

READING MATTHEW 2:1-12
FROM AN 'AIGA TALIMALAMA'
PERSPECTIVE

A Thesis Presented to the
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Bachelor of Theology

by

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Abstract

The reason behind this study is my appreciation of the Gospel of Matthew and my admiration of the Samoan culture. *Aiga Talimalama*, is the *Talimalama* family of Salesātele who are known to locate and raise *Salamasina's* son which is now part of their identity. The search of where the Messiah was born by the magi, is a very important part of Jesus birth narrative. The search for the star in the east in Matthew 2:1-12, will be explored in this study using my context as a reader – the lens of *Aiga Talimalama*. The selected interpretive analytic that will be used together with the *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutics to read the text is Sociorhetorical criticism (SRC). The study considers important reading the Bible using our own perspectives and experiences in order to make more sense the meaning of the Bible in our worlds.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to EFKS Salesātele who have supported me throughout this journey.

Not forgetting my rock and anchor who have grounded me throughout this thesis and Malua journey, my precious wife Olivia and my beautiful children, Penailoaoeisaua, Vaiwilmalua, Neemia and Pulemau.

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List of Abbreviations

CCCS	Congregational Christian Church Samoa
EFKS	<i>Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa</i>
SRC	Sociorhetorical Criticism

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Literature Review

1.1 Reason of this study and Background

The reason behind this study is my appreciation of the Gospel of Matthew and my admiration of the Samoan culture. One of the goals in my study of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Malua was to learn more about Jesus and his ministry in the four Gospels. From that enthusiasm, I want to explore the Gospel of Matthew's version of the birth of Jesus Christ. The star that guided the three wise men in Matthew 2:1-12 from the east signaled the birth of Christ, a magnificent event in the history of Christianity. The star was a sign that symbolized the coming of Christ, the light of the world. Ironically, the star depicts Christ as the light to the dark world - a new dawn, a new beginning, a new creation. In Samoan: *O Iesu o le Malamalama i le Pogisa*.

In respect of the Samoan culture, I have always been interested in the *Aiga Talimalama* as mentioned in the *Salesātele* honorifics. The common problem of oral traditions is the various accounts of one story. The same applies to Samoan myths or '*tala mai anamua*'. This is because the accounts have been influenced and perhaps twisted to suit audience preference. The *Aiga Talimalama* is a good example of such accounts. Thus, I will describe different versions of *Aiga Talimalama* in Chapter Two and show characteristics of *Aiga Talimalama* as the hermeneutical lens.

I will explore the meaning and function of the star in the east from my context as a reader – the eyes of *Aiga Talimalama*. It is finding how the hermeneutics of *Aiga Talimalama* functions in the birth of Jesus Christ brings forth more meanings that would make more sense the social and cultural significance of the honorifics of *Aiga Talimalama*. Thus, the focus is on the text.

1.2 Aim & Objective

The aim of this thesis is to analyse and study the text (Matthew 2:12) using the *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutics and the sociorhetorical criticism as the interpretational analytic.¹ It is seeking and searching more meanings about Jesus' birth as revealed in and through the star witnessed by the magi in relation to our village honorifics of *Aiga Talimalama* – which is my world as a reader.

1.2.1 Thesis Statement

Reading the Bible using our life experiences and our social and cultural values is an opportunity for me as a reader of the Bible in today's world to bring some of the important social and cultural values that run our village communities to find how they can function in the story of Jesus' ministry. It is to find more meanings about our social and cultural values in light of the ministry of Jesus – Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God. It is therefore the purpose of this study to take advantage of the consideration of the locations and situations of the readers of the Bible in today's world to explore and analyse the birth of Jesus in light of the honorific of our village – the honorific about the shining of light on our village lands in the history of our village. Thus, it is the task of this study to explore how the *Aiga Talimalama* functions in the sociorhetorical interpretation of Matthew 2:1-12 made herein.

¹ There are other Samoan scholars who utilise the sociorhetorical approach with their life experience and understanding of the Samoan and the Pacific worlds to read the Bible. See Vaitusi Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of the Gospel of Matthew* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017); Fatilua Fatilua, "Who gets what, when, and how: Appropriating the political economic context of Luke 18:18-30 with implications on the political economies of the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs)," *Samoa Journal of Theology*, vol. 1 (2022): 65-74.

1.2.2 Focus Questions

I will incorporate the following focus questions to assist this study. I will elaborate on these questions and their use in Chapter Two. What are the characteristics of the *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutic that will be used to analyse the interpretation of Matthew 2:1-12? What is *Aiga Talimalama*? How are these characteristics used to analyze the sociorhetorical interpretation of the birth of Jesus and other characters' relationship to that birth? What are some of the significances of the reading approach and interpretation presented in this study to the work of finding meanings of texts relevant to our Samoan contexts? What are the theological significances of the interpretation that would help make more sense the birth of Jesus as the arrival of the light of the Gospel for the people of Samoa? These questions will help guide this study.

1.3 Method and Approach

Biblical interpretation now considers important the world of the reader which brings a new way of seeing and reading a text. Paul Ricoeur's three worlds of the text enable us to explore these dimensions of a text to reach a rich, satisfying, and mature interpretation of the text.² These worlds are important in order for the reader to bring his or her own questions to the interpretations of the text which helps shape a framework to interpret the text. These questions can be considered as a hermeneutical way of seeing a text. In this way, biblical interpretation gives us, the readers in our own worlds, the opportunity to make sense of what the Bible means in our every-day life activities. It is not to force our

² See Paul Ricoeur, "What is a text? Explanation and understanding." In *A Ricoeur reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016) 43-64. The Three worlds of a text: 1- The World Behind the Text: Historical Background; 2- The World Within the Text: Linguistic Concerns 3- The World in front of the Text: The Reader's Needs; Werner Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance* (London: SCM Press, 2002), 71-74.

thinking and hermeneutic on the text but to help guide our exploring of the text. Thus, the emphasis is the text itself.

