataulima* (accomplish/fulfil/capable) hermeneutical perspective. Here Wulf addresses questions between Earth's perfect portraits in Gen. 1:1-2:4a and recurring natural disasters that he suffers in his Samoan local context. These questions identify the need for context specific hermeneutical frameworks that take into account our local ecological situations in the interpretive process. In this light, Wulf proposes the Samoan cultural concept *gafataulima* as an ecological hermeneutic to re-evaluate the quality of Earth as presented in the Gen. 1:1-2:4a creation narrative, utilising the Samoan version of narrative-grammatical criticism known as a *tala-mamanu* as a reading tool.<sup>8</sup> The Samoan *gafataulima* hermeneutic is a tripartite hermeneutical approach based on abilities. It measures the quality of a subject in relation to its capacity to achieve a function. Its three-fold approaches take into account a Samoan worldview of Earth and natural disasters, evident in Samoa today. It involves; 1) the identification of Earth's relations and functions; 2) establishing the cost in terms of abilities for Earth to accomplish the identified tasks; 3) highlighting Earth's capabilities and determining if Earth acquires during creation the required capacity to *gafataulima*, her given responsibilities. According to Wulf, establishing Earth's capabilities to *gafataulima* her given functions will provide a response to the question: Was Earth created 'good'?

Another Samoan Old Testament scholar who I wish to mention here is Makesi Neemia. In his article The Hebrew Bible and Postcolonial Samoan Hermeneutics, he

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<sup>6</sup> Peniamina Leota, *Ethnic Tensions in Persian-Period Yehud*; (2005), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur John Wulf, "Was Earth Created Good?" (2016).

<sup>8</sup> Arthur John Wulf, "Was Earth Created Good?" (2016).

discusses *priestly perspective on land in the Hebrew Bible, with special focus on the writings of P* (priestly writer) and the Holiness Code.<sup>9</sup> In his discussion Neemia considers the naming of God, the ecumenical Abraham, with hypotheses concerning the Priestly accommodation to, and contestation of Persian imperialism. The objective of these discussions was to draw up the priestly accommodation of ancestral religion and traditional land claims to be used as a hermeneutical perspective to view Samoan claim to customary land.<sup>10</sup> For Neemia the peaceful and ecumenical attitudes together with an openness to ancestral land claims promoted in the priestly writings could ease tensions in Samoa land tenure since people could come to perceive their Christian God as a protector of their ancestral claim to customary land.<sup>11</sup>

Another example can be found in the work of Faauuga Pula.<sup>12</sup> Pula in his study *The Self-Sacrifice of Malietoa Faiga's Son and the Self-Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter* conducts a cross-cultural reading of the narrative of Jephthah's vow and sacrifice in Judges 11 using the Fatitu Saleimoa<sup>13</sup> version of the Samoan legend of Poluleuligaga<sup>14</sup> to formulate a hermeneutical lens. According to Pula, reading the Judges narrative in light of the Samoan legend equates Jephthah's daughter to the Samoan legendary figure of Poluleuligaga. Her actions can be seen as self-sacrifice to fulfil her father's vow and to ensure liberation for the people from the consequences of a broken promise to Yahweh. Pula's approach to the text is an unpretentious

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<sup>9</sup> Makesi Neemia, *The Hebrew Bible and Postcolonial Samoan Hermeneutics*, in *Colonial Contexts and Postcolonial Theologies, Story weaving in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Mark G. Brett and Jione Havea (Palgrave: MacMillan, 2014), 67.

<sup>10</sup> Neemia *The Hebrew Bible and Postcolonial Samoan Hermeneutics* (2014), 67.

<sup>11</sup> Neemia *The Hebrew Bible and Postcolonial Samoan Hermeneutics*. (2014), 67-80.

<sup>12</sup> Fa'au'uga, *The Self-Sacrifice of Malietoa Faiga's Son and the Self-Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter* (Malua Theological College, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Fatitu is a sub-village of the village of Saleimoa in the north-west of Upolu Island.

<sup>14</sup> Poluleuligaga was the adopted son of Malietoa Faiga. He was the biological son of Malietoa's brother Ganasavea.

comparative approach where he compares and contrasts the biblical and Samoan stories. However, Pula's simple approach yields an innovative Samoan contextual approach to reading biblical texts.<sup>15</sup>

Another example can be found in the work of Maligi Setefano.<sup>16</sup> In Setefano's work he attempted to fuse the Samoan proverbial saying '*ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele*,' (the heart (or rock) and blood (or earth) weeps), with the Earth Bible Team's eco-principles of interconnectedness, voice and resistance to formulate a Samoan ecological hermeneutical lens to read the land mourns motif in Hosea 4:1-3. Reading the land mourns motif in Hosea 4:1-3 using this cultural-ecological lens leads Setefano to conclude that the motif depicts the cry of the parent Earth due to the ill fate of humanity (her children) and their failure to fulfil their obligations and responsibilities in their parent-child relationship. That is, the Earth mourns because of the projected devastation of the Israelites and because of their sinful nature towards one another and Yahweh.<sup>17</sup> The blending of elements of Samoan culture with the Earth Bible Team's eco-justice principles by Setefano produces an innovative way of reading biblical texts and thus makes the biblical message anew and relevant for the Samoan audience.

Mariota's thesis provides another illustration of contextual hermeneutics, through the application of technical biblical research to express historical and cultural issues specific to Samoa and the Pacific. His study presents a three way dialogue between his context as a New Zealand born Samoan (a group who have been marginalised by the cultural and institutional structures of the Congregational Christian

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<sup>15</sup> Fa'au'uga, *The Self-Sacrifice of Malietoa Faiga's Son and the Self-Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter* (2007), 30-32. In these particular pages Faauuga provides his synoptic of the Samoan and Biblical stories.

<sup>16</sup> Maligi Setefano, *Weeping with the Land: An Ecological-Cultural (Samoan) Reading of Hosea 4:1-3*, (B.D. Thesis, Malua Theological College, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Setefano, *Weeping with the Land*, (2010).

Church of Samoa<sup>18</sup>), the Sogi<sup>19</sup> residents (who have been marginalised due to Samoa-China relations) and the biblical world using postcolonial discourses. In doing so Mariota applies the postcolonial hermeneutical lenses as defined by Mark Brett in his reading of Genesis 21 and 22 to read the relocation discourse of the residents of the village of Sogi and Samoan cultural discourse dominant in the C.C.C.S in New Zealand.<sup>20</sup>

Through the use of Brett's postcolonial hermeneutics Mariota unravels the underlying ideologies of the Samoan and Chinese governments behind the relocation discourse of the village of Sogi. That is a power play between China and Samoa that serves the strategic and development interests of both parties at the expense of the residents of Sogi. According to Mariota this reflects the Persian period Yehud as defined by Brett who presumes that the final editors of Genesis 21 and 22 have set out to challenge the theological ethnocentric interests levied by the books of Ezra and Nehemiah through a one-sided interpretation of the priestly notion of the "holy seed" in Ezra 9:1-2. This form of resistance can be characterized as "intentional hybridity" whereby the dominant voice expressed in Genesis 22 is fused with other voices to the point where the dominant voice is suppressed and challenge.<sup>21</sup>

In summation, the above studies by Samoan Old Testament scholars and students highlight clear parallels between the biblical and contemporary Samoan contexts. It illustrates how our readings of biblical texts can inform our perceptions of

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<sup>18</sup> From now onwards this thesis will use the abbreviation C.C.C.S to designate the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa.

<sup>19</sup> Sogi: A village in the vicinity of the Apia urban area, in the north of Upolu Island.

<sup>20</sup> Martin Mariota, *A Dialogue with the Voices from the Margin*, (BD Thesis, Malua Theological College, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> Mariota, *A Dialogue with the Voices from the Margin*, 1-2.

the issues surrounding us in contemporary society and vice versa. These studies also manifest the fact that my Samoan culture and way of living is rich with concepts, stories, worldviews and rituals that can be used as hermeneutical keys to read biblical texts. The use of these local premises as hermeneutics can enrich our understanding of biblical texts and make their messages sensible for us. This is the route this thesis will endeavor, where I will use the phrase *Sa le fo'i* my Samoan context to develop a hermeneutical perspective to read 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19.

## 2.3 Meanings and Nuances of *Sa le fo'i*

To draw out the numerous nuances and connotations of the phrase *Sa le fo'i*, I intend to analyse the term on three different levels. These include a survey of the etymology of the phrase, the myth that is associated with the phrase and the current usages of *Sa le fo'i*. The idea is to draw out the multiple nuances of the phrase that are viable to develop my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical perspective.

### 2.3.1 *Etymological Survey*

The Samoan short phrase *Sa le fo'i* is made up of three Samoan little words that carry numerous nuances and meanings. First is the term *sa*. As a verb this term simply means set apart, sacred, forbidden, taboo or prohibited.<sup>22</sup> Hence the term is used to set something/someone apart as sacred or holy as in the phrases *sa le sami*, *sa le vao* (the sea and the land is sacred) or as a noun to indicate a taboo or prohibition as in the Samoan phrase *ua sa le popo* (the collection of coconut is prohibited). Reading these two nuances into the phrase *Sa le fo'i* yields two aspects to the meaning of the phrase. First, reading *sa* as an indication of setting something/someone apart to *Sa le fo'i*

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<sup>22</sup> George B. Milner, *Samoan Dictionary: Samoan-English, English-Samoan* (Auckland: Pasifika Press, 1993), 194 – 195.



reveals the sense of the phrase that someone who adheres to the call *Sa le fo'i* could be seen as one set apart. In addition, reading *sa* as an indication of a taboo or prohibition into the phrase *Sa le fo'i* manifests the meaning of the phrase as a sacred taboo that everyone should abide by. This means that it is imperative for the recipient to follow since it is a sacred or a divine command. These usages of the term *sa* reveal the term as a rhetorical device used by the addresser to add authority to the statement in order to persuade the addressee(s) to obey.

The second word in the *Sa le fo'i* phrase is *le*. The term *le* is the article in Samoan phraseology. It is used whenever the idea is certain to the mind of the speaker.<sup>23</sup> Although the usage of *le* in the phrase *Sa le fo'i* is untranslatable into the English. It yields the idea that the mentioned action is certain in the mind of the speaker. In this sense, *le* indicates that the subsequent action is a must for its audience. The term *le* can also mean 'not' or 'no' as in the phrase; *E le alu* (not to go or don't go).<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the usage of *le* in the phrase *Sa le fo'i* reemphasised or strengthened the prohibition indicated by the term *sa*. This application of *le* can be viewed as rhetorical in nature since it puts more emphasis not only to the prohibition but also the required action in the statement *Sa le fo'i*.

The last word in the phrase *Sa le fo'i* is the term *fo'i*. According to Pratt this Samoan verb can mean 'to return' or 'to turn back.'<sup>25</sup> Pratt seems to define the term *fo'i* in the context of a journey. Perceiving the term as a description of a journey returning to its departure point. This usage is echoed in the Samoan phrase *ua toe fo'i i fanua le malaga*, (the journey has returned to shore). Reading this nuance of the term to the

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<sup>23</sup> George Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language with English and Samoan Vocabulary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> and revised edition, (Papakura: R McMillan Southern Reprints, 1984), 6 & 176.

<sup>24</sup> Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language* (1984) 176.

<sup>25</sup> Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language* (1984) 149.

phrase *Sa le fo'i* reveals a prohibition for someone not to return to where he/she was. George B. Milner, added to this list by adding the nuances 'to take back' or 'to withdraw'.<sup>26</sup> First, Milner views the term *fo'i* to refer to the taking back of a belonging or something dear to someone. Second, Milner seems to view the term within the context of financial transaction. That is the term that explains the withdrawal of money from the bank.<sup>27</sup> Reading these two nuances of the term *fo'i* into the phrase *Sa le fo'i* as a prohibition for someone not to take something back or not to withdraw from doing a task.

Furthermore, Namulauulu Filipo added another dimension to the term *fo'i*. For him the term can also mean 'give back' or 'to retreat'.<sup>28</sup> Namulauulu claims that the term carries multiple meanings depending on the context. On the one hand, the nuance 'to give back' is apparent in Samoan *faalavelaves* or bereavements. In this situation the term *fo'i* is often used to denote the giving back of monetary and food items as a token of appreciation to those who brought gifts of similar nature to help with the hosting of an occasion. On the other hand, the meaning 'to retreat' reveals the usage of the term *fo'i* in the context of war. Especially, to depict someone who is defeated and retreated. Reading these connotations of *fo'i* into the *Sa le fo'i* phrase reveal the phrase to be a prohibition to stop someone from giving back or to prohibit someone from retreating.

All in all, this brief etymological survey of the phrase *Sa le fo'i* reveals several dimensions of the phrase that could be useful for the development of my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical perspective. First, the study manifests that the phrase is a taboo or a sacred prohibition that should be closely observed. In this sense, the call depicted in *Sa*

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<sup>26</sup> Milner, *Samoan Dictionary* (1993), 69.

<sup>27</sup> Milner, *Samoan Dictionary* (1993), 69.

<sup>28</sup> Namulauulu Filipo, interviewed with author, (February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021). Filipo is a chief of Fusi who is also an elder of the village.

*le fo'i* is a command for the audience to strictly adhere to. In addition, the *Sa le fo'i* phrase is rhetorically designed through the use of the little terms *sa* and *le* to persuade the hearers to act accordingly. Second, this command carries several nuances depending on the context that it is used in. For instance, in the context of a journey it can mean a call not to return until it reaches its destination or achieved its purpose. This means *Sa le fo'i* is a journey rhetoric to encourage a crew to journey on disregarding any obstacle that comes their way. Furthermore, in the context of Samoan *faalavelaves* the phrase denotes a call not to return a portion of what others have offered. This can be seen as an action against the norm in Samoan *faalavelaves*. It is often an appeal made by those who are selfish and seeking a profit from the occasion. This means *Sa le fo'i* is a negative rhetoric of the selfish profit seekers. Third, is the context of war, where the phrase is used as a war cry not to retreat. In other words, the phrase *Sa le fo'i* is a war rhetoric prompting soldiers to fight on and not to surrender.

### 2.3.2 Mythological Survey

*Sa le fo'i* embodies a story that has been in my village's oral traditions and passed down by my ancestors throughout history. This section aims to explain the story behind the phrase *Sa le fo'i*. The intention is to lead out nuances of the phrase that could be valuable in developing my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical perspective for reading biblical texts.

The phrase *Sa le fo'i* originated from the Samoan myth of Letufuga and Leaula. They went to seek honour from Malietoa. Malietoa granted their request and Leaula went to Saleaula while Letufuga went back to Fusi Safotulafai both with the authority to rule over the Savaii islands. However, such stirred up hatred and jealousy among the Tuiaana and Savea, who also approached Malietoa for the same privileges but were denied. Tuiaana and Savea decided to pursue Letufuga to take back his prized

possession by force. On arrival Tuiaana and Savea declared war on Letufuga and his people. They assaulted and killed the natives of Faasaleleaga in the hope that Letufuga would relinquish the honour bestowed to him by Malietoa.

Meanwhile, Letufuga and a partner were hunting pigeons in the inlands and from a far Letufuga heard the cries of his people who were under attack by Tuiaana and his war party. Not long after, the Faasaleleaga people fled and sought refuge inland until they reached the place where Letufuga and his hunting partner were resting. The people relayed to Letufuga what had happened resulting in Letufuga's declaration of war against Tuiaana and his people. For the moment, the battle reached the inlands prompting Letufuga to engage in battle straightaway. The battle was ferocious and the Tuiaana's side felt the might of Letufuga's side causing them to retreat. As Tuiaana and his army retreated, Letufuga's side gained ground and drove the opposition back towards the shores. As the battle reached a marshy land in the inlands Letufuga's hunting partner who is now fighting alongside him saw diseased Aana soldiers in the waters with smiles on their faces. Hence the place was called Vaiaata (smiling waters). The war rages on with Letufuga and his army now in pursuit of Tuiaana's side. When the battle reached the mountain side Letufuga broke his hunting staff which he had used in combat Letufuga would then use his hands to pick a person up and use that person to strike another person or he would pick a person up and rub their faces into the dirt. Here the name of the mountain which is now called '*Olo*' meaning rub-derived from.

The battle waged on and at some stages Tuiaana and his soldiers gained some momentum putting doubt in the hearts of Letufuga's men. In these instances, Letufuga would utter the call *Sa le fo'i* (no return) to encourage his men to fight on. There must have been several occasions since there are two pieces of land called by the name *Sa le fo'i* in the Fusi inlands today. In addition, there is also a road at the back of Fusi village

called *Sa le fo'i* this road according to village tradition is where Letufuga uttered the final call *Sa le fo'i* to indicate the final push for victory.

However, the battle did not end there; the chase continued until they reached Ituotane on the other side of the island. There Letufuga and his army decided to turn back, killing any Aana soldier they came across. On their return they noticed the stench of dead corpses of Aana soldiers especially from the bunkers where some of the warriors from Fusi had been stationed. Thus derived the chiefly title Mafuolo meaning stench bunker to commemorate the heroism of Fusi warriors. All of a sudden, Letufuga had Tuia'ana and Aana in his sights and hastily pursued them until he chased them into the sea, stirring up the sea. At this point some A'ana fighters sought refuge onto a small sand island. This sand island is now called "*Nu'unefu*" to remember the retreat and surrender of Tuia'ana and his war party. In defeat Tuia'ana pleaded for mercy, *Letufuga Pule oe, Letufuga To'atama'i oe, Letufuga Fuā oe, Letufuga alofa oe, alala ia oe ua e toa*. (Oh Letufuga you are sovereign! Oh Letufuga you are fearsome! Oh Letufuga the victory is yours! Oh Letufuga show love and lower your attack (rest) for you are mighty!). Tuia'ana's plea derived the title *Saalalatoa*, (the family of resting warriors) to designate the family of Letufuga. Furthermore, Tuia'ana displayed his defeat by offering his daughter Fa'auluulumaga as a bride for Letufuga to memorialize his triumphant victory and a ransom for the lives of the people of Aana.

Consequently, the names and places named in the story still exist today and are ample evidence suggesting the historicity of the occasion. However, there are still a few elements in the story challenged by some elders and orators in the village of Fusi. One of these people is Leilua Fata Tinai.<sup>29</sup> He disputed the reason behind the naming of the

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<sup>29</sup> Leilua Fata Tinai: interview with author (20<sup>th</sup> December, 2020). He is one of the high chief of Fusi Safotulafai.

inland road as *Sa le fo'i*. According to Tinai victory was already assured when the battle reached that point and Tuiaana and his men had fled to the sea seeking refuge on Nuunefu. There Letufuga's hunting partner urged Letufuga to return with him to their hunting. However, Letufuga insisted that no one should return or *Sa le fo'i*. For Tinai these utterances displayed Letufuga's bravery and his temperament not to return until he receives assurance from Tuiaana that he is defeated and will never dare to challenge Letufuga again.<sup>30</sup> Letufuga Penitito<sup>31</sup> and Leilua Pouvi<sup>32</sup> also dispute the meaning and origin of the title Mafuolo. For them the reason behind the title Mafuolo is a mockery towards one of Letufuga's warriors who fled in fear and hid inside a bunker. On their way back from Itutane, Letufuga smells the stench from where the warrior was hidden thus originating the name Mafuolo (stench bunker).

Furthermore, there are also gaps in the account of Letufuga and the Faasaleleaga war that need to be mentioned. First, is the fact that there is no mention of the cost of Letufuga's *Sa le fo'i* utterance. Apparently, Letufuga's call persuaded his men to fight on until death. Fortunately, for them victory was theirs but wouldn't it save lives if they were allowed to regroup to find new strength to fight on? Or give the other side a chance for diplomacy? Second, the story did not manifest the delay in Tuiaana's declaration of defeat and thus allowed the chase to go on until the Itutane on the other side of the island. Why didn't Tuiaana declare defeat and save his men from further despair earlier?

However, in saying this the story reveals connotations of *Sa le fo'i* that can be developed for hermeneutical purposes. First, the story reveals the rhetorical effect of *Sa le fo'i* in the context of war. That is, the utterance in truth persuaded Letufuga's men in

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<sup>30</sup> Leilua Fata Tinai: interview with author (20<sup>th</sup> December, 2020).

<sup>31</sup> Letufuga Penitito interviewed with author at 8am (20<sup>th</sup> December, 2020) in Fusi Safotulafai.

<sup>32</sup> Leilua Pouvi interviewed with author at 4pm (20<sup>th</sup> December, 2020) in Fusi Safotulafai.

their quest for victory even when their lives were at stake. Thus adherence to the call *Sa le fo'i* determines an act of bravery. Second, the call *Sa le fo'i* encourages Letufuga's army to fight to the death. Such act could be seen as a sacrifice to protect something precious to one's life. That is, it is better to die than to lose it. And thirdly, adherence to the call *Sa le fo'i* discloses one's loyalty. That is, it reveals one who is willing to lay down his life in service to his king. In summary, this analysis reveals that *Sa le fo'i* is a rhetorical utterance to persuade one to respond in bravery, sacrifice and loyalty.

### 2.3.3 Contemporary Usages

As mentioned above the phrase *Sa le fo'i* is often heard in discourses in my village of Fusi Safotulafai. Some families use the phrase as a proper name to name their children while other families use it to name their farmlands. Leilua Pouvi, reiterated this claim, pointing out that there is also a purpose for naming one's child Salefo'i. That is, to ensure that one's child grows up to imitate his/her name. Someone who is brave, loyal and willing to perform sacrifices in his/her *tautua* (service to the family and village). Naming a piece of land *Sa le fo'i* also is purposely done. It is for the purpose of constantly reminding and encouraging those using the land to work the land to its full potential and productivity for the benefit of the family. Leilua Fatagogo who owns several pieces of land agrees with Pouvi claiming that his most productive piece of land is the one named *Sa le fo'i*. Judging from these usages of the phrase *Sa le fo'i* it is clear that the phrase is used rhetorically to persuade those named after the phrase in their *tautua* and to encourage the working of the land to ensure high yields for the wellbeing of the family.

Another usage of the term *Sa le fo'i* today is evident in the naming of sporting teams in our village of Fusi. Our rugby, cricket, soccer, and boxing, teams are all named after *Sa le fo'i*. Atapana Leilua explains that this move is not only an attempt to awaken

the spirit of no retreat in the sporting arena but also to give our athletes a sense of identity<sup>33</sup>. Since all of Samoan recognised that any team called *Sa le fo'i* hails from Fusi Safotulafai. Furthermore, the name *Sa le fo'i* is not limited particularly to sporting teams but we also have dance groups, fundraising groups and so forth that are called after the phrase *Sa le fo'i* Namulauulu Peseta Tugalii, commented that the main reason why our village teams are called *Sa le fo'i* is to give us a sense of belonging<sup>34</sup>. That is, it made them proud to represent the village and at the same time reveal to the rest of Samoa that we hail from the village of Fusi Safotulafai. In sum, the usage of the phrase *Sa le fo'i* as a name for our social groups reveals the term to be used rhetorically to give the group a sense of belonging and an identity as a group belonging to the village of Fusi Safotulafai. The village with a *Sa le fo'i* attitude.

All in all, contemporary usages of the phrase *Sa le fo'i* reveal that the phrase is a rhetorical device used in dialogues to persuade the people of Fusi to exhibit particular personal characteristics, to give all in their *tautua* to the family and village, encourage a high standard of performance and give the people a sense of belonging and identity.

#### **2.3.4 Summation**

Judging from the three surveys of the phrase *Sa le fo'i* it is clear that the phrase can be used as a rhetorical device to persuade the people of Fusi Safotulafai, to display certain acceptable values and ethical traits, to act bravely and loyal in their *tautua* to their family and village and to give the people a sense of identity. In other words, *Sa le fo'i*, is an attitude of bravery, a *tautua* and an identity.

*Sa le fo'i* as a hermeneutic therefore will take these three nuances of the term into consideration. First, an interpreter applying *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical lens to read text

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<sup>33</sup> Atapana Leilua interviewed with author at 2pm (22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2020) in Fusi Safotulafai.

<sup>34</sup> Namulauulu Peseta Tugalii interviewed with author at 6pm (23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2020) in Fusi Safotulafai.



will attempt to identify features of a text that exhibits or stresses attitudes of bravery. Second, the interpreter will identify extracts of a *Sa le fo'i tautua*. That is, loyal and sacrificial services beneficial to many. And third, the interpreter applying *Sa le fo'i* perspective will make judgements if any of the character(s) in the story can be identified under the *Sa le fo'i* banner. To lead meaning out of the text this project intends to use Rhetorical Criticism since the phrase *Sa le fo'i* can be looked at as a rhetorical device.

## 2.4 Rhetorical Criticism

According to Martin Kessler, analysing the rhetoric in a text or speech is important, in detecting the art of persuasion in texts or speeches.<sup>35</sup> George Kennedy also sees the importance of rhetorical criticism as a tool in the exploration of texts to understand the relationship between the author, the text, and the audience.<sup>36</sup> In saying this, looking at rhetoric's of a text (words, structure, and form) can tell us how the writer wishes the reader to understand the text.

Thus, the same can be applied when reading the biblical text, as it has its own audience and unique messages with differing authorial intentions. Authorial intentions determine the type of rhetoric's that exist within a text. For example, in the New Testament, the overall rhetoric behind this period is more different to the Old Testament times, given the different social and political situations of the author and their audiences. Kennedy sees the New Testament writers' intentions of attempting to persuade a gentile audience instead of the Jewish populace.<sup>37</sup> Their intents influence the

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<sup>35</sup> Martin Kessler, et al "*A Methodological Setting for Rhetorical Criticism*" in *Art and Meaning Rhetoric in Biblical literature*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 2; Also see: Jeffrey A. D. Weimar, "*What does Aristotle Have to do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism*," *Calvin Theological Journal*, 32 (1997), 459.

<sup>36</sup> George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 3.

<sup>37</sup> Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (1984), 3.

rhetoric in their writings. At the same time, Kenneth Kuntz, argues the same for Old Testament writers. Citing Isaiah 51: 1-16 as an example, he claims that the prophet's tone of persuasion can be determined from the literary devices incorporated in his prophecy. In other words, the messages within the biblical texts can be understood better by analysing the persuasive language and devices intoned in the literary units.<sup>38</sup>

#### ***2.4.1 Five Parts of Rhetorical Criticism***

According to Hayes and Holladay, there are five parts of rhetorical criticism; invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery.<sup>39</sup> The first three aspects of rhetorical criticism are relevant to written texts whilst the last two components are specifically relevant to speeches and oral presentations.

*Invention* is an attempt to discover what the implied author is intending to say in order to effectively communicate what the authorial intention. Kessler explain 'invention' as an attempt "to find what the author should say."<sup>40</sup> That is, an endeavour to invent and anticipate what the implied author wish to say. This undertaking can be historical or literary methodologically. For the purpose of this thesis I choose to invent the authorial intention through a literary analysis of 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19.

*Arrangement* deals with the arrangement of a text or oral presentation.<sup>41</sup> The organisation of a text or oral presentation can determine how it is delivered and understood. Rhetorical criticism is designed to uncover the implied author's intentions and meanings by identifying the compositional content and structure (both surface and deep structures) of a text. Surface structures are those structures that are obvious which

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<sup>38</sup> Kenneth Kuntz, *Rhetorical Criticism and Isaiah 51: 1-16* (London: T& T Clark, 1982), 1-3.

<sup>39</sup> Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 93.

<sup>40</sup> Kessler, "A Methodological Setting for Rhetorical Criticism" (1982), 2.

<sup>41</sup> Kessler, "A Methodological Setting for Rhetorical Criticism," 2.

the critic could detect effortlessly, while deep structures are structures that are deeply impeded with the literary composition including chiasmus and inclusio.

*Style* is about how the writer chooses to use language to effectively send the message through as they want it to be received. Critics using Rhetorical criticism should have an eye for parallelism, editorial notes, repetitions, images and so forth.

*Memory* relied on the act of remembering the contents and how to present it effectively using tone of voice amongst others to capture the audience and pursued them to act accordingly.

*Delivery*, this part of Rhetorical criticism deals with oral presentations. It analyses how the speaker use voice and body language to effectively communicate the message and persuade the audience.<sup>42</sup>

For the purpose of this thesis I intend to employed the arrangement and style component of Rhetorical criticism to analyse the narrative in 1 Chronicle 11: 15-19. In this case, I will look at the text structures and literary devices such as repetitions, parallelism, metaphors and so forth. The main purpose is to determine how the implied author of 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19 intended me to view the characters in the story.

## 2.5 Summary

To summarise this chapter, a sound definition of *Sa le fo'i* has been established to highlight the aspects of my hermeneutical lens. *Sa le fo'i*, is an attitude of bravery, a form of *tautua* and an identity. So, the interpreter viewing a text from a *Sa le fo'i* perspective will look for evidences of the three nuances of the term in the characters of the studied stories. In addition, the selected methodology for textual analysis is Rhetorical criticism mainly the arrangement and style components of this methodology.

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<sup>42</sup> H. J. Hayes and R. C. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 74.

In this sense, I will approach 1 Chronicles 11:15-19 looking for surface and deep structures and literary devices such as repetition, metaphors and so forth that could relay the intentions of the implied author and the views that he/she is attempting to persuade us to believe.

## Chapter 3

### Sa le Fo'i Reading of 1 Chronicles 11:15-19

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, it will provide a detailed exegesis of 1 Chronicles. 11:15-19 through the use of Rhetorical Criticism with special focus on textual Arrangement and Style. At the same time, I will synthesise my exegetical findings with my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical perspective.

#### 3.2 Text Arrangement

As aforementioned the arrangement component of Rhetorical criticism simply refers to structures – namely surface structure and deep structure. This section therefore explores both structural types. The surface structure will recognize 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19 in its pure narrative formulation, while the deep structure diagnoses how it is arranged and prescribed in order to persuade the reader.

##### 3.2.1 Surface Structure of 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19

The following structure is adapted from the narrative structure provided by William Johnstone of 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19.<sup>1</sup>

Verse 15	Introduction
Verse 16 – 17	First Scene: David's Longing for Water
Verse 18	Second Scene: The Three Warriors and David
Verse 19(a) -	Third Scene: God forbid
Verse 19(b) -	Conclusion

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<sup>1</sup> William Johnstone, 1 & 2 Chronicles – 1 Chronicles 1 – 2 Chronicles 9; *Israel's Place among the Nations*; (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997), 151.

### *Introduction (v15)*

Verse 15 serves as the introduction to the narrative unit in 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19. It provides us with the setting and the major characters of the story. It reveals that the story is set in central Israel. This is indicated by the geographical locations such as the cave of Adullam where David was taking refuge and the valley of Rephaim occupied by the army of the Philistine. In addition, verse 15 also introduces the main characters of the story; namely David and three of David's mighty men. The three men went down to see David at the cave of Adullam while the army of Philistines was encamped in the valley of Rephaim. Such deed can be looked as an act of bravery and loyalty considering that the Philistines are setting camp nearby. Viewing the men's actions from my *Sa le fo'i* perspective reveals the men's action comparable to the characteristics of a *Sa le fo'i tautua* in which they put their lives in a dangerous situation, willing to sacrifice their lives for the safety of the king.

### *First Scene: David's Longing for Water (vv. 16-17)*

Verses 16 and 17 open up the first scene that pronounces the urgency and the craving of the David for water from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate. David was in the stronghold; and the battalion of the Philistines was at Bethlehem. Verse 17 clearly states the problem; the water in which David was craving for was at the very place where the Philistines were camped. Yet, David's urgency for water is reflected by his utterance: "O that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate!" His words echo a deep need, and utter a challenge for his men.

In light of the *Sa le fo'i* perspective, sometimes we may face many challenges in our lives but most often we don't take the challenge due to our personal commitment. However, the urgency to take up such challenges is derived from the motivation of the words. Therefore, the words must be carefully selected and convey in such a way that inspired and motivated the heart to progress, and move forward to face such challenge. In

other words, only someone with a *Sa le fo'i* attitude and loyalty could have the aptitude to response to the challenge and answer David's call.

*Second Scene: The Three warriors and David (v. 18)*

Verse 18 continues the narrative into the second scene, but this time, things started to turn into action. The three men broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and they brought it to David. But David would not drink of it; instead, he poured it out to the Lord. The exploits of the three men shows their courage, and their sense of loyalty dedicated to their king. Evidently, this reflects the true nature of the concept of *Sa le fo'i*. First, they exhibit the *Sa le fo'i* attitude of no retreat and no surrender. Second, the deeds of the three men replicate the *Sa le fo'i tautua*; a service performed in loyalty even to the point of sacrificing one's life for the king.

*Third Scene: God Forbid (v.19a)*

Verse 19a continues the narrative when David refused to drink the water that was brought to him by the three men. He hesitated, when he realised that the three men were willing to risk their lives just for his personal desire. Therefore, he would not drink it. David's action reveals his own personal judgement regarding the actions of these men. He regarded their action as an intrinsic and fundamental work of loyalty and commitment to God. Hence, instead of consuming it, he poured out the water to God as a symbol of offering. David's refusal to drink the water fetched by the three men echoes traits of *Sa le fo'i*. His personal judgement of the three men and their deeds reveals the three men's loyalty to their leader as that of a *Sa le fo'i* devotion with the willingness to sacrifice one's own life in the service of their leader and God.

### *Conclusion (v. 19b)*

The narrative concludes at 19b with the claim that the three warriors did these things. Such a claim confirms that the ultimate work of the three warriors is indeed authentic. Such claim from a *Sa le fo 'i* perspective confirms that the works of the three men is indeed in line with the works of *Sa le fo 'i*.

### **3.2.2 Deep Structure of 1 Chronicle 11: 15-19**

As discussed above, deep structure is another form of arrangement that uses chiasmus and inclusio. The following is a chiastic arrangement of 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19.

**a** Three chiefs (v.15)

**b** David was yearning for a drink of water (v.17)

**c** David refused to drink (v.18a)

**x** David poured out the water to the Lord (v.18b)

**c'** David refused to drink (v. 18c)

**b'** Shall I drink (v. 19a)

**a'** Three warriors (v. 19b)

aa' - In observing the selected text, the word/number "three" is repeated three times. In verse 15, the author intentionally opens the verse making known that out of thirty men, three made the conscious decision to follow David into enemy territory. Here, the bravery and courage of these "chiefs" is made known. Out of the thirty, only a tenth of the pack made the move. Furthering the notion of courage and bravery, the author once again notes in verse 18 that "the Three broke." Instead of noting a general plural term, the author makes clear that the same "three" from verse 15 are the initiators of the action found in verse 18. "Three" then is repeated for emphasis. Interestingly enough, "three" is preceded by the particle "the," creating the term "the Three" In a way, "three" here isn't just a



number, but has become a title or name for faction that has formed. The use of the article diminishes any questions about who is performing the action here. It isn't just any three that "broke," it was "the three."

The "three" is once again repeated at the end of verse 19. Here, the author once again makes known that the courageous act that just took place is credited to the "three." In repeating the term "three," the author solidifies that the unquestionable courage that humbled David wasn't that of his entire army, but that of the "three." Another important point that is worth mentioning here is the use of the two terms; chiefs and warriors to make reference to "the three." In verse 15, the term *chief* is used to label the three men, while in verse 19, the term used is *warriors*. The transition from chiefs to warriors signifies the ultimate work that these men have done. The term "warriors" indicates the elevation of the status and reputation of these three men which they achieve, given their brave actions.

Viewing the actions and works of "the three" from my *Sa le fo'i* perspective discloses similarities between the characteristics attach to the concept *Sa le fo'i* and the qualities exhibit by the three warriors. This includes the personal qualities of loyalty, bravery and servitude. In this light, the three therefore can be identified as members of the *Sa le fo'i* faction.

bb' - In this section, verse 17 talks about David longing for a drink of water from the well at the gates of Bethlehem. However, in verse 19a, David hesitated and refused to drink the water, after the three men broke through the Philistine's camp and got hold of it. In this sense, it seems that David is feeling guilty, when he realized that the blood of these three men could have been spilled just because of his desire for water. Furthermore, it demonstrates David's appreciation of the difficult task that was carried out by these three brave men. Viewing David's reluctance to drink from the *Sa le fo'i* perspective, reveals David's acknowledgement of the bravery and loyalty of the three men; characteristics that

reminiscence the *Sa le fo'i* mind set and philosophy. It is evident that the path that they crossed is quite a difficult journey through the heart of the enemy. Yet, they had the courage to do so, because of their loyalty to their king. Hence, instead of drinking the water, David poured it out to the Lord as a sign of sacrifice and thanksgiving. At the same time, through his appreciation of the good work of these three men, he gave thanks to the Lord for saving their lives.

cc'- Here, David refused to drink the water as indicated in verse 18a and verse 18 c. This could be a guilt response, as he realizes the dangerous work that the three men attempted to fetch water from the gate at Bethlehem. David's response could also be seen as an act of satisfaction towards the three men, as their actions made him realised their unwavering loyalty and bravery to serve him with their lives wholeheartedly. Again, such exhibition of courage and allegiance is in line with the differing nuances of *Sa le fo'i*.

x – Central to the narrative is David's pouring of water he demanded to the Lord. Such an act could be seen as an act of sacrifice on the part of David who was longing for a drink. The water David offered to the Lord is priceless and David equate it to the blood of the three brave men. In hind sight, David's action reflects his faithfulness and loyalty to God. Such depiction from my *Sa le fo'i* perspective reveals David's actions to be in line with the various nuances of *Sa le fo'i*. It depicts David as a true *Sa le fo'i* in his relationship and service to God.

### 3.3 Style

There are certain Hebrew words found within the selected passage that have special significance from a *Sa le fo'i* perspective.

Verse 15b makes use of the word “army” (מִקְנֵה) in reference to the Philistines. The term is used here to make reference to the location and activities of the army. This is suggest by its other nuance “army camp”.<sup>2</sup> This means Bethlehem is under siege from the Philistines army and at the same time surrounded the well that David long to drink from it. The term also suggests that the army of the Philistine was also highly organised and properly trained. Thus making it hard for another army to penetrate and defeat it.<sup>3</sup> Viewing this portrait of the Philistine’s army from a *Sa le fo’i* depicts an army that is hard to penetrate and requires a *Sa le fo’i* attitude and mind set to overcome it.

Furthermore, the word “encampment” (מַחֲנֶה) also carries the nuances to “bend” or to “curve.” These two nuances envision a circular set up.<sup>4</sup> It therefore, suggests a strategic layout of the army in positions of defence should they be ambushed by the enemy. This would have meant that David understood this kind of encampment and its layout, which also meant he was well aware of the risks his men were going into. This depiction from a *Sa le fo’i* reveals an army that is very hard to penetrate. Any attempt to infiltrate its lines requires a *Sa le fo’i* or brave mind set.

In verse 16, there are two words that are associated with battle and warfare. The two terms are placed parallel to each other to produce an antithetical parallelism. The first is the word “stronghold” (מְצֻדָּה) used here depict the locality of David’s army while the second word is “garrison” (נִצְיָב) used here to reveal the outlook of the Philistine camp. The first term also carries the connotation “fortress”<sup>5</sup> representing a well-fortified locality that can withstand strong attacks from the enemies. In addition, the Hebrew term can also mean

<sup>2</sup> Achtemeier, Paul J, and Roger S Boraas. *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), 119

<sup>3</sup> Achtemeier, Boraas. *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (1994), 120.

<sup>4</sup> Achtemeier, Boraas, *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (1994) 335.

<sup>5</sup> Merrill F Unger, Howard F. Vos and R. K Harrison, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody, 2006), 1650.

“prey” or “net”<sup>6</sup> thus resembling a place that could be used to capture the enemies. So, the well-fortified location referred to in verse 16 is not only safe for defensive purposes but it can also be a trap to capture the enemy and turn them into prey in offensive manoeuvres. The term “garrison” on the other hand, is also defined as a military post or pillar.<sup>7</sup> It shows the Philistines being posted in the area with the intent of guarding and/or patrolling the area they have occupied. This means that the Philistine is on the alert, guarding their military post at all times.

Viewing these depictions of the Philistine camp and its counterpart David’s army from a *Sa le fo’i* perspective reveals two army camps that are very well fortified and ner impossible to penetrate. So, anyone attempting to penetrate it requires a brave attitude to ensure success.

As for verse 17, it is interesting that David’s words can be translated as, “who will cause to give me water from the well?” this can be looked at as a rhetorical question or statement. This is most certainly a challenge. David is expectant that his demand will be met by someone. David’s desire for water can be looked at as a test of loyalty and bravery, which only those of the highest military prowess might dare to attempt. The testing of the men is a consistent feature of David’s leadership. We saw earlier in verse 6 how David offered the post of chief/commander of his troops to whoever led the charge against the Jobsites. Therefore, the mission that David has assigned to his soldiers is fraught with danger. It is mission impossible. It is only for the mighty, the hard and the strong. In other words, David’s request depicts a *Sa le fo’i* mission, that, only a person with a *Sa le fo’i* attitude and bravery can fulfill it.

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<sup>6</sup> Strong, J. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1890), 983.

<sup>7</sup> Strong, J. *Concordance of the Bible* (1890), 377.

Verse 18 explains the carrying out of that mission by David's three warriors. The "*three broke through the camp of the Philistines.*"<sup>8</sup>

The term broke (בָּרַח) in its original Hebrew meaning is "to cleave, break open or go through."<sup>9</sup> The term, explained the actions of the three warriors. That is, they attacked and break open the Philistine's encampment head on without fear. To have broken through the lines of an army means that the defence of the place has been shattered by the determination of the three warriors.

As for the word "camp" (מַחֲנֶה) it carries the same meaning as "encampment" from before. That is, the camp of the Philistine army. The mission was successful, the three warriors managed to collect the water desired by David. The repetition of the term here can be looked at rhetorically as a reference marker. To remind the audience of an earlier reference to the impenetrable camp of the Philistine. Considering this depiction from a *Sa le fo'i* perspective reveals the work of the three men as comparable to the work of one who possess the attributes of a *Sa le fo'i* warrior. In this sense, David's three men can be called as men of *Sa le fo'i*.

Verse continues with an explanation of David's actions;...[*But*] *David would not drink of it; he poured it out to the Lord.*"<sup>10</sup> This phrase can be looked at as a synonymous parallelism. The first line *David would not drink of it* is repeated in the second half of the phrase; *he poured it out to the Lord*. The repletion reiterated David's refusal to drink the water. From the perspective of the three warriors, it may have been a waste of time and effort having gone to get the water only for David to pour it all out. But David here is showing true characters of a leader by honouring the bravery of his men. A consideration

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<sup>8</sup> NRSV.

<sup>9</sup> Strong, J. *Concordance of the Bible* (1890), 152-153.

<sup>10</sup> NRSV.

of this interpretation from a *Sa le fo'i* perspective David's consideration of his men as those with true *Sa le fo'i* characteristics of bravery, loyalty and servitude. In addition, David here is showing traits of *Sa le fo'i* in his sacrifice and relationship with God. Offering to God what is precious and priceless.

The reference to "blood" (דָּמָא) in verse 19 refers to the blood of the slain, or blood affected by an activity which as a result of battle or violence.<sup>11</sup> Rhetorically the term blood is used as a metaphor here to explain the sacrificial nature of what the men did for their leader. They showed loyalty by willingly carrying out the task knowing that it was a high-risk and could possibly lose their lives in the process.<sup>12</sup> Another view would argue that the blood refers to the slain Philistines that the three men killed to fetch water to fulfil David's thirst.<sup>13</sup> This reading involves the consideration of the narrative gap in the story. That is, there is no mention of any confrontation between the three men and the Philistine soldiers who surrounded Bethlehem and the well. In either way, blood was spilt to quench David's thirst thus making water from the well "blood water" that is priceless and fitting for a sacrifice. Such a sacrifice from a *Sa le fo'i* standpoint is reminiscence of a *Sa le fo'i tautua* in terms of giving all for the family and community.

### 3.4 Summary

My exegetical analysis of 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19 through the use of Rhetorical Criticism (arrangement and style) reveals what the three mighty men did in their service to David is in line with the connotations of my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical lens. That is, the three men exhibit traits of *Sa le fo'i* as bravery, loyalty and servitude. Therefore, it is fair to say that the three mighty men in the story deserve to be titled as men of *Sa le fo'i*. In addition,

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<sup>11</sup> Strong, J. *Concordance of the Bible*; (1890), 135-136.

<sup>12</sup> Unger, Vos and Harrison, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (2006), 248-250.

<sup>13</sup> Klein, *1 Chronicles* (2006), 334-335.

David also shows characteristics of *Sa le fo'i* in his relationship with God. Especially, if we consider his sacrifice of the priceless blood water the men fetched to satisfy his thirst. In this sense, we can also honour David as *Sa le fo'i* in his service to God.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusion

My main reason and purpose for this study is to give attention to the characters in 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19 namely David and his three mighty men. In such quest I developed a reading mechanism where I merged my *Sa le fo'i* perspective with features of Rhetorical Criticism (arrangement and style).<sup>1</sup> Bringing my life situation and Samoan context into engagement with the text is for the hope of developing alternative meanings of the text that can be understood and relevant to my Samoan audience.

My engagement with 1 Chronicles 11: 15 -19 through the use of the developed reading approach reveal the deeds of David's three warriors to be in line with the characteristics of *Sa le fo'i*. therefore, David's three men can be identified of titled as men of *Sa le fo'i*. In addition, David's actions were also under scrutiny through my *Sa le fo'i* and I found out that David's actions also reveal a *Sa le fo'i* leader who honour and value the bravery and loyalty of his men. Not only that but his service and sacrifice to his God can be seen as a *Sa le fo'i* act. In these senses, David therefore, can also be seen and identified as one who belongs to the *Sa le fo'i* faction. In light of the brief literature review given in the introductory chapter, it seems that my reading of 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19 is sided with scholars who praise the actions of the three men as acts of bravery, loyalty and servitude.

It is therefore my hope that my reading of 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19 and the lessons it yields will inspire others in their personal lives and also their faith in the Lord. In the hope that, my interpretation of 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19 will give others a sense of

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<sup>1</sup> See: Chapter Two where I developed my reading strategy.



motivation, perseverance, persistence, and determination, to strive for the best, and never give up in the pursuance of our dreams.

Reading 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19 through the lenses of my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutic has demonstrated that a Samoan reading of biblical texts generates alternative meanings. Not only that, but it also attests to the viability of my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutic for the reading of biblical texts. The work however is not an end in itself. There are still avenues that need to be explored given the numerous subjects and contexts to which a *Sa le fo'i hermeneutic* can be applied. The *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical approach can therefore be used to assess and view any biblical character. In this light, *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical approach can be considered an interpretive hermeneutic to compliment other approaches such as feminism, sociological, political and cultural approaches to biblical texts. This wide range of uses suggests the potential of *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical approach to read a wide range of biblical texts for future projects. It is only through continual testing that my *Sa le fo'i hermeneutic* will be fully developed and make a significant contribution to Samoan biblical studies.

Proving the viability of my *sa le fo'i* hermeneutical approach and the Christian lessons unravelled from my study of the characters in 1 Chronicles 11: 15-19 testify to the usefulness of the *Sa le fo'i* approach to the mission of the Congregational Christian Church especially minister working in parishes. My *Sa le fo'i* reading approach offers minister another alternative approach to reading biblical texts especially when focussing on biblical characters. Using an alternative approach means the creation of alternative meanings that could assist in sermon and lesson preparations. In addition, the viability of my *Sa le fo'i* hermeneutical perspective to reading biblical texts highlights the compatibility of our local approaches for the study of biblical texts. This exercise should encourage ministers to look for alternative approaches from our local contexts to

be used as reading mechanism to interpreting texts. Using context specific approaches could make biblical messages more relevant and applicable for our local audiences because using our local hermeneutical approaches could translate biblical messages in our languages and thought forms.

## Glossary

<i>Faamaoni</i>	loyal
<i>Gafataulima</i>	accomplish, fulfil, capable
<i>Nu'unefu</i>	island commemorating Tuia'ana's surrender
<i>Sa le fo'i'</i>	no return
<i>Sā le sami,</i>	the sea and the land is sacred
<i>Sā le vao</i>	the land is sacred
<i>Tala-mamanu</i>	Samoan version of narrative-grammatical criticism
<i>Tautua faamaoni</i>	loyal service
<i>Tautua toto</i>	service that exceeds expectation
<i>Tautua</i>	serve, service
<i>Toto</i>	blood
<i>Ua sa le popo</i>	the collection of coconut is prohibited
<i>Ua toe fo'i i fanua le malaga,</i>	the journey has return to shore
<i>Ua tagi le fatu ma le eleele,</i>	the heart/ rock and blood/ earth weeps

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