

**Kingship Transition in Chronicles: An analogy of the Samoan
Public Ritual of *Ui le Ula***

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a rhetorical reading of 1 Chronicles chapters 28 – 29 with the aim to find possible analogies between kingship transition in Chronicles and the *Ui le Ula* ritual within the Samoan context. It will demonstrate how the rhetorics of the Books of Chronicles advocate David as the ideal king in contrast to king David described in the Samuel – Kings. This thesis will also be looking at one of Chronicles major themes which is “finding the new identity in the postexilic period”. By finding this new identity, an investigation whether Chronicles unique account of transition of kingship from David to Solomon is in line with the meaning of *ui le ula* from a Samoan perspective.

DEDICATION

In memory of the mothers in my life, late dearest grandmother Maria Soliola Elise Iosia and late mother Moli Soliola Lokeni Iosia.

Alofa'aga e le mavae mo oulua.

Also to my wife Lea Violet Soliola, my proof reader, coffee mixer and the mother of our son Lokeni Soliola, my inspiration and motivation when I am down or when his mother upsets me.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to investigate possible analogies between the transition of David's kingship to Solomon (1 Chron 28-29) and the Samoan ritual of *ui le ula*. My understanding and implication of *ui le ula* derives mainly from the background of how a *matai* title is transferred from one *matai* to another in the Samoan context. The connection between the biblical transition of kingship and my Samoan understanding of *ui le ula* is crucial in this study and is also a personal interest of mine.¹

The Samoan phrase *ui le ula* is obviously made up of three words: the verb *ui*² meaning, "change from" (*ui mai le isi i le isi* or "change from one to another") or simply "transfer to"; the preposition *le* ("of"); and the noun *ula* ("*lei*" or "necklace" or "garland of flowers") which is the most important word in this study. *Ula* is a Samoan necklace made up of leaves and flowers which brings out the beauty of our natural environment.³ It is one of the traditional Samoan accessories worn by dancers in traditional performances which represent Samoan culture and tradition. The *ula* accessory also represents various traditional customs such as welcoming or farewelling guests. From a Samoan understanding, the *ula* makes anyone feel welcome, special and make you intact in any local context.

The word *ula* in this sense can be closely related to Samoan sayings such as *ua ula le asō* ("a perfect day"); "*ua lau i ula ae pou i toa le asō* ("a day splattered with beauty and strength"). There are different *ulas* with different uses and purposes in the

¹ The elaboration of the possible analogies between the biblical kingship transition and the Samoan cultural understanding of *ui le ula* will be fully treated down below in chapter 4.

² The word *ui* has more than one meaning: first it means "about to end/finish" (or too late to be fixed/cured) as used in some Samoan general sayings such as "*ua ui le ma'i*" which carries a negative connotation of hopelessness for a sick person for survival; the second meaning points to a pathway or an action of walking along (e.g., *ua ui ane*).

³ Another literal Samoan word for "ula" is "faasolo" - often seen during times of entertainment or *fiafia* in the Samoan context.

Samoan context.⁴ For the purposes of this paper, *ula* is symbolic of the authority, power and identity that are being transferred from one person to another.

The combination of these three words *ui le ula* then simply refers to the transference of authority, power and identity from one person in a position of authority to another. It is a ritual performed in public, witnessed and supported by members of a family or a community involved. From a Christian Samoan perspective, the ritual of *ui le ula* not only symbolises the transition of leadership from one leader to another, but it also signifies a divinely approved appointment of the next person to take over.

Thesis Statement

The primary focus of this thesis therefore is to examine the rhetoric used by Chronicles to portray the intense struggle for a new identity during the postexilic period. It is argued that this new identity represents a shift from a “history-defined” identity represented in Samuel-Kings during the monarchical and exilic period, to a reformed cultic identity during the Persian period.⁵ With this shift of identity, I want to investigate whether Chronicles’ unique account of the transition of kingship from David to Solomon is in line with the meaning of *ui le ula* from a Samoan perspective. A theological question is asked whether a similar biblical transition (i.e Chronistic) can be observed in the Samoan situation.

⁴ *Ula laufa 'i-* (made up of banana leaves) usually worn by the Samoan untitled men (or *taulealea*) when they serve in a village.

Ula mosooi- (made up of *mosooi* leaves) often used for dancing and welcoming guests because they smell nice. But in the days of old *these ula mosooi* were also used for *taga palolo* (catching sea worms)

Ula fala- usually worn by those who have special status in the government sphere. But these *ula fala* are often worn by *matai* (orators and chiefs) at village settings.

⁵ Sara Japhet, *1 & 2 Chronicles* (London: SMC Press Ltd, 1993). *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah*, Collected Studies on the Restoration Period (Winona Lake: Eisenbrans, 2006). Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10 - 29*, vol. 12, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (New York: The Anchor Bible, 2004). Louis C. Jonker, *Defining All Israel in Chronicles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016).

Methodology

Many Chronistic scholars generally agree that the books of Chronicles are the product of certain Israelite groups in the Persian province of Yehud, who struggled to find their true identity after the Babylonian exile.⁶ A number of scholars have also argued for the need to examine Davidic kingship in Chronicles as a form of literary rhetoric in order to promote the divine supremacy in the postexilic period.⁷

Based on such scholarship, I want to use the literary rhetorical approach to examine the transition of kingship from David to Solomon in Chronicles. In comparison to Samuel-Kings, my research aims to determine the distinctive ways that Chronicles presents David's kingship. I suggest that employing the rhetorical reading of Chronicles, allows us to explore how Chronicles persuasively declare the supremacy of David's reign. However, a rhetorical reading of the whole book of Chronicles (as most scholars did)⁸ is beyond the scope of this paper. Thus I will particularly examine how the Chronistic Davidic kingship functions rhetorically in 1 Chronicles 10-29.

My interest lies in rhetoric as a persuasive literary strategy and not just a form of literary design.⁹ George Kennedy describes such rhetorical approach as a criticism that "takes the text as we have it, whether the work of a single author or the product of editing, and looks at it from the point of view of the author's or editor's intent, the unified results, and how it would be perceived by an audience of near

⁶ Japhet, *1 & 2 Chronicles*. Louis Jonker, "The Case of Jehoram's History in Community Identity in Judean Historiography" in *Textual Identities in the Books of Chronicles*, ed. Gary N. Knopper and Kenneth A. Ristau (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), pp. 197-217. M. S. Smith, *The Polemic of Biblical Monotheism: Outside Context and Insider Referentiality*, Religious Polemics in Context (2004), pp.201-34. R. A. Engnell, *Otherness and the Rhetorical Exigencies of Theistic Religion* (1993), pp. 82-98.

⁷ Rodney K. Duke, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990). Phyllis Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah*, ed. Gene M. Tucker, Old Testament Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1994), pp.25-54.

⁸ Duke, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler*, p. 149.

⁹ In relation to this point, Duke employs categories drawn from Aristotelian rhetoric to examine the book of Chronicles. see also Patricia K. Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," in *To Each Its Own Meaning*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Havnes (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), pp.156-80.

contemporaries.”¹⁰ Kennedy’s elaboration of rhetorical criticism leads me to concentrate on form, language and content as well as persuasive strategies, and design (e.g., literary framing, word structure) and how such literary design may assist me in finding a rhetorical strategy within Chronicles.

Rodney Duke states, “historical narratives are representational depictions of the world composed for the purpose of conveying ‘meaning’ to one’s audience. The historian wishes to persuade the audience to accept his/her story as true – that means to accept it with its inherent presuppositions, world-view and ideology.”¹¹ Duke’s argument is evident of the language of Chronicles during the transition of kingship from Saul to David in 1 Chron 10. This chapter (1 Chron 10) obviously marks not only the transition from Saul to David but it also provides entry into the narratives, from genealogical chapters (1 Chron 1-9). In comparison, the detailed information about the end of Saul’s reign described in Samuel-Kings, is ignored by the Chronicler.¹²

With this literary evidence, we can say that although Chronicles cites and reuses earlier texts that were likely becoming authoritative in the Chronicler’s day as mentioned by Ben Zvi, the beginning point in Chronicles (from chapter 10) is only to give a favourable version of the kingship transition from David to Saul.¹³ That is, the first narrative in Chronicles disposes of Saul by telling of the suicide (1 Chron 10:-7). With this first narrative, Brueggemann argues that the narrative concerning Saul is crafted so that David is not mentioned and therefore could not be blamed for Saul’s removal from the throne.¹⁴

¹⁰ As cited by Patricia Tull “Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality,” p.161.

¹¹ Duke, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler*, p. 33.

¹² Here I refer to the “Chronicler” as the writer(s) of the books of Chronicles (whether Chronicler refers to a sole writer, or many writers or even an institution or a school of authors)

¹³ Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana V. Edelman, *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

¹⁴ Walter Brueggemann, *David's Truth in Israel's Imagination & Memory* (USA: Fortress Press, 1985), pp.100-01.

In addition to Brueggemann's point, I also propose that Chronicles does not merely attempt to persuade its audience that the Davidic kingship is important. Rather, the Davidic kingship is the primary image of Yhwh's ideal kingship in the context of Chronicles. Such ideal kingship could have sustained and protected the nation into the future. Rhetorically, the Chronicler does not engage in a direct appeal but "reconfigures" (to use Ben Zvi's terminology) the past where king David is accepted. In this sense, Chronicles' (re)configuration of divine and Davidic reality is persuasive in orientation.

Limitations

The decision to limit my analysis on the transition of kingship from David to Solomon in Chronicles, is part of an effort to stay within the scope and the word count of this thesis.

As mentioned earlier, Chronicles has a unique theological configuration of the transition of kingship from David to Solomon, compared to its older version in Samuel-Kings. For this reason, I will therefore examine and compare passages from Chronicles and Samuel-Kings, especially passages where this transition becomes closely identified with the expression of Yhwh's supremacy. I claim that the Davidic kingship represents the divine kingship on earth and that needs to be passed on to the next reign. Despite the fact that I will regularly compare texts in Chronicles with Samuel-Kings, I will not treat the Davidic transition in Samuel-Kings as such.

Shape of my Study

My paper proceeds as follows:

Chapter 1 presents a broad investigation of David's kingship throughout Chronicles in comparison to Samuel-Kings. Chapter 2 focuses specifically on the exegetical work on

1 Chron 28-29 where the actual transition of kingship is re-told. Chapter 3 focus on the Samoan understanding of *ui le ula*. Chapter 4 synthesizes the findings of this research.

In summary, I want to explore the dynamics of the Davidic kingship in order to find a parallel between the biblical leadership transfer and the ritual of *ui le ula* in the Samoan context. To do that, I will firstly show how the rhetorics of the Books of Chronicles advocate David as the ideal king in contrast to king David described in the Deuteronomistic History (Samuel-Kings). I will then end by examining whether Chronicle's public presentation of kingship transition from David to his son Solomon could be better understood from my own understanding of *ui le ula*, within the contemporary Samoan context.

CHAPTER 1: DAVID KINGSHIP AND DIVINE SUPREMACY IN THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

1.1 Introduction

The study of David's kingship as well as its positive imagination in Chronicles is not new at all especially in the Chronistic Scholarship.¹⁵ My main concern in this opening chapter is to test my hypothesis; that Chronicles offers some of the most striking claims in the Old Testament regarding the exalted status of the Davidic kingship, which are very different from what is reflected in Samuel-Kings (considering Samuel-Kings as Chronicles' major source). Moreover, I want to search the overall view of David's rule from the Chronicler's perspective and its possible link to divine kingship. Why is David's kingship so prominent and favourable in Chronicles? And if this is true, why did the Chronicler retell such an exalted kingship in a context where Israelites' kingship no longer exists? To answer these questions, this chapter focuses on the study of some terminological patterns and the choice of words in Chronicles compared to Samuel-Kings.

1.2 Davidic Kingship is "equated with the Kingdom of God."

My starting point is that only in Chronicles from the whole of the Old Testament do we find David and Solomon on the divine throne, and ruled directly over Yhwh's kingdom. I suggest that this is a crucial part of Chronicles' new creation out of its Deuteronomistic sources (Samuel-Kings). The following text comparisons exhibit such human king's exalted status:

¹⁵ Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2009), pp.395-411.

“Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me (Yhwh); your throne will be established forever” (2 Sam 7:16)

“So Solomon sat **on the throne of David** his father. Thus his rule was firmly established” (1 Kgs 2:12)

“Blessed be Yhwh your God, who showed you favour by placing you **upon the throne of Israel**” (1 Kgs 10:9a)

I will station him (Solomon) in **my house and my kingdom** forever; his throne will be established forever” (1 Chron 17:14).

“So Solomon sat **on the throne of Yhwh** as king in place of David his father. He had success and all Israel obeyed him” (1 Chron 29:23).

“Blessed be Yhwh your God, who showed you favour by placing you **upon his throne as king for Yhwh your God.**” (2 Chron 9:8a).

From these brief comparisons, Chronicles never refers to the “throne of David” but instead speaks of the “throne of Yhwh” or the “throne of kingdom of Yhwh over Israel” (1 Chron 28:5), or the “throne of Israel” (2 Chron 6:10, 16) or simply the “royal throne in Israel” (1 Chron 22:10; 2 Chron 7:18). So Klein rightly states: “Kingship is equated with the Kingdom of God...and is inalienably linked to the Davidic dynasty (1 Chron 17:13).”¹⁶ By all means, Davidic kingship in Chronicles presents an earthly manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth. Here I want to explore such unique configuration of Davidic and divine kingship recorded throughout Chronicles.

To do that, this chapter proceeds to discuss four crucial sections about David’s unique profile in Chronicles: David’s devotion to the cult and Supreme King; David as a nationally unifying figure; David as a Reformer; and David as an exemplary donor.

¹⁶ Ralph W. Klein, “Chronicles, Book of 1-2,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 992-1002.

1.3 David's Devotion to the Cult and Supreme King

In chapters alluded to David in Chronicles (1 Chron 10-29), two primary objects of David's political power that are obviously described are the ark (1 Chron 13-16) and the temple (1 Chron 17-29). Just before those chapters, David is also described as a military leader who gathers an army "like an army of God" [כַּמְחַנְהָ אֱלֹהִים] (1 Chron 12:23).¹⁷

These two objects of David's political power is clearly portrayed in the following structure in Chronicles:

1 Chron 13-16	David seeks the welfare of the ark
13	ark in transit
14	military exploits
15-16	ark in Jerusalem
1 Chron 17-29	David prepares for the temple
17	Davidic covenant
18-20	military exploits
21	choosing the temple site
22-29	preparations for the temple and temple builder

From this structure, it also depicts two major periods of cultic preparation in David's life. That is, the period when David seeks to bring the ark; and the period when David plans for the temple. Each of these periods includes "military exploits" where David is involved. However, all of these events seem to be described in relation to the theme of exalting Yhwh's kingship. David's presentation behind these cultic events (bringing of the ark and the preparation for the temple) illustrates David to be a very cultic and

¹⁷ Note that the phrase כַּמְחַנְהָ אֱלֹהִים does not appear in the Chronicler's *Vorlage*, and could be understood as Yhwh's army that David leads (e.g., as a "divine army" or simply a "mighty army" (as Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10-29*, 566, who interprets אֱלֹהִים as a superlative).

devoted king. His supremacy is due to the fact that David seeks to direct the whole nation to worship the divine king.¹⁸ This description of David is closely related to the next point where David is viewed as a king of national unity.

1.4 David as a Nationally Unifying Figure

Although it is claimed elsewhere that the Chronicler whitewashes David, this is only partly true. It is clearly recorded in 1 Chron 21:8 that David “sinned greatly,” and that he was unfit as temple-builder (1 Chron 22:8; 28:3). However according to Jacob Wright’s argument, it seems that Chronicles omits all hints of disunity from David’s character but claiming him as a “catalyst of national unity.”¹⁹ In supporting Wright’s argument, it is quite evident in 1 Chron 11-12 that “all Israel” unites to make David king (1 Chron 11:1-3, 4, 10; 12:38-40) and join his army (e.g., 2 Chron 11:1, 4, 10; also see 2 Sam 6:6-10). Even in 1 Chron 13-16, David gathers all Israel to transfer the ark.

I want to argue that as these texts portray “all Israel” and the many people on David’s side, it is certainly pointed also to the broadest land for the people of Israel to own, at the same time. Sara Japhet confirms this by stating that “The Chronicler takes this very picture, the broadest boundaries of the land, to depict the territory in which people of Israel are actually settled; not at the end of David’s rule and after all his military campaigns, but at the very beginning of his reign.”²⁰ So David is described in Chronicles not only as a king of national unity but also a king who acquires bigger land for Israel to settle.

¹⁸ Jacob Wright, *War*, 2, 29-44 as cited by Matthew Lynch, *Monotheism and Institutions in the Book of Chronicles* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), p. 213. In Lynch’s book, Wright was focusing on the description of David in 1 Chron 11-12. With these chapters, the idea of “all Israel” supporting David’s reign is also detailed by Jonker, *Defining All Israel in Chronicles*, pp. 157-60.

¹⁹ Jacob Wright, *War*, 2, 29-44. Focusing on the description of David in 1 Chron 11-12, Wright argues that the verb *קָבַץ* (“to gather”) in 1 Chron 11:1 connotes and evokes the ingathering of Israel after the exile.

²⁰ Japhet, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, p.278.

1.5 David as a reformer

Unlike 2 Samuel, Chronicles' record of David and his attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem via Obed-Edom's household (1 Chr 13-14) depicts David as a cultic reformer. What is interesting in that case is how the Chronicler rearranges materials from 2 Samuel 5-6 about David's international success and his victories over the Philistines. For instance, in Samuel's account, the Philistines "abandoned their idols (עַצְבֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים)" at Baal-perazim and David "carried them away" (2 Sam 5:21). However, according to Chronicles (1 Chron 14:12), David and his men burn the Philistine "gods" (אֱלֹהֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים).²¹ The change from עַצְבֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים ("their idols") to אֱלֹהֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים ("their gods") again link David's victory to Yhwh's victory over "the gods." Therefore, in that case, it is fair to say that David in Chronicles is a loyal king who destroys foreign gods and still seeks the ark.

Moreover, in Samuel's account, David's victory over the Philistines (2 Sam 5:11-26) occurs before David's attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6). In Chronicles however, the stories about David's defeat and destruction of the Philistine gods appear within the ark narrative (1 Chron 13-16). That means the stories about David's victory over the Philistine occur within the story of the ark's ascent to Jerusalem in Chronicles. With this adjustment of Samuel's materials, the Chronicler seems to connect this action of David's loyalty to Yhwh's throne. Another Chronicler's revision of Samuel's account is when the men carry off the idols/gods as described above. The difference created by the Chronicler here reveals that David becomes the reformer who destroys foreign cults and restores Yhwh's cult and temple.

²¹ David's action in Chronicles reflects the Deuteronomic law to burn foreign gods and cult objects (e.g., Deut 7:5, 25; 12:3).

1.6 David as a model donor

Another unique profile of David kingship in Chronicles is his action of giving. The Chronicler in many occasions describes David's emphasis on giving from his own wealth as an example for Israel's leaders. I will take an example found in the last chapter of Chronicles about David.

1 Chron 29 contains David's royal speech (vv. 1-5) preceding his farewell prayer (vv. 10-19).²² Here records David acknowledging his donations to the temple publicly (vv.2-4). In v.5, David asks "Who then will offer willingly, consecrating themselves today to the Lord?" (וּמִי מֵתְנַדֵּב לְמַלְאוֹת יָדָיו הַיּוֹם לַיהוָה). To my view, this is a rhetorical question found only in Chronicles. The Hebrew phrase (לְמַלְאוֹת יָדָיו) translated by the NRSV as "consecrating themselves," should be literally translated as "fill his hand."²³ From accordance search, the use of the noun יָדָיו (lit. "his hand") in this similar context often appears in Priestly texts throughout the Old Testament, when priests serve Yhwh.²⁴ Judging from this linguistic study of the word יָדָיו, we can argue that the people under David's leadership are willing to donate and participate in priest-like service to God.

In response to David's speech, the people and the leaders of Israel "made their freewill offerings" (vv. 6-9). The rest of David's speech in chapter 29 (vv.10-19) is about David's farewell prayer. However a conviction enacted in David's case by giving huge personal wealth, reveals not only as an example set for the following leaders but such action also expresses his legacy in giving to God through the cult.

²² For detailed discussion of David's speech, see especially Mark A. Throntveit, *When Kings Speak: Royal Speech and Royal Prayer in Chronicles*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 93 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987).

²³ My own translation of the actual nuance of the Hebrew phrase לְמַלְאוֹת יָדָיו is "to consecrate (himself)" due to its *piel* infinitive form of the word לְמַלְאוֹת followed by the singular noun יָדָיו.

²⁴ For instance, see Exod 28:41; 29:9, 35; Lev 8:33; 16:32; Num 3:3; etc.

Arguably, the Chronicler portrays David as a model devotion to the divine king. He is the patron of the cult and a figure devoted wholeheartedly to the ark and the temple. Despite David's failure to build the temple, the Chronicler's perspective appears to stress the fact that David is the true builder of the temple. This is due to the fact David appoints every officials and organizes everything before giving it to Solomon. I will come to this point later down below.

In summary, the Chronicler's portrait of David emphasizes his devotion to the divine king as well as his extraordinary exaltation as king. As mentioned above, the Chronistic David is the patron of the cult and a devoted figure for the two projects: ark and temple. The Chronistic David is the leader around whom all Israel join in battle, worship, and gift-giving. He is such an exalted king who sits on Yhwh's own throne, and the one to whom the people direct their worship of Yhwh.

Now I will turn to study the relevance of the transition of kingship from David to Solomon in the language of 1 Chron 28-29.

CHAPTER 2: EXEGETICAL WORK ON 1 CHRONICLES 28-29

2.1 Introduction

These two chapters of Chronicles (1 Chron 28-29) are parts of the Chronicler's creation or the so-called *Sondergut*.²⁵ For this fact, my exegetical work on kingship transition is merely based on the Chronicler's perspective. Within this Chronistic account, it seems that after the major part that deals with David's preparations for handing over power to his son and for building the temple, the Chronicler then returns to the narrative line interrupted at the end of 1 Chron 22. There we read David's speech to Solomon and some officials. In this speech, Solomon is explicitly referred to as "a man of peace and rest" (1 Chron 22:9). His name is being etymologically related to the Hebrew word for "peace," which reflects a kind of kingdom needed in the context of Chronicles. Without going into detail of the transition recorded in these chapters of Chronicles, this chapter will provide a summary of my observations made in this regard.

2.2 Chronistic Transition – A Public Occasion

Reading 1 Chron 28-29 together with 1 Chron 22, we can say that whereas the previous reported speech of David to his son Solomon in 1 Chron 22 seemed to be a private affair, the introduction to the present section (28:1) indicates that David now makes the transfer to his son a public religious occasion. This remark can be elaborated from the different verb used in 1 Chron 28:1 compared to 1 Chron 23:2. Sara Japhet in particular has referred to the important role that the verb קָהַל ("to assemble") plays in this last occasion of David's reign.²⁶

²⁵ See Samasoni Moleli, "Jabez in Context: A Multidimensional Approach to Identity and Landholdings in Chronicles" (University of Divinity, 2018), chapter 3.

²⁶ Japhet, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, p. 491.

In my own research, the verb קהל occurs three times in the narrative of David, namely 1 Chron 13:5 and 1 Chron 15:3 (where David assembled the group of people for bringing of the ark of the Lord); and in 1 Chron 28:1 (where David assembled officials of Israel and tribes as well as commanders as witnesses to such occasion). The implication of קהל in these three occurrences is enclosed with the *Hiphil* form of the verb (יקהיל). This use of the same verb accentuates not merely the good intention of David but also the obedience of the people to the command of the king.

Although David also assembled all the leaders for the division into different service groups in 1 Chron 23:2, the verb קהל (“to assemble”) is used in 1 Chron 28:1 instead of אסף (“assembled”) as in 1 Chron 23:2). For some scholars, the verb קהל is normally used in contexts of religious-cultic gatherings.²⁷ This can be an indication that this public occasion is of special significance. In this way, the doubtful circumstances of the transfer as reflected in 1 Kings 1 are avoided in Chronicles.

2.3 Chronistic Transition: A Detour to Solomon’s reign

As mentioned earlier, the whole speech of David in 1 Chron 28:2-10 is very similar to his speech to Solomon in 1 Chron 22: 7-16. However in 1 Chron 28 David addresses the assembly as “my brothers and my people” (v.2). Such words indicate that it was David’s intention “to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, for the footstool of our God.” Here the ark is now also called “the footstool of our God.”

The reason for David’s disqualification from building the temple in 1 Chron 28:3 is repeated in 1 Chron 22:8. However the reason behind David’s failure to build the temple in chapter 28 is worth noting. The first part of 1 Chron 28:3 records the words

²⁷ Ibid., p. 491; also see Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10 - 29*, 12.

מלחמות איש (“a man of war” or “warrior”) followed by ודמים שפכת (“shed blood”). From this word order, it seems (as I argue) that the Chronicler emphasizes this not so much as a blemish on David’s character, but to prepare the way for Solomon’s reign, which will be the period of peace and rest. This is elaborated in 1 Chron 28:4-5 where the Chronicler clearly stresses David’s divine election when God has chosen David “from all my ancestral house to be king over Israel forever” (מכל בית־אבי להיות למלך על־ישראל לעולם). Here, David’s kingship is reported as not only supported by many (מכל בית־אבי) but also his reign is forever (לעולם).

As we read on, this divine election of David has been transmitted to his son Solomon whom God has chosen to “sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel” (v.5). Now that kingdom is being designated as “the kingdom of the Lord of Israel.” This designation reflects the Chronicler’s view that the actual king of Israel is Yhwh. Sociologically, I suggest that this view is fitting in the context of Chronicles where Israel has no king. Without a king in the period of Persian imperial rule, perhaps the Chronicler wants his community to keep confessing that the kingdom belongs to Yhwh who is their actual king. As readers, this aspect reminds us that both David and Solomon’s kingships are earthly custodians of Yhwh’s kingship.

The rest of David’s speech turns into his words of exhortation to all the leaders and officials, followed by his words of encouragement to Solomon (vv.6-11). The two Hebrew verbs וְעַבְדֵהוּ (“serve”) and רְאֵה (“take heed”) both in their imperative form are significant in David’s speech. What is required of Solomon is wholehearted devotion and a willing mind. Therefore if you serve and take heed of Yhwh’s word the Lord will assist him in every situation. With these words, David reminds Solomon once

again that if Solomon serves and follows Yhwh's commandments, then "you may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever" (v.8). David concludes his speech to Solomon with good words of encouragement: "be strong and act" or simply "be strong and do the work" (וַעֲשֵׂה).

After all, a clear line from David to Solomon starts with David's desire to bring the ark to Jerusalem. When David realises that Yhwh confirms the eternal promise to David's house, David realises that Yhwh wants his son to build the temple. The story of David therefore ends on a high note of expectation. Everything is now ready for the temple ("the house of rest") to be built under Solomon ("the man of rest/peace"). This description of Solomon as "the man of rest" is truly reflected in chapters about Solomon (2 Chron 1-9). These chapters report neither battles nor the strife during the transition of kingship/leadership from David to Solomon (contrast 1 Kgs 1-2).²⁸

2.4 A Transition to Solomon

From many Chronicistic scholars, Thompson and Williamson have argued that the Chronicler's account of the transition from David to Solomon has been modelled on the transition from Moses to Joshua (Deut 31; Josh 1).²⁹ Thompson clearly states:

The Chronicler presents not one but two great kings as the ideal for Israel. The one was David, the warrior-king who subdued the enemies of the people of God and established a secure domain. He was now passing, and the other, Solomon, was taking his place.³⁰

From my view, Thompson's quotation above also describes Solomon as a second David. However, I believe that whatever these theories play in the interpretation of

²⁸ Note that 1 Kings 1-2 reports David's fourth son named Adonijah who decides to selfishly seek the throne as the next king after David, instead of Solomon. This part of the transition narrative is missing in Chronicles.

²⁹ J.A. Thompson, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Chronicles*, vol. 9 (USA: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), p.192.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.198.

kingship transition, the language of Chronicles reveals its unique view of this transition compared to its source texts.

For instance, during the transition to Solomon, the source text records that Solomon rises to the throne after a bloody coup (1 Kgs 1-2). In Chronicles however, it reports a smooth transfer of leadership from David to Solomon. I find this literary proof interesting. Like David, the common phrase in describing Solomon's rise to the throne in Chronicles is "all Israel" (כל-ישראל).³¹ For instance, "all Israel" celebrates the rise of Solomon as king, "all Israel obeyed him" and "all the officers, mighty warriors, and even all the sons of King David, gave their support to King Solomon (1 Chron 29:22-24). All these people anointed Solomon as king and "as the Lord's *prince*" (1 Chron 29:22b).³²

Throughout Chronicles, the Chronicler stresses that Solomon's chosenness [בחר] was related directly to the construction of the temple. Chronicles states three times that Yhwh chose [בחר] Solomon for the task of temple-building (1 Chron 28:6, 10; 29:1; not in its *Vorlage*), and Hiram praises Yhwh for giving Solomon wisdom for building the temple (2 Chron 2:11/12).

This word study becomes more interesting because no other text in the whole of the Old Testament asserts the divine chosenness of any king but David. Thus for Chronicles, Solomon's election was important, not merely because his confidence was disputed in its source text (1 Kgs 1-2) but his election entailed a vital task; i.e, building the temple. Braun affirms this point that the temple was the primary reason that Yhwh elected David and Solomon as kings over Israel.³³

³¹ Jonker, *Defining All Israel in Chronicles*, p.120.

³² Note that the word prince (נָגִיד) is also translated as "ruler" throughout the Old Testament.

³³ Roddy L. Braun, *Solomon, the Chosen Temple Builder: The Significance of 1 Chronicles 22, 28, and 29 for the Theology of Chronicles*. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95/4 (1976), pp.581-90, esp p.89.

Based on Braun's affirmation, perhaps the reigns of David and Solomon are rooted in the temple. This temple appears to be the visible manifestation of divine rule on earth.³⁴ Interestingly, the Chronicler retells this idea behind the transition of kingship, in his context where neither Israel's kingship nor temple is existed.³⁵ The temple becomes the new identity of the postexilic community. But this temple in Chronicles' context is viewed differently from the temple in Samuel-Kings during the monarchical period. This temple is actually bigger where all Israel including aliens and foreigners are welcomed.

2.5 Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, David and Solomon's kingships in Chronicles portray the kingdom of God on earth hence, a God given transition of kingship. It also has demonstrated that both kings are strongly supported by the whole nation using the common phrase "all Israel" in Chronicles. The Chronistic transition of kingship from David to Solomon is a smooth process compared to Samuel-Kings. The Chronistic transition of kingship is a public religious occasion. These points are crucial in my study as I now turn to seek the understanding of the Samoan ritual process of *ui le ula* within the Samoan context.

³⁴ On the relationship between divine rule and the temple, see Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10 - 29*, 12, pp. 629-33.

³⁵ Here I argue that the temple is yet to be completed during the final composition of the books of Chronicles in the early Persian period. However, this argument remains debatable amongst the Chronistic scholars.

CHAPTER 3: THE SAMOAN UNDERSTANDING OF *Ui le Ula*

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will mainly focus on the significance of the *ui le ula* ritual in the Samoa matai system.³⁶ My starting point is to expound the roles of *matai* and the sacred value behind its origins in Samoa, before an investigation on the significance of *ui le ula*, not only within the *matai* system but within the Samoan culture as a whole. Given the current changes that Samoa has come through and adjusted to regarding its *matai* system, most of the data information collected for this research was completed through face-to-face interviews as well as interviews via email. The information derived mainly from prominent and high-ranking chiefs who willingly replicated the originality of the *ui le ula* process in accordance with what they had actually learnt and witnessed within their own traditional village settings.

3.2 Roles of Matai

According to Soliola Lokeni Iosia, there are four categories of a *matai*'s crucial leadership roles.³⁷

First is the *aiga* (family). Iosia strongly pointed out that the *matai* must prioritise and be accountable to the development of his *aiga* in all aspects. He must maintain the family peace and sustain the family identity. The *matai* leads the family to church and conducts the usual evening prayers. The *matai* must assure that the family has enough to eat by planting and farming crops, raise cattle, pigs, and poultry and save surplus for the rainy days. He emphasizes the present era; *matai* must encourage the young

³⁶ There has also been a previous thesis written on *ui le ula*, by former student and current teacher of Malua Theological College Bible School, Rev Apela Ah Him, focusing on Theology. However, this thesis emphasises on the Chronistic perspective on Kingship Transition from 1 Chronicles 28 & 29.

³⁷ Soliola Lokeni Iosia is a *matai tulafale* for more than 40 years and serves as a *aoao fesoasoani* (lay preacher) at EFKS Lepa.

generation to be well educated formally and informally to support their educational requirements, be the first to look out for what is best for the children's future and the family too. The *matai* must also oversee that households live in adequate houses and are allocated sufficient lands to live and work on, attends to village council and protects the family assets in terms of lands and titles. He/She must value the family traditional identities and ensure the families learn, understand and value them too.³⁸

Second is the *aiga potopoto* (extended family). The extended family is similar to the one family, only that the extended family has several *matai* and is led by the highest leader namely the *sa'o* of the extended family. The extended family *matai* normally gather where the *sa'o* resides for their decision making. The *sa'o* holds the supreme power over the extended family.³⁹

Third is the *nu'u* (village). This is recognised as the Village council (Fono a le Nu'u). All the *matai* and their *sa'o* gather at the usual village meeting place on specific days being decided on such as Aso Gafua (every Monday). The purpose of this gathering/council is to deliberate on matters or issues arising, disciplinary matters, the village developments such as building a new church building or school building, etc. It is also addressing and strengthening the village rules and regulations. The Council encourages agricultural developments to ensure the villagers are provided with sufficient food, and have enough to sustain their health securities.⁴⁰

Lastly, is the *Malo* (Government). All the *matai* in the village are asked to support and perform leading duties when any government program is implemented in the village setting, as well as sharing and contributing to the development of Samoa as a whole.

³⁸ Face to face interview with Soliola Lokeni Iosia on 22/03/2019 in his village, Lepa.

³⁹ Face to face interview with Soliola Lokeni Iosia on 22/03/2019 in his village, Lepa.

⁴⁰ Face to face interview with Soliola Lokeni Iosia on 22/03/2019 in his village, Lepa.

For example, by assisting in the implementation of government initiatives to improve village farming, education, fishing, village cleanliness to promote tourism, health and wellbeing.⁴¹

In addition to Iosia's understanding of *matai*'s roles, Maligi Evile and Afamasaga Faamatala agree that once a person becomes a *matai*, it automatically places that person as the father of everyone. They become the peacemaker in the family and the village, the initiator of most projects and the provider of money and fine mats for every *fa'alavelave* that he/she is connected to. He/She becomes the head of the family who carries the good name of the *aiga*. In my view, both Evile and Fa'amatala regarded the *matai* from a closed modernised perspective as evident with the mentioning of money.⁴²

As Samoa adopted Christianity and gradually treads to the era of modern technology, changes come about to influence the *matai* system and the implications for the *faamatai* as a system of governance, which happens to target the three major institutions of governance in Samoa's political and social world. These institutions are the Samoan *aiga* or family, the *nu'u* or village and finally the Samoan government. Overall, Afamasaga sees the *matai* as the head of Samoan families who carry the good name of the *aiga* and are generally the overseers or leaders in various matters, which include titles and land as well as the maintenance and functions of the families.⁴³

All in all, the need to work together and to cooperate in building up a better family, better extended families, strong villages and an economical Samoa are all part of the *matai*'s roles. In my opinion, such immense responsibilities placed on the *matai* makes him/her heavily rely on divine blessings and guidance to best fulfil his/her roles.

⁴¹ Face to face interview with Soliola Lokeni Iosia on 22/03/2019 in his village, Lepa.

⁴² Maligi Evile, "The Inseparable Partnership," in *Changes in the Matai System: O Suiga I Le Fa'amatai*, ed. Asofou So'o (Apia: National University of Samoa, 2007), pp.73-82.

⁴³ Afamasaga Fa'amatala Toleafoa, "A Changing Fa'amatai and Implications for Governance," pp. 27-28.

This line of argument will be elaborated in the next step of my research with regards to the divine aspect of a Samoan *matai*.

3.3 The Divine Aspect of a Matai

According to Malama Meleisea, before the missionaries arrived, the *matai* was like a god in the traditional setting and the Samoan culture.⁴⁴ It was truly a precious and treasured recognition to uphold and that the standing of each *matai* in his family thus determine his family ranking recognition in the village. The *matai* positions held significant value, dignity and prestige within their families. The *matais* were seen as divine figures within the family and even in the traditional society despite the differences in ranks.⁴⁵ The affirmation of this statement about *matai* as divine figures can be seen in the following popular choruses I know:

(1)

<i>Pei o Isaraelu mai anamua</i>	<i>Like ancient Israel</i>
<i>E iai o latou matai ma e tautua</i>	<i>With chiefs and servants</i>
<i>O le ala foi lea e mamalu ai Samoa</i>	<i>This is why Samoa is respectable</i>
<i>Aua e leai ni faiga faasoloatoa.⁴⁶</i>	<i>Because no one is allowed to run wild!</i>

(2)

<i>Ua tofia ele Atua Samoa</i>	<i>Samoa has been sanctioned by God</i>
<i>ina ia pulea e matai</i>	<i>To be ruled by matai</i>
<i>Aua o lona suafa ua vaelua iai</i>	<i>As it was the matai with whom</i>
	<i>God's name has been shared</i>

⁴⁴ Interview with Professor Malama Meleisea on 22/02/2019 at his office at the National University of Samoa.

⁴⁵ Interview with Professor Malama Meleisea on 22/02/2019 at his office at the National University of Samoa.

⁴⁶ By Tuiletufuga Henry Enele.

From these choruses, the safety and welfare of every Samoan is guided by the village *matai*, who set rules for the common good of all.

In addition to this point, Meleisea points out that some of the highest ranking chiefs were termed *ali'i pa'ia* (sacred chiefs).⁴⁷ The *ali'i pa'ia* whether a chief (*ali'i*) or an orator (*tulafale*) are given the term *matai*, deriving from “mata i ai” (being set apart/consecrated) or literally, setting the eyes to the leader and be served with the utmost respect by all means. What seems to be crucial from Meleisea’s study is the fact that both *alii* (chief) and *tulafale* (orator) are consecrated with slightly different roles and dignities. Within the Samoan context, each family is led by a *matai* (either chief or orator) who is given the authority to be the trustee of the family lands and properties. He/She has the full power to be the custodian of the family properties, including the allocation of family land section for each member to cultivate and live on it. As a paramount family chief, he/she is also in charge in rewarding a faithful service within family settings.

Meleisea also explains that *alii* titles have links within the historical genealogies of Samoa which is traced back to Tagaloa-a-lagi (the earthly god who resided in the ninth sky (9th)).⁴⁸ For Meleisea, high chiefs were sacred, they carried the “mana”⁴⁹ (sacred power) of the gods. Here, Meleisea points out that before Christianity arrived, the highest ranking chiefs were termed as *ali'i pa'ia*, sacred and divine like the god

⁴⁷ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the Modern History of Western Samoa* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1987), p.13.

⁴⁸ *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa* (Apia: University of South Pacific, 1987), p27.

⁴⁹ The word *mana* according to the Rev Alesana Eteuati (current vice principle of Malua Theological College), is a spiritual knowledge (*tofā ma le moe*)

Tagaloa-a-lagi, who resided in heaven.⁵⁰ Before Christianity, the authority of all the *matai* was divinely sanctioned by Tagaloa-a-lagi.⁵¹

To differentiate between chief *matai* (*matai alii*) and orator *matai* (*matai tulafale*), the *matai ali'i* seemed to be more dignified and prestigious and is obsessed with godly authority while the *tulafale* is physically active and quite competent in the art of delivering dignified language appropriate for the occasion. Taking Tagaloa-a-lagi as the highest god in the Samoan history, Apulu Lance Polu agreed that most Samoan families contested to stretch their family genealogies as heirs of Tagaloa-a-lagi, particularly the heirs of an *ali'i* title.⁵²

However, the respect highly featured by most *ali'i* titles across Samoa contradicted with the government system in my village, Lepa. The Fatialofa and Auelua are both called *tulafale-alii*⁵³ titles, they equally hold the highest esteem in the village and across the sub-villages of Aufaga and Saleapaga. They both play the chiefly and oratory roles given that they both lead large extended families. The extended families are also segment of less important *matai* leaders who mainly play the executive roles on behalf of Fatialofa and Auelua.

As common practice of any group of extended families, their shared historical ancestral roots summarised in the *fa'alupega* (traditional salutations) gives the village its identity.⁵⁴ As stated by Meleisea, *faalupega* “is a set of ceremonial greetings addressed to the *matai* names of seniority which are associated with the historical origin

⁵⁰ Face to face interview with Professor Malama Meleisea on the 22/02/2019 at his office in the National University of Samoa.

⁵¹ Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the Modern History of Western Samoa*, p.13.

⁵² Face to face interview with Apulu Lance Polu on 26/10/2018 at his office in Togafu'afu'a at 1400hrs. He is the Editor in Chief of the Talamua Newspaper.

⁵³ Fatialofa and Auelua are both called orator-chief.

⁵⁴ Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, p.27.

of each village. The *fa'alupega* also sets out the rank order of the main titles of each village and so acts as the “constitution” for the village *fono* (council of matai)”⁵⁵

The point that I wanted to stress here is that the village *fa'alupega* facilitates a visitor’s way into a village to understand who to seek for guidance or for cautious mannerism. Normally in the past, visitors and strangers preferred to know where the highest chief of the village was, very likely to be the safest and secured place if help was needed. Even a culprit took refuge to the highest chief’s place to be safe from a villager’s anger, meaning, the godly authority possessed by the chief turned an angry villager into wary and calmness.

Different from the leading roles of *matai* described by Evile and Faamatala above, Meleisea upholds the *matai* to the utmost traditional supremacy and in closeness with the god-related era in times of Tagaloa-a-lagi. The distinguish features of the *matai* practice described above addresses the values, the various rankings and levels of recognition together with traditional expectations thus shaping the *matai* system. The *matai* paramounts and supremacy born from the god Taga-loa-a-lagi era is being passed on and reinterpreted as divine power granted by the Christian Lord God in heaven.

Nowadays, we see that the church is considered with great honour where the church minister joins a village as the most prominent figure, a messenger of God to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet, it is the *matai* as village leaders that maintain the village land ownership and keep their extended families engage in village affairs for the good of all. Hence the leadership abilities required of a *matai* makes choosing the next *matai* successor a very crucial task. If the roles and status of a *matai* are to remain sacred and powerful even today, what does this imply for the next successor? To answer this

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.28.

question, I now move to seek the symbolic meaning of *ui le ula* ritual in the *matai* system.

3.4 Ui le Ula Within the Matai System.

The most common application of *ui le ula* practice is within the *matai* system where roles and responsibilities of one Samoan *matai* are transferred to another member of a family whom they all agree to be the next *matai* title bearer.⁵⁶ As mentioned elsewhere in this paper, the Samoan traditional process *ui le ula* is expending the “*ula*” as symbolic of bestowing all the roles and responsibilities of a *matai* to the preferred successor. Based on the brief background of *matai* Samoa described above, I contend that the process of *ui le ula* within the Samoan context does not merely mean transferring of authority/identity/power/leadership from one *matai*/leader to another. However, it is a divinely given authority/leadership/power that carries a new and shaping a special identity for the next person and generation. As Tupua Tamasese describes, the act of passing away of the “*ula*” depicts the passing away of blessings from the gods and is done by the former holder of the “*ula*” as god’s representation.⁵⁷

Tuiatua further explained that the process of *ui le ula* is the same process when bestowing a *matai* title and that the family must prepare for the traditional ceremony like the *usu*, (*pati le ava* etc.). The one that holds the *matai* title will transfer (“*ui*”) the title/responsibilities (“*ula*”) himself to the new holder of the *matai* title. The former *matai* will officially and traditionally declare in the presence of his relatives and

⁵⁶Note that *ui le ula* can also be applied to the exchanging or transferring of roles and responsibilities from one person/leader to another as we often do in Malua Theological College annually with the election of the President and Secretary roles of the student body for the new year.

⁵⁷ Former Head of State of Samoa, holding one of Samoa’s highest ranking chief, Tuiatua. He is the author of *Su’esu’e Manogi*. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta’isi Efi, *Su’esu’e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2018).

families (*aiga potopoto*) that his *matai* title (“*ula*”) be bestowed to the new holder or successor.

Traditionally, this public proclamation is an authorised announcement of removing the paramountcy of the title from the original holder and is sanctioned over to the preferred new holder. This part of the ceremony must not be done by anyone except the one that holds the *matai* title.⁵⁸ *Ui le ula* ritual is done in the presence of the *aiga potopoto* (extended family) with other paramount chiefs and orators of the village to witness and honour the divine process. The power held by the original holder would be weakened and hold the so-called “a matai vaipou.”⁵⁹ This simply means a former *matai* holder would return to his/her prior untitled status, yet will still have the respect from the family if the former was of age.⁶⁰

Tamasailau suggests that “*ula*” in this saying as a “symbolic imagery is powerful” as it represents the coming together of beauty, balance and symmetry, something she believes one aims for as a leader.⁶¹ The gesture in the word “*ui*”, as the passing over to another, is symbolic and cultural. It is a deliberate act of keeping the links between what is best of the past in the present and the future. The “*ula*” connects all three. The faith in the recipient’s talents, abilities and wisdom and faith in God have been accorded in the former *matai*’s mind given the concern to *ui le ula* which is an on-going process to transmit the ancient Samoan wisdoms - the *tofā* of our *tuua* and the traditional Samoan values and protocols around succession.⁶² As stated by Oomi Saifoloi, “The matai with

⁵⁸ Face to face interview with Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi at his house in Tuaeufu on 09/11/2018 at 1430hrs.

⁵⁹ A lesser valued position of a matai.

⁶⁰ This view is also agreed upon by Alesana Eteuati, current Vice principal of Malua Theological College.

⁶¹ Tamasailau Sualii-Sauni interviewed via email on the 13/11/2018.

⁶² Tamasailau Sualii-Sauni interviewed via email on the 13/11/2018.

wisdom upholds the dignity of culture and the richness of oratory. Your culture is a treasure. It is a garland of flowers that you wear with dignity”.⁶³

Tamasailau Sualii-Sauni⁶⁴ elaborated on “Ui le Ula” in terms of our Samoan culture (*tu ma aga faasamoa*), that it is a metaphorical practice that speaks not only to the significance of leadership succession but also to the ritualization and legitimization of its accompanying traditional Samoan succession processes.⁶⁵ *Ui le ula* is closely associated with our traditional Samoan notions of bequeaths or *mavaega*. It is, as Tamasailau stated, “a saying that refers, in traditional Samoa, to the formal passing of something significant such as a *matai* title and/or *pule*, from one who legitimately has the right to hand it over to another”⁶⁶.

Hence, *ui le ula* is a cultural practice not to be taken lightly. It is usually thought about very seriously before practicing, as in most cases what is being passed over to another affects the rights, inheritances and the responsibilities or duties of many others. It is an image of leadership succession that keeps the link between the generations, keeping the best and most fragrant of our traditions, alive.⁶⁷ In other words, *ui le ula* as a gesture is a transfer of legacy and responsibility between generations.

Tamasailau argues that she does not stand by the view that traditions are out of date and no longer relevant practices, yet strongly believes that traditions, and therefore 'the traditional' is very relevant to the present and the future because it

⁶³ O'omi Saifoloi, "Remember Your Culture," in *Changes in the Matai System: O Suiga I Le Fa'amatai*, ed. Asofou So'o (Apia: National University of Samoa, 2007), pp.27-31.

⁶⁴ She is an associate professor in Sociology/Criminology, School of Social Science at the University of Auckland. Her areas of expertise include Pacific social, justice and health research, Pasifika research methodologies, Pacific jurisprudence and Samoan ontologies and epistemologies. She is the author of the book, “Whispers and Vanities: Samoan Indigenous Knowledge and Religion”.

⁶⁵ Tamasailau Sualii-Sauni interviewed via email on the 13/11/2018

⁶⁶ Tamasailau Sualii-Sauni interviewed via email on the 13/11/2018

⁶⁷ Tamasailau Sualii-Sauni interviewed via email on the 13/11/2018

is about our heritage and roots as Samoans.⁶⁸ This means that *ui le ula* keeps the *matai* system as our Samoan heritage alive and well. *Ui le ula* is also a key part of our *faasinomaga* - our Samoan-ness identity.⁶⁹ The *ula* is symbolic of many things. It represents respect from the family, power and authority, responsibilities, lands or land ownership and family. The *ula* therefore holds great significance and value for in this saying, it represents many things that will be placed over somebody when they receive the honour of the *matai* title.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter not only explains and acknowledges the value and significance of *ui le ula* within the Samoan *matai system*, it elaborated further into this practice, origins and the sacred value behind it. The chapter also highlights the *matai* titles as being in two categories of (i) *ali'i* (ii) *tulafale*. The *ali'i* is considered more prestigious and dignified and performed finalising decisions while the *tulafale* is involved in executing and performing the physical roles diligently and resourcefulness.

Ui le ula is a traditional practice or a process of dispensation of a *matai* title from a former holder to a new holder being recommended. It is a ritual that represents leadership succession of bestowing the *matai* title from the older to the young. The *matai* title is symbolic of an *ula* (garland of strewn sweet smelling flowers or pandanus keys) is taken off from the former holder's neck and placed on the new holder's neck with breathing blessings uttered by the former holder. The transition of the *matai* title goes with handing over of all the roles and responsibilities from the previous *matai* title holder to the next.

⁶⁸ Tamasailau Sualii-Sauni interviewed via email on the 13/11/2018.

⁶⁹ Tamasailau Sualii-Sauni interviewed via email on the 13/11/2018.

According to our historical beliefs in god Tagaloa-a-lagi as the supreme ruler and leader of Samoa, the *matai* title bestowal is a sacred process endorsed by Tagaloa with his blessings and *mana* being conferred to the new holder. This implies that with this new title, comes not only with many responsibilities but also with many blessings. With the arrival of Christianity, a major change in the Samoan interpretation of the sacred power behind the *matai* was introduced, where Tagaloa-a-lagi is been reinterpreted as God. Here, the significance of God in Samoan thinking is woven into the *ui le ula* ceremony signified by the *lotu* service that precedes the actual ritual. To me, such moulding of God into the *ui le ula* practice is crucial because God is being upheld as the connecting thread of the *ula* pieces of responsibilities (*tiute*), authorities (*pule*), and blessings (*manuia*). This I argue will connect well with David's act of *ui le ula* to his son Solomon as the next God-appointed leader.

CHAPTER 4: SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

It has been argued in this thesis that the rhetoric in Chronicles with regards to David-Solomon kingships transition can be plausibly explained within the field of establishing “a reformed cultic identity” for postexilic Israel.⁷⁰ As such, a literary rhetorical approach was applied to analyse the Chronicler’s perspective of how David may have transposed his kingship to Solomon, compared to a “history-defined” identity as in Samuel-Kings. The analysis provided some clear indications of how the Chroniclers’ reinterpretation of Israel’s history was perhaps deemed necessary for the Persian period audience. For instance, Chronicles’ portrayal of both David’s and Solomon’ kingships as “equated with the kingdom of God” on earth is quite different, compared to its parallel texts in the Deuteronomistic History.⁷¹ Such a new and unique line of interpretation points to the rhetoric’s function in the literature where the Chronicler probably tries to remind readers, of how God took part in their history in human form via King David. Such divine involvement was successfully passed on to King Solomon, with the temple as symbolic of God among them always.

In relation to my Samoan context, the thesis also investigated whether Chronicles’ account of the David-Solomon kingships transition is in line with the meaning of *ui le ula* from a Samoan perspective. A study into *ui le ula* and its importance in Samoan *matai* leadership transfer is included in the analysis to further enhance our understanding of possible analogies between the two worlds. Needless to say, my understanding of *ui le ula* within the contemporary Samoan context has shaped my interpretation of Chronicles’ presentation of the David-Solomon kingship transition. Thus I recognise the danger there is in making generalised conclusions given the different communities and different contexts in this study. However, for the purposes of

⁷⁰ See page 2 under topic “Thesis Statement.”

⁷¹ See pages 7-8 for detail.

this paper, I have limited the key findings to include only observations and findings that are perhaps crucial and common to both practices. The study hopes that these observations of analogies between Chronistic kingship transition and *ui le ula* may encourage other Samoan readers to not only realise how our own world is reflected in biblical text, but it also enlightens our understanding of God's involvement in human history.

4.1 Public Occasions

My first observation is the public announcement of Solomon as the new God appointed King of Israel in front of "all Israel" as recorded in Chronicles. David assembles officials of Israel and tribes as well as commanders as witnesses to such an occasion. Different from Samuel-Kings account, the Chronicler records this public announcement of Solomon being appointed as David's successor, the new King of Israel. This indicates that David's announcement of the transfer of the King title to his son as a religious public occasion is of special significance as the community is well informed of their next king. Such idea of public occasion of kingship transition in Chronicles is in line with the public ritual of *ui le ula* in the Samoan context. The *ui le ula* ceremony is never a private ritual and it is performed in front of the whole extended family (aiga potopoto). The former *matai* will officially and traditionally declare in the presence of his relatives and family (aiga potopoto) that his *matai* title will be bestowed on the new holder or successor. Other paramount chiefs and orators of the village may also be present to witness and honour the occasion. The Samoan public ritual of *ui le ula* therefore is in line with the Chronicles' account of kingship transition rather than Samuel-Kings' account.

4.2 Transfer of Roles and Responsibilities

The transfer of responsibilities and duties from King David to his successor Solomon, his son was crucial to the Chronicler's account. One of Solomon's main and vital duties as the newly appointed King of Israel was to build the temple as the resting place for the Ark of the Covenant. This of course is normal of transitions where a former king transposes the leadership duties and responsibilities to the next successor. From Chronicles' account, Solomon's special duty of building the temple happens when David steps aside, allowing his son to do it. As argued above the reason behind David's failure to build the temple is not so much as a blemish on David's character but to prepare the way for Solomon's reign, which will be the period of peace and rest. So this study suggests that the actual builder of the temple is David rather than Solomon because everything was planned and organized by David according to Chronicles' account. Moreover, it is a transition from the senior and more experienced (David as father) to the inexperienced (Solomon as David's son).

Unlike David-Solomon kingship transition, *ui le ula* in the Samoan context does not always occur between father and son as other members of the extended family are also entitled to a *matai* title. However, the idea behind the notion of transfer of roles and responsibilities from senior and more experienced to the younger and inexperienced members remains the same. Within the *matai* system, the former *matai* titleholder often prepares everything for the next appointed person. Like David-Solomon transition, the extent of duties and responsibilities for the next *matai* title is all determined by the former. Thus, the transition of the *matai* title with the transfer of roles and responsibilities that associated with the title. Solomon's new title of being a king for Israel comes with the new status of being the temple builder and keeper of the ark of God. Likewise the *matai* title comes with the new status of being the custodian of the

family customary land. The common factor between the temple and the Samoan customary land is their overall purpose. That is both the temple in the Chronistic world and the customary land in the Samoan world serve for the benefit and inclusion of all members of the communities involved, not just for the appointed leaders.

4.3 Chronistic's Smooth Transition

Another unique feature of Chronicles kingship transition is the smooth transition from David to Solomon. According to Jonker, one of the Chronicler's favourable phrases to use is "all Israel" [כל-ישראל] (p.16). This word is often used to show that the rise of David-Solomon kingships are celebrated and supported by all Israel including the northern region. For instance, in 1 Chron 29:22-24 "All the leaders and the mighty warriors, and also all the sons of King David" gave their support to King Solomon. These people anointed Solomon as King and "as the Lord's *prince*" (1 Chron 29:22b) (p. 16). Here, Chronicles avoids the tense situation recorded in 1 Kings 1-2 where David's fourth son Adonijah attempts to selfishly seek the throne as the next king after David, instead of Solomon. The missing of this story in Chronicles' account affirms the point that the transfer of kingship in the Chronicles is a smooth transition compared to Samuel-Kings. Such omission is also in line with the wider purpose of Chronicles where war or conquest in gaining land is missing.

The smooth Chronistic transition also enlightens my understanding of *ui le ula* within the Samoan context. *Ui le ula* is a public ritual practice and it must be done with the support and agreement of all members of the family. If there is an element of disagreement involved, it should not be done at all. The rise of the new *matai* titleholder is affirmed by the presence and the prayers of the whole extended family as well as the village. Perhaps, the blessing that goes with the *ula* to the next titleholder is guaranteed by a smooth transition of the title.

4.4 Divine Aspect of the Transfer

As described by the Chronicler, David was an exalted king who sits on Yhwh's own throne. This exalted status was transferred to his son, his successor, Solomon. It is not a transfer of a mere kingship title but also a transfer of the divine cultic aspect of leadership. For the Chronicler, the involvement of Yhwh is crucial in the David-Solomon kingship transition because the exaltation of both David and Solomon to be on Yhwh's throne emphasizes God's approval of these leaders. In addition, the main task in the leadership transfer is the building of the temple for the community to worship Yhwh. Here, perhaps the temple indicates God among the people "all Israel" and not just their kings. Chronicle's strong portrayal of God with the kings compared to Samuel-kings tells of the Chronicle's message of hope for postexilic Israel.

In Samoa, *matai* were seen as earthly gods before the arrival of Christianity. As discussed above, the act of passing away of the "ula" depicts the passing away of blessings from the gods and is done by the former holder of the "ula" as god's representation. Samoa today however, any special occasion such as the *ui le ula*, always begins with a *lotu* often led by a church minister where God's blessings are sought. For Samoans, the involvement of God in a ritual suggests God's blessings. Hence the *ula* taken off from the former *matai* and placed on the successor accentuates not only the tasks that are passed on but God is also upheld as the connecting thread of the *ula* pieces of responsibilities, authorities and blessings. This signifies that without God, one's leadership efforts are in vain. God's blessings guarantee the next *matai*'s success in their tasks ahead.

CONCLUSION

The smooth public announcement of the David-Solomon kingship transition in the presence of all Israel indicates two main ideas from the Chronicler. First, “all Israel” suggest the Chronicler’s high regard for the inclusion of everyone in the postexilic Israel. The whole community is important not only to witness and applaud their leaders but to support the temple project for everyone to worship Yhwh. Second, the Chronicler also highly upholds the idea of God’s divine involvement in Israel’s history. Both kings David and Solomon are presented as kings on God’s throne on earth while the temple signifies God among everyone, not just the kings. Perhaps such a message was needed to encourage the postexilic audience that despite foreign rule at the time, God is and always will be their king among them.

The same two ideas are revealed from the *ui le ula* ritual – inclusion of the whole extended family and God’s involvement. The people – the extended family that the *matai* is supposed to lead - are the most important in the *ui le ula* transition. The family’s approval of their next leader is crucial because they need someone to help, guide and solve any issues. And of course, Samoa as a Christian nation, God’s involvement through a *lotu* is a must in all occasions.

The interpretation of God behind the Samoan ritual of *ui le ula* has enlightened my own understanding of this ritual. The study suggests *ula* is not just a representation of responsibilities, duties and honour that come with the *matai* title, but it also celebrates God and His blessings in both the past and the future leader. This indeed is in line with Chronicles’ reconstruction of Israel’s identity rather than Samuel-Kings’ identity. It seems that Chronicles does not dwell on the political aspect of kingship transition as mentioned in Samuel-Kings but attempts to show the new religious identity of the people of God. Such reconstruction of Israel’s identity in Chronicles reflects the

Samoan saying: *e sui faiga ae tumau faavae* (practice may change, but the foundation remains). For me, this means the Chronicler manoeuvres the historical practice of kingship transition to suit his audience but the foundation of Israel – Yhwh their God, remains forever. Stressing divine inclusion is part of Chronicles' new practice that fits its cultic purpose in its own context. That is, although Israel kingship is absent perhaps the Chronicler's main concern is that God is Israel's true king even under Persian rule.⁷²

APPLICATION

What has this study informed us as future church leaders destined to work in Samoan village communities?

First, our understanding of biblical texts can be further enhanced by our cultural rituals and practices, and vice versa. The rhetorical reading of Chronicles in this study has allowed us to discover the Chronicler's unique style of writing to convey its message. The study has also allowed us to appreciate God's involvement in our Samoan cultural rituals. *Ui le ula* maybe an old ritual familiar to us, but the study has helped us to read God as the divine thread in the *ula* that causes leaders to fulfil God's purposes on earth.

Second, it is crucial of us as community and people leaders to provide support and advice to village leaders or *matai* about the importance of their roles during their time to lead. David's reign was unique and fitting for the people at the time. Likewise, Solomon's reign was also unique and served the purposes he was appointed for. The point is, although leaders change, every leader is unique to God, and everyone's

⁷² This line of argument perhaps goes back to address the questions raised at the beginning of chapter 1 page 7.

leadership style is significant for its main purposes – to lead and direct people. As church leaders, we are to support *matai* as cultural leaders in their roles as “servants” to people, not just “masters” to be honoured and respected. To be appointed as a *matai* or minister comes with blessings, honour and cultural gifts. Hence one should not seek such positions for personal gain in the form of gifts from people but more to be a blessing to others especially the less fortunate in society.

Third, the inclusion of people, those that *matai* and church leaders lead, is extremely important in our ministry. People’s approval of their appointed leaders, whether in cultural or church settings, is crucial. Families need people, churches need people, and nations need people. We cannot be successful leaders if we cannot include people. People need to feel included regardless of their social status. Rich, poor, old or young, we are to be mindful that despite our social differences, we are all equally important as members of communities and churches that contribute together for the benefit of all.

Lastly, as leaders we must recognise God in our service to others. Taking over a leadership position whether in church or family settings, is a God-given opportunity to serve. Being a leader is a privilege that comes with immense responsibilities, which often put burdens on leaders. Therefore acknowledging our human tendency to fail at times, allows us to appreciate our need of God as our divine source of strength and our unseen source of wisdom. David ensured Solomon was well-informed to follow God. Likewise we as church leaders must inspire our *matai* village and community leaders to acknowledge God in all their dealings. After all, this is what we are called to do as future church ministers working under God’s leadership.

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