For example is shown in Vaitusi Nofoaiga's use of a Samoan perspective called *Tautuaileva* to read Discipleship in Matthew. His development of *tautuaileva*, evoked from his considering important of a family member's role as a *tautua* in a Samoan family context. This role has characteristics that takes into consideration the importance of local needs that are family-related. These characteristics such as *faasinomaga* (sense of belonging) and *tautuatoa* (courageous servant) were used by *Nofoaiga* to explore discipleship as not only a global task but also a local task that are to be carried out by the disciples called by Jesus to do his ministry as shown in the Matthean account.³ There are more studies that are now using elements of Samoan indigenous references as departure points in their exploration and interpretation of the Bible.⁴ The innertexture, intertexture, and social and cultural stages of the sociorhetorical approach will be used with the *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutic to explore the characters, the scenes, plot and movements in the text.

1.4 Literature review

In this section I review the scholarship on Matthew 2:1-12. This helps set the direction for my thesis.

³ Vaitusi Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017).

⁴ See other Samoan readings of the Bible that use Samoan Understanding and Experiences. Peni Leota, "Ethnic Tensions in Persian-Period Yehud: A Samoan Postcolonial Hermeneutic," (PhD Thesis, Melbourne College of Divinity, 2005); Vaitusi Lealaialoto Nofoaiga, "Towards a Samoan Postcolonial Reading of Discipleship in the Matthean Gospel," (PhD Thesis, The University of Auckland, 2014).; Arthur John Wulf, „Was Earth Created Good? Reappearing Earth in Genesis 1:1-2:4a from a Samoan Gafataulima Perspective," (PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, 2016); Makesi Neemia, "The priestly ger (alien) meets the Samoan tagata ese (outsider)," in *Sea of Readings: The Bible in the Pacific*, ed. Jione Havea (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018);

David L Turner titles the text as ‘the visit of the magi’ which has two motifs; firstly, God’s redemptive purposes beyond the nation of Israel; and secondly, King Herod’s treachery and Israel’s disbelief in Jesus.⁵ Furthermore the text is displayed in a chiasmic structure starting with the arrival of the magi from the east and their departure.⁶ Similar to Turner, Margaret Davies titles the text as ‘the visit of magi’. The significance is it shows that Jesus the King of the Jews is also King for the gentiles. The reference to Magi perhaps is a representation of the gentiles who were able to locate the star, which directed them to the Messiah.⁷

A different scope is addressed by Charles H Talbert claiming that Matthew 2:1-12 signifies Jesus’ Davidic and Messianic roots through his birthplace in Bethlehem.⁸ This is significant because it demonstrates a competitive portrait of the two Kings in Herod and Jesus.⁹ The gentile background of the magi is mentioned by Talbert perhaps to illustrate the use of non-Jewish people to locate where the Messiah was born. The so-called King of the Jews is Herod (despite he was from Idumean). The magi who were gentiles, is used by God as messengers to seek for the newborn baby Jesus. Therefore, it illustrates how God uses gentiles to seek for the Messiah, rather a Jewish leader or

⁵ David L Turner, *Matthew: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 76.

⁶ See Turner, *Matthew*, 77 for the chiasmic structure of Matthew 2:1-12

Magi arrive from the east (2:1)

Magi have seen a special star and seek to worship Jesus (2:2)

Herod is terrified of the one born king of the Jews (2:3)

Herod questions the religious leaders (2:4)

Religious leaders answer Herod (2:5–6; cf. Mic. 5:2)

Herod plots against the one born king of the Jews (2:7–8)

Magi see the star again and are enabled to worship Jesus (2:9–11)

Magi depart to their own country (2:12)

⁷ Margaret Davies, *Matthew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009) 32-34

⁸ Charles H Talbert, *Matthew Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament* (Ada, MI; Baker Academic, 2010), 35

⁹ Talbert, *Matthew*, 36

someone of Jewish background. Whereas the Jewish ruler Herod is so adamant to have Jesus found so He can be killed.

This particular passage is titled as “Pagans worship Jesus” by Craig S Keener. For Keener, the author’s contrasting the main characters is a practice that constituted a standard ancient literary device.¹⁰ Keener agrees with both Davies and Talbert that Jesus is also for gentiles. In this case the gentiles are the magi's who worship pagan gods. The Magi and scribes function as composite characters, like the chorus in a Greek drama. The pagan astrologers lead the way to locate Jesus; Israel's ruler seeks his death, acting like a pagan king; Jerusalem's religious elite — forerunners of Matthew's readers' opponents — take Jesus for granted. Matthew forces his audience to identify with the pagan Magi rather than with Herod or Jerusalem's religious elite, and hence to recognize God's interest in the Gentile mission. The God who sought servants from the pagan west like the Roman centurion also sought previously pagan servants "from the east" like the Magi.

Based on the reviews above, a collective summary insinuates that there is a gentile versus Jewish comparison of characters, where the Magi are a representation of gentiles. Even though Jesus is of Jewish origin and Davidic blood, it is ironic that gentiles were the first to locate him through the star. So, the significance of the Magi and the star must be seriously considered. On the contrary, the Jewish representation here is the rule of Jews in King Herod. Rather than embracing the King of the Jews as prophesised, he would rather have Jesus killed. So, the star as light and the Magi’s searching for Jesus in and through the star will be the focus of my exploration of the text guided by the *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutic.

¹⁰ Craig S Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999) 124-125.

1.5 Chapters Outline

The thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter one deals with the *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutic and the Literature review of text, Matthew 2:1-12. Chapter two introduces the background *Aiga Talimalama* and its application as a hermeneutics on the with the inclusion of the *Aiga Talimalama* perspective and how it would be facilitated to read the exegesis of the text. Chapter three focuses on the innertexture analysis of the text. Chapter four consists of the second texture of SRC in Intertexture; reading Matthew 2:1-12 intertextually with Numbers 24:14-19 using Oral-scribal texture. Chapter five appropriates the last texture which is Social and culture using a challenge-riposte reading of the rhetoric unit. Last chapter is the conclusion which gives significances of this study not only in terms of the importance of using our Samoan hermeneutics. Also the significances of broadening the birth of the Messiah as the light upon which we shall enlighten our way of life in relation to our cultural perspectives of light in Samoa.

1.6 Summary

In summary of our introductory chapter, one can state that the literature review has confirmed both the issue and the purpose of the study. This is to discover the narrative gap and to redevelop discussion on the topic of the star discovered by the Magi's, in light of the Samoan *Aiga Talamalama* perspective. The next chapter will appropriate the text and the method used.

CHAPTER TWO

Reading Methodology: *Aiga Talimalama* Hermeneutics and Sociorhetorical Criticism

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the Reading Methodology for this study. The Approach is Reading the text using the Samoan understanding of *Aiga Talimalama* as a hermeneutic. This Approach is guided by the sociorhetorical interpretive analytic to explore the text. It is followed by the analysis of the different textures of the text in Chapter Three.

2.2 *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutic

The story of the *Aiga Talimalama* has different versions due to the nature of oral traditions being passed down through generation. One of the accounts of the *Aiga Talimalama* is from other chiefs of the village of *Salesātele* not related to our family.¹ The *Aiga Talimalama* family in *Salesātele* has four designated *matai* titles namely; *Leleimalefaga*, *Lalau*, *Tauaefa* and *Tagitagiapua*. The arrival of *Salamasina's* son in *Salesātele* gave rise to the new family, known as *Aiga Talimalama*. *Salamasina's* son's name is *Tapumanaia*. In the days when Samoa practiced the sport of pigeon-hunting, it took place in the inlands of *Salesātele* on a land called *Manono*. The chiefs of the gods of Samoa gathered, and the son of *Salamasina* went with them to witness and watch the sport of pigeon-hunting as it was a popular sport. When the event finished in the evening, many of the competitors left and noticed the young boy missing. It was getting dark and the boy was still nowhere to be found. *Salesātele's* chiefs *Lelei* and *Lalau* searched and found the child and then decided to bring him home. It was late and they thought it was a good idea to let him sleep and await the next morning to see whether the young boy was

¹ Personal interview with *Tauaefa* and *Tagitagiapua* (chiefs of *Salesatele*) August 2021.

human or spirit. This is where the term *Talimalama* originated. It is translated as ‘awaiting the new light or new day’. The next dawn they had heard the villagers of *Lotofaga* (neighboring villages) had launched a search party by making noises in their search of the son of their King - *Tafaifa o Salamasina*. This is where the honorifics, the *Aiga Talimalama* the son of *Salamasina*, is derived from and is still commemorated to this day.

Another account is told by the Elder and High Chief of our family at *Salesatele* in *Falealili*. He is *Leleimalefaga Esau*.² According to a survey of *Aiga Talimalama*, most *matais* such as *Tagitagiapua Faafetai*, and *Lalau Timoteo* (other village chiefs, included in the *Aiga Talimalama* as per village honorifics) had a consensus that *Esau*’s version of *Aiga Talimalama* is the true version. They all declared and agreed with the opinion of *Leleimalefaga Esau*.

According to *Leleimalefaga Esau*, the story passed on from their ancestors to their generation is that *Salamasina* and her crew travelled from *Leulumoega* for *Lotofaga*. The crew reached the shores of *Salesatele* at *Falealili* by sunset. *Salamasina* then decided that reaching *Salesatele* at sunset near dark would be a very good opportunity to visit her son, who was living at *Taoaluga* and *Taoalalo* in *Salesatele*. Some members of the travel group wanted to continue on their journey for *Lotofaga*, for if they stopped the village of *Salesatele* would say that *Salamasina* the *Tafaifa* came especially to visit her son. *Leleimalefaga Esau* said the voyage had reached the mainland in the evening. The village served them with dinner and stayed the night. *Leleimalefaga* said that *Tapumanaia* was surprised by the arrival of the voyage. *Salamasina* and the delegation met with *Tapumanaia* and *Tapumanaia* informed *Lelei* and *Lalau*, to look after *Salamasina* and her travel group. However, *Salamasina* did not want to offend the village, and was

² Personal interview with High chief of *Leleimalefaga* family who is also an paramount chief of *Salesatele* village- August 2021.

determined to return as soon as possible in the early hours of the morning to *Lotofaga* for the village of *Lotofaga* was waiting for their arrival for a regular meeting. As the travel party rested for the night, the village of *Salesatele* made usual preparations for the guests to help them with their journey the following day. When these things were prepared, *Leleimalefaga* went to the place of *Taoaluga* and *Taoalalo*, and sat in front of the house in the middle of the night, awaiting the rise of *King Tafaiifa* in the next morning. It was also *Leleimalefaga's* careful watch over *Tapumanaia*. There was suspicion that *Salamasina* might take her son, *Tapumanaia*, back with her to *Lotofaga*. *Leleimalefaga Esau* said that *Salamasina* knew all along that there was a person sitting in front of the house. At dawn *Salamasina* asked her son who the big man was sitting in front of the house. *Tapumanaia* replied that the delegation had met with *Lelei* but did not understand and had not paid homage to the customs and traditions of *Salesatele*. For *Leleimalefaga Esau*, *Salamasina* arose and said, “*Malo faafetai, e manuia maota ma laoa e faasino ia Taoaluga ma Taoalalo*” (“Good morning, the house at *Taoaluga* and *Taoalalo* are in good health”).

Salamasina and his entourage were ready to return, and *King Tafaiifa* thanked them for the honor of the meeting, and the usual courtesies and greetings, and then offered her love and said, “*Lelei ma Lalau*, I now understand why your son (*Salamasina's* son – *Tapumanaia*) does not want to return. You have given him high respect. I do not have much to return your kindness. Instead, let your name be extended to *Leleimalefagaiaega* which means your good service stays with you in the bay where you live. You will catch your fish and find your place in your Family, not only that you have been waiting in the wilderness for a ghost or for a human but also for daylight.

The version of *Aiga Talimalama* I will use to facilitate as a hermeneutic derives from the concept shared by *Leleimalefaga Esau*. *Aiga Talimalama*, as mentioned

resembles a new day or new dawn which is captured in the *Salesatele* honorifics will be the concept I will use to facilitate this reading, in line of exegesis of Matthew 2:1-12 using SRC. Furthermore, it represents an identity of a family within the *Salesatele* village, a family specifically linked and connected to *Salesatele*. It is the identity or *fa'asinomaga* of a particular people in a particular place.

The *Aiga Talimalama* family in *Salesatele* were responsible for the search and the upbringing of *Salamasina's* son in *Salesatele* giving them their identity, known as *Aiga Talimalama*. *Salesatele* chiefs of *Lelei* and *Lalau* searched, found the child, and then decided to bring him home. It was late and they thought it was a good idea to let him sleep the night and await the next morning to see whether the young boy was human or spirit. This is where the term *Talimalama* originated, translated as 'awaiting the new light or new day'. The connection between the *Aiga Talimalama* searching for *Salamasina's* son and awaiting a new dawn and new day for guidance, evokes categories that will be used as hermeneutical lenses for analysing the interpretation of the selected text. These categories will guide the revisiting of the significance of the characters and the setting in Jesus' birth narrative in Mark 2:1-12. They are: *Malama* (Light), *Tali-malama* (Awaiting and Receiving Light), *Fai ma Malama* (Becoming a Light), *Manuia o le Malama* (Rewards/Blessings of the Light). These as hermeneutical lens will be used to analyse the sociorhetorical interpretation of the selected text; Matthew 2:1-12.

In addition the *Salesatele* honorifics represents identity or *faasinomaga* and elements of the Samoan culture in *tautua* (service) and *faamanuiaga* (reward) embedded. These elements are also crucial factors of *Aiga Talimalama* which I will elaborate later on the next chapter.

2.3 Sociorhetorical Criticism

2.3.1 What is Sociorhetorical Criticism?

What is Sociorhetorical Criticism? According to Vernon K Robbins,³ it is a reading analytic that incorporates social science with more literary-based advances in biblical studies.⁴ The objective is to combine literary, social, cultural, and ideological issues in texts. It enables the implied reader(s) to dwell on the ‘world in the text, behind the text, and in front of the text.’⁵ As readers, we compare or contrast values and beliefs with the world in which we live, to shine more meaning within the text. Thus, sociorhetorical criticism provides tools for interpreters to explore how the language of the text evokes meanings that readers can relate to their own world – it is making meaning relevant⁶. Readers with different insights from different locations may interpret the same text with differing meanings.⁷ In this way, sociorhetorical interpretation is not meant to nullify other methods and interpretations but to enter into dialogue with them so that new meanings are produced and made relevant to other worlds and locations.

³ Vernon K. Robbins. *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society, and Ideology* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall Inc, 1996), 1-10.

⁴ Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 1.

⁵ Robbins. *Exploring*, 1–2. See also Elaine M. Wainwright’s explanation of this combination in her article, “Reading Matthew 3–4: Jesus—Sage, Seer, Sophia, Son of God,” *JSNT* 77 (2000): 28–29.

⁶ Robbins, *Exploring*, 1. For an example, Vaitusi Nofoaiga in his works explains his use of Sociorhetorical criticism with his Samoan perspectives. See Vaitusi Nofoaiga, “Enacting Sociorhetorical Interpretation in the Island Nation of Samoa in Oceania,” in *Welcoming the Nations: International Sociorhetorical Explorations*, ed. Vernon K. Robbins and Roy R. Jeal (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020) 57-69; Vaitusi Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017).

⁷ Vernon K. Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse Volume 1*, (Dorset UK: Deo, 2009) 5: “a socio-rhetorical interpretive analytic applies a politics of invitation, with a presupposition that the people invited into the conversation will contribute significantly new insights as a result of their particular experiences, identities, and concerns. In other words, a socio-rhetorical interpretive analytic presupposes genuine team work: people from different locations and identities working together with different cognitive frames for the purpose of getting as much insight as possible on the relation of things to one another.”

The sociorhetorical approach allows this thesis to use my Samoan understanding of our village's honorifics to explore a biblical text. This is important to me as a bible reader in today's context and world. It provides a platform for me to appropriate the exegesis from my world as a Samoan. In addition, it affirms that my interpretation doesn't need to nullify traditional interpretations. It is not a reading exercise to impose the reader's location and situation on the text but to explore the text, seeking how the text can answer one's questions. In this way, attention is given to the text itself.

Aiga Talimalama hermeneutics will be applied as a method of reading the text, to explore a new reading of the text but not to nullify other traditional interpretations of the text. The application of the *Aiga Talimalama* hopes to add another dimension of how to read this text in practice.

The sociorhetorical approach has five stages: Inner Texture, Intertexture, Social and Cultural Texture, Ideological Texture and Sacred texture. Due to the nature of this paper, the stages more fitting that I will use are Innertexture, Intertexture, and Social and Cultural Texture.

2.3.1.1 *Innertexture*

According to Robbins,⁸ Inner texture concerns the features of the language of the text itself, focusing on words in the text. It focuses on the internal structure and development of the text. For instance, the analysis of meanings, words, and repetitive words. In this interpretation emphasis will be given to exploring the three species of rhetoric – judicial or forensic, epideictic, and deliberative. This allows the reader to achieve a deeper understanding of words, patterns, characters, and literary devices. Exploring the innertexture is exploring the world embedded in the language of the text or

⁸ Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1996), 7.

the world of the text. To achieve this, I will use “beginning, middle, and ending” by dividing the rhetorical unit (selected text Matt 2: 1-12).

2.3.1.2 *Intertexture*

According to Robbins, the intertexture of a text is the interaction of the language in the text with the outside material, physical objects, historical events, texts, customs, values, roles, institutions and systems.⁹ In this study, I will be exploring phenomena from outside embedded in the text such as exploring the star seen by the magi as the star of Jacob in the Book of Numbers in the Old Testament. It requires the exploration of other texts to interpret the aspects that are internal to the text. Intertexture covers the spectrums of (1) oral-scribal intertexture; (2) historical intertexture; (3) social intertexture; and (4) cultural intertexture.

2.3.1.3 *Social and Cultural Texture*

Any author’s construction of a text is influenced by a world around him/her. Considering the Matthean Gospel as a Gospel written somewhere in the first century Mediterranean world indicates that the implied author has understanding of the Roman imperial system. Thus, the social and cultural codes embedded in the text reflect the social and cultural context dominated by the Roman Empire. This section focuses analysing the text’s “social and cultural nature *as a text*” using the challenge-response (riposte) feature referenced by Robbins.¹⁰ This part will show that the social and cultural values embedded in the social and cultural codes of the language of the text and that they exhibit the importance of the star as light. It will explore the rhetorical compositions of the ‘rhetoric of praise and blame’ which establishes the distinction between the person or group that is

⁹ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 7.

¹⁰ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 7.

honoured and the one that is shamed – or from the point of view of ‘light’ it is the distinction between the person or group that is with light and those without light.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter lays out the reading methodology used in this study. It is a sociorhetorical reading of the text that will be analysed by the hermeneutics of *Aiga Talimalama*. The sociorhetorical reading of the text is exploring the innertexture, the intertexture, and the social and cultural texture of the texture. That interpretation will be analysed by the *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutics by way of exploring how that hermeneutics functions in the sociorhetorical interpretation of Matthew 2:1-12.

CHAPTER THREE: The Innertextual reading of Matthew 2:1-12

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first part of exegesis which is the innertextual interpretation of the text with its analysis by the hermeneutical lenses of *Aiga Talimalama*. The lenses are *Malama* (Light), *Tali-malama* (Awaiting and Receiving Light), *Fai ma Malama* (Becoming a Light), *Manuia o le Malama* (Rewards/Blessings of the Light). It will begin with the interpretation of the significance of the placement of the text in the Matthean presentation of Jesus' ministry followed by the interpretation of the text as a rhetorical and narrative unit. The interpretation of the text as a rhetorical and narrative unit is an exploration of the language of the text based on the three species of rhetoric. They are 'judicial, epideictic, and deliberative.'¹ Exploring the text using these three species of rhetoric is finding whether the shining star as the shining light of the love of God in and through the birth of Christ is an event that considers important the past, present, or future. The chapter ends with a conclusion that will lead the study to Chapter Four, the intertextual, and social and cultural textual interpretation of the text.

3.2 Placement of the Text – 2:1-12 in Matthew

Before interpreting the placement of Matt 2:1-12 in the Matthean presentation of Jesus' ministry, it is important to give a brief review of the prominent interpretations of the star in the story of the birth of Jesus in Matt 2:1-12. This review is important for it leads the study to the consideration of the star in the story of the birth of Jesus as light or *malamalama* according to my Samoan hermeneutics of *Aiga Talimalama*.

¹ This study utilizes Aristotle's understanding of rhetoric. For Aristotle, there are three species of rhetoric which are 'judicial, deliberative, and epideictic.' Judicial is about the past. Epideictic speaks of the present and deliberative depicts the future. See Kennedy, *New Testament Through Rhetorical Interpretation*, 19-20.

The main interpretations of the star in the story of the birth of Jesus by the Matthean scholars fall into two main interpretations. One is the interpretation of the star as a natural star and the other interpretation is the star as a supernatural star – a star as miraculous. The star (as seen by the magi in Matt 2:1-12) as a natural star is considered the light or glory of the Lord shone from a distance to show the birth of Christ to the three wise men.² The star in Matthew 2:1-12 as a supernatural star is a star considered a sign of the birth of Jesus connected to Num. 24:17.³ The star as a supernatural star was the belief in the time of the Roman Empire. Even the astronomer were not able to interpret those stars because they were supernatural stars. For this study, both interpretations are important. It does not matter whether the star is natural or supernatural. I see both stars from my *Aiga Talimalama* Hermeneutics bringing forth light that guides and leads the magi to Jesus and they are an action connected to the star of Jacob in Numbers 24. The literary platform upon which that interpretation is based upon is the adapted structure of the Gospel of Matthew shown below. As in the hermeneutical circle according to Werner Jeanrond:

“...we can never understand a whole without understanding all of its parts; nor can we adequately understand the parts without seeing them functioning in the overall composition to which we contribute.”⁴

The first widely accepted structure of the Gospel of Matthew is B. W. Bacon’s structure focused on the five major discourses in Matthew (Chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18, and

² See John Gill, *Exposition of the Bible* on the website <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/matthew-2-9.html> accessed on 2 May 2022; Aaron Adair, “The Star of Christ in the Light of Astronomy” *Journal of Religion and Science* vol 47 no. 1 (2012): 7-29; Margaret Davies, *Matthew (A New Biblical Commentary)*, Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2009), 33-34.

³ See Craig A. Evans, *Matthew*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 52-53; John F. Walvoord, *Matthew - Thy Kingdom Come: A Commentary on the First Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1974), 23; Stephen Westerholm, *Matthew in New Interpreter’s Bible: One Volume Commentary edited by Beverly Roberts Gaventa and David Petersen* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010) Pages 925-964.

⁴ Werner Jeanrond, *Theological Hermeneutics: Developing And Significance* (London: SCM Press, 2002), 5-6.

24-25) believed to be a parallel to the five books of Moses.⁵ It is followed by Kingsbury's threefold structure of Matthew that was prominent and favoured by many scholars of Matthew. The three major parts of Kingsbury's structure are 1:1-4:16 (Preparation for Jesus Messiah, Son of God), 4:17-16:20 (Proclamation of Jesus to Israel), and 16:21-28:20 (Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Messiah, Son of God). The literary markers of those three divisions according to Kingsbury are "From that time Jesus began to proclaim" in 4:17 and "From that time on, Jesus began to show" in 16:21.⁶

Those various and different structures of the Matthean Gospel all consider chapter 2 of Matthew as part of the beginning of the Matthean presentation of Jesus' ministry. It is where the birth of Jesus is told and shown revealing who Jesus is before the story about his actual ministry begins. This study also acknowledges that consideration of chapter 2 by exploring it to find more meaning-relevance of the birth of Jesus from my Samoan perspective of the significance of light or *malamalama* as embraced by our village honorifics of *Aiga Talimalama*. Thus, the structure of the Gospel of Matthew used in this study is called "The Structure of the Story of Jesus the Light"⁷ or "*Auivi o le Tala o Iesu o le Malamalama*". The structure follows Bacon's five discourses (Chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18, and 24-25) structure. This structure of the whole Gospel of Matthew will be used to identify the placement of Matthew 2:1-12 as the part of the Matthean presentation of

⁵ B. W. Bacon, "The Five Books of Matthew against the Jews," *The Expositor* 15 (1918): 56-66. Bacon was correct in recognizing the presence of the five discourses

⁶ J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 7-17. See D. R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (JSNTSup 31; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988); and J. A. Gibbs, *Matthew 1:1-11:1* (Concordia Commentary; St Louis, MO: Concordia Academic Press, 2006).

⁷ Calling Jesus the light in this study relates to the consideration of Jesus as the Morning Star, one of the given titles of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. There is a widely accepted interpretation of Jesus Christ as the Light, the Morning Star, relative to the star of Jacob mentioned in Numbers 24. See Joel B. Green et al., eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1992), 472-473. The star in the Gospel of Matthew in the birth of Jesus also relates to the star of Jacob in Numbers 24. I will elaborate on this interpretation in the analysis of the intertexture of the text.

Jesus' ministry, where the birth of Jesus Christ is revealed, by the shining star or the shining light – *Le malamalama pupula* witnessed by the wise men from the East.

Structure of Jesus the Light (*Auivi o le Tala o Iesu o le Malamalama*)

- 1:1-4:25 Jesus Christ the Light (*O Iesu Keriso o le Malamalama*)
 5:1-7:28 Jesus' Sermon about Light on the Mountain (*Lauga a Iesu i le Malamalama i le Mauga*)
 8:1-9:38 Jesus the Light's healing and miracles (*Vavega ma Faamalologa a Iesu le Malamalama*)
 10:1-42 Jesus' chosen disciples to proclaim the Light (*Filifilia e Iesu ona Soo e faailoa le Malamalama*)
 11:1-12:50 Rejection of the Light by the Jewish leaders (*Feteenaiga a Iesu le Malamalama ma Taitai Iutaia*)
 13:1-58 Parables of the Kingdom of the Light (*Faataoto i le Malo o le Malamalama*)
 14:1-17:27 Acknowledgement of Jesus the Light by the disciples (*Iloa e Soo o Iesu o le Malamalama*)
 18:1-35 Light in the Community (*O le Malamalama i totonu o Faapotopotoga o Tagata*)
 19:1-22:46 The Authority of Jesus Christ the Light (*O le Pule a le Malamalama*)
 23:1-25:46 Woes, coming of the Kingdom (*O le Faa-Aua a le Malamalama ma le Afio mai o le Malo o le Lagi*)
 26:1-28:20 Rebirth Given by Jesus Christ the Light (*O le toe fanaufouina o le Tagata e le Malamalama*)

The first part of the Structure of the Light (Matt 1:1 – 4:25) consists of the birth narrative (2:1-23) relative to the renowned genealogy (1:1-25 that enlists the patriarchal framework commencing from Abraham right to David the King, and from David to Joseph the father of Jesus. So the birth of Jesus Christ in chapter 2 as revealed by the star seen by the magi is the birth of the Light from the family of the King of Israel who will enlighten the world. Thus, the rest of the story about Jesus' ministry is seen by this study as the story about Jesus the Star or the Light shining upon the world to save the world. Thus, this literary placement of the birth of Jesus as the birth of Light that will enlighten the world is considered important by this study. It is explored to find out how our worlds

function in that light. This exploration will begin with the analysis of the text, 2:1-12, as a rhetorical and narrative unit.

3.2 Matthew 2:1-12 as a narrative and a rhetorical unit about Jesus the

Light (O le anofale faa-le-tusiga ia Iesu o le malamalama)

A rhetorical unit has a beginning, middle, and ending parts. Matthew 2:1-12 as a narrative and rhetorical unit is part of the overall composition of the Gospel of Matthew in its final form. Shown below is the threefold structure of Matthew 2:1-12 as a rhetorical and narrative unit.⁸

1. Beginning vv1-2 Wise men looking for the child whose star rises – the light
2. Middle vv3-8 Wise men and Herod – Herod fears the star or the light
3. Ending vv9-12 Wise men follow the shining star or the shining light

Before exploring 2:1-12 as a rhetorical and a narrative unit, I will firstly analyse the whole of chapter 2 and the function of the birth of Jesus as revealed by the shining star in the whole chapter. This is essential for it shows the connection of chapter 2 to the events happened in chapter 1, and what will happen in chapter 3 as explained above.

⁸ Talbert considers 2:1-12 as a rhetorical unit or pericope entitled as the “Visit of the Magi”. For Talbert, this pericope can be displayed as a ‘chiasmus’ which resembles a play of characters as they respond to their respective actions, as reflected below:

- Magi arrive from the east (2:1)
- Magi have seen a special star and seek to worship Jesus (2:2)
- Herod is terrified of the one born king of the Jews (2:3)
- Herod questions the religious leaders (2:4)
- Religious leaders answer Herod (2:5–6; cf. Mic. 5:2)
- Herod plots against the one born king of the Jews (2:7–8)
- Magi see the star again and are enabled to worship Jesus (2:9–11)
- Magi depart to their own country (2:12)

This structure emphasizes the response of the characters to each other in the story. My exploration of the text, 2:1-12 as a rhetorical and narrative unit emphasizes the response to the shining star and the implications of the shining star and its metaphorical effect to the world.

Chapter 2 itself is about the birth of Jesus in the time of Herod the Great. The chapter begins with the Herod's hearing about the birth of the King of the Jews (2:1-3), and ends with the death of Herod (2:19-23). So the birth of Jesus represents the Kingdom of God against the Roman Kingdom represented by Herod the Great. Thus, the birth of Jesus as revealed by the shining star or *Le malamalama o le fetu* is the revelation of the sovereignty of God upon any kings or any powers in the world. In chapter 2 itself, the return of the wise men to their own country that ends 2:1-12 as a rhetorical and narrative unit is followed by Joseph's taking the child Jesus and Mary, his mother, to Egypt because Herod was planning to search for the child. It is the message given to Joseph by an angel of the Lord. The rest of chapter 2 speaks about Herod's search for the child Jesus and the death of Herod. Chapter 2 ends with Joseph leaving Egypt with Jesus and his mother for Nazareth. So the events happened after the birth of Jesus (2:1-12) shows God's protection of the child Jesus the shining star or the shining light from the hands of the earthly kings (2:13-23). In other words, the greed for power of the people on earth was not able to impede the shining of the born star or the shining light, Jesus Christ. Thus, for this study, the birth of Jesus is very important and its function as the birth of the shining star or light to our worlds is very important. Thus, it is the task of the following sections to explore the birth of Jesus in 2:1-12, as a rhetorical and narrative unit, relative to our valuing and signifying of light as *malamalama* in our worlds.

Matthew 2:1-12 as a narrative and rhetorical unit has literary and opening signs. The opening signs are shown in vv. 1-2 and the closing signs in vv. 11-12. The opening and closing signs are Jesus the shining star or light as the main character; the times and places where Jesus was born and made his home; and the people on earth must pay homage to the born star. The opening signs in vv1-2 are: Firstly, Jesus as the main character was born in Jerusalem. Secondly, Jesus was born in the time of Herod the Great.

Thirdly, the child born named Jesus, is the king of the Jews. Fourthly, Jesus the born child as King is revealed by the shining star according to the wise men.

The closing signs vv11-12 are: Firstly, Jesus the main character with his mother, are shown in the house, the place of birth, entered by the wise men – the place that the shining star led the wise men to which implies that the shining star himself is Jesus. The child born. Secondly, the wise men paid homage to Jesus Christ, the born star. The wise men now find the King of Jews they have searched for. Thirdly, Herod is mentioned again. This time, the mention of Herod's name, is to show that it is not the Herod's way that the wise men chose to go back to. Instead, they chose the other way, which is the way of the shining star, the way of Jesus. So what is mentioned in the middle part of the rhetorical and narrative unit could be what the wise men encounter on their way to finding Jesus. How they deal with it is probably another function of the middle part. It is the task of the next part of the interpretation of Matt 2:1-12 as a rhetorical and narrative unit, to find that.

A rhetorical and narrative unit has rhetorical and narrative characters and their interactions in the unit reveal a rhetorical situation and a rhetorical problem. The characters in the unit are Jesus and Star as light as the main characters, and all other characters as minor characters. They are the wise men, Mary, Herod, chief priests and scribes, the prophet, Judah, rulers of Judah, shepherd, Israel, Bethlehem, Judea. The wise men's search for Jesus guided by the star is the rhetorical situation. This is revealed in the consideration of the progression of the unit from verse 1 to verse 12 as a literary invention⁹ arranged in a style of putting forward a statement followed by questions to show what is needed to be achieved as proposed in the statement. For example, the

⁹ Kennedy speaks of the five parts of rhetoric as 'invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery.' See Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 13-14.

beginning of the unit begins with the statement about the wise men's interpretations of the shining star they have witnessed as the rising of the King of the Jews and their questions about where to find that King. It is followed by the literary amplification of that statement and questions in the words of the prophecy in vv5-6. The prophecy is the proof of their claim of the birth of the King of the Jews as revealed by the shining star or light. From that rhetorical situation evoked the rhetorical problem which is the question about the wise men as Gentiles seeing the shining star as the revelation of the birth of the King of the Jews. Why not the Jews? The answer to this question will be found in the intertextual and social and cultural textual interpretations of the text.

According to Talbert¹⁰ Magi were gentiles who were able to recognize signs and foretell events, including the rise of Kings. This is the only time Magi's are mentioned in the Christian Bible. Therefore, their role in this narrative is crucial and was meant for something extraordinary. In verse 2, the phrase 'observing his star from the east' is so significant as their role as seeing the rise of Kings (as Talbert says) is accurate. Furthermore εἶδομεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ' says more as εἶδομεν that cover three groups of tenses of the act of seeing- amazing things (Luke 5:26), conflicts (Phillipians 1:30) and in this case a star (Matt 2:2). The verb specifically associates with a subsequent recognizing and understanding. Particularly, in the narrative of the New Testament, a past-tense seeing results in a present-tense knowing refers to "I saw" means "I know".¹¹ Three species of rhetoric are embedded in this verse - the judicial, epideictic, and deliberative. The futuristic role of this verb means it is if the Magi knew there was something even more special about the star that something special was to come out of the star. The noun ἀνατολῇ is unique in the sense as its meaning attaches the verb rising. This

¹⁰ Charles H Talbert, *Matthew (Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament)*". (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010) 35-37.

¹¹ Logos Bible Software- eidomen

is because ανατολη literally means rising but indicative of the sun rise. Since the sun and the stars rise in the east, this word is often used to mean east but the concept of east was not so much a direction on earth but rather in time: it denotes the past and particularly antiquity (which makes it a synonym of the Hebrew word דָּקֵם, qedem).¹²

The reason why the Magi were seeking where the baby was born is explained in the infinitive aorist active of the verb προσκυνη/σαι (pay homage or worship). The fact that the verb is active voice, means the subject performs the action ie- the Magi are serious about paying homage to the newborn child. The root of the verb (προσκυνεω) also means to greet or meet or ultimately merge with. So, their mission was not just seek, greet and meet the child, but merge and be able to make contact with him. This is outstanding because we have gentiles who have no affiliation to the Jewish child, yet they made it their mission to meet the child, perhaps confirming their title as the ‘King makers’.

The use passive genitive participle γεννηθέντος (gennēthentos, *was born*) is consistent with passive verb forms in 1:16 (ἐγεννήθη). This confirms the prophecy in Micah 5:2¹³, as the birth or beget of the child is now here.

On the other end, Herod the King was not only frightened but the verb ἐταράχθη means more than just frightened. He was troubled both physically and mentally, was not in peace with the news. As a result he gathered and inquired or ἐπυνθάνετο which has a middle voice, which shows real concern about the action. The action here is inquiring about the location of where the child is born. The verb πυνθανομαι also means to learn, but not in the sense of prolonged studying, but rather in the sense of to learn of or about

¹² Logos Bible software- anatolh

¹³ But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days

a particular fact, either by serendipitous hearsay or by targeted inquiry.¹⁴ This shows signs of desperation with Herod, confirms being threatened by the child.

The reference to a prophecy from Jewish religious leaders perhaps was the last thing Herod needed. The indicative perfect verb *γεγραπται* indicates that action has already been done meaning it was in was writing from years ago, just waiting for it to happen. When the leaders confirmed it was during their time, Herod initiated his plot and the adverb *λάθρα* (meaning covertly or secretly) insinuates a cunning act to keep his intentions from the Jewish Leaders.

The aorist active imperative verb *απαγγειλατε* implies that Herod commands the Magi to search him but the aorist feature reflect that it must be done in silence. This supports the sly act as he keeps it secretly. Despite Herod wanting to pay homage to the child, these verbs support the point that Herod had his own covert operation planned out.

The last section of the rhetorical unit I believe is the climax as the mission of the Magi is successfully achieved. The star was their guide as the prefix *προ* in the verb *προαγω* illustrates the positioning of where the star was during their mission; which was in front or before them. It also means to lead then it stopped, as the verb *ιστημι* which means “to stand” is closely related to the action of the verb *τιθημι* (*tithemi*), meaning to set, put, place or establish. This means the star was bound to stop in front of where the child was born, to guide and lead the Magi to the child.

Once the star stopped the Magi stopped, their reaction was priceless. The passive deponent voice in *ἐχάρησαν* implies a overwhelming rush of joy. The noun *χαρὰν* does not justify their mood as they expressed through gifts but also worshipping the child. This child who has no ties to the Magi as they are gentiles, yet the participle aorist active

¹⁴ Logos Bible software- evpunqa.neto

πεσόντες suggest their prostrating act as sign of joy and respect to pay homage προσεκύνησαν to the child as they insisted in verse 2.

3.3 How the Aiga Talimalama functions in the innertextual interpretations

We can argue that the Magi's mission to search for the child is with the star as their guide, is reflected in *Aiga Talimalama's* search and upbringing of *Salamasina's* baby. Not only this became their mission, but it became their identity or *faasinomaga*. How? Through their name bestowed upon them in *Talimalama* or 'awaiting new dawn.' Their *faasinomaga* (identity) through their honorifics as *Talimalama* is set stone in their honorifics.

The Magi's were gentiles, they were outsiders so as the *Salesatele* family to the *Salamasina's* son. Yet they came across a child who was an outsider to their family, not knowing the risks or threats (whether a ghost or curse), they still made it their responsibility and their mission to await for the next morning to see the child through. The star that led of was in front of Magi, also implies to the new day, the new dawn for the child to reveal himself as the son of *Salamasina*. It can also be seen as a natural phenomenon through God's creation, the stars and rise of the Sun to a day, is what guided the Magi and the *Talimalama* family to receive their child, their mission. To extend these phenomena through nature and creation, the word *Malama* meaning light, is what the stars and the sun emit. This is resemblance of guidance and life, is what *Aiga Talimalama* is about. It was awaiting for a new breath of life to be bestowed upon their lives and family. The boy became a guiding star a breath of new dawn, of new life to their family.

The concept of *Tautua* or service/servant ripples within the narrative. The Magi were servants of the Persian community through the expertise of reading stars and

astronomy. Even though they had ties with the Jewish community, the star had lead them to be affiliated with the Jewish kingship in Herod and religious leaders. Their *tautua* was now accounted for other communities outside their hometowns. This shows that service should not be accustomed to our comfort zones but to be inclusive of other communities. Their gifts and especially homage or worship is also important in the concept of *tautua*. They did not just locate the child, but they also showed love and respect towards Jesus. Respect is a crucial in *tautua* faasamoa it is not given but earned. To worship God, we must respect God and show respect in how we praise, give thanks and communicate with God. The *Salesatele* families extended their service to seeking for the *Salamasina*'s son, whom was not flesh or their blood. They went of their comfort zones to accommodate for the child. What did it bring? It brought them blessings or in Samoan known as *faamanuiaga* or rewards.

Faamanuiaga (rewards/ blessings) is reflected in the narrative, when the boy was located. The Magi were overjoyed as their mission was complete. Their blessing was to fulfil what they had to look for, the child who the King of the Jews. The lost boy in *Salamasina*'s son was revealed in the new dawn when the *Lelei* and *Lalau* were able to care and nurture for the boy until the next morning. Like the Magi with their gifts, *Lelei* and *Lalau* gave the boy the gift of caring and taking care of him despite the child being a curse. He paid homage to the child and respect and was then granted rewards from *Salamasina*. *Lelei*'s name was extended as a blessing to *Leleimalefagaiega* meaning your good service has been rewarded. Their land as part of their *faasinomaga* was also blessed by *Salamasina* as a reward, their shores were filled with fish and land with crops for their sustenance.

3.4 Summary

This chapter confirms the use of SRC as methodology used in this study. The Sociorhetorical criticism with the *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutic to explore the text. The innertexture exegesis of the text has allowed to see the characters mood's and intentions in depth by analysing key verbs and nouns. It has opened up another dimension of the narrative bringing more sense in the characters movements and potentially why they did do what they did.

After integrating innertexture exegesis with my *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutic all aspects of the *Aiga Talimalama* I had listed have been successfully used to read the text. These include identity or *faasinomaga*, *tautua* and *faamanuiaga*. I was also able to find evidence of the notion of waiting for the dawn of a new day to reveal the identity of the lost boy.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Intertextual analysis of the Matthew 2:1-12 with Numbers 24:14-19.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is the second part of the exegesis where I will establish an intertextual reading of Matthew 2:1-12 and Numbers 24:14-19. After the exegesis, I will use my *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutics to analyse the reading.

4.2 Numbers 24:14-19

14 So now, I am going to my people; let me advise you what this people will do to your people in days to come.”

15 So he uttered his oracle, saying, “The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is clear.

16 the oracle of one who hears the words of God and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down but with eyes uncovered: 17 I see him but not now; I behold him but not near—a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the foreheads of Moab and the heads of all the Shethites. 18 Edom will become a possession, Seir a possession of its enemies, while Israel does valiantly. 19 One out of Jacob shall rule and destroy the survivors of Ir.”

This rhetorical unit is titled in the New Revised Standard Version as Balaam’s fourth oracle, which was his last oracle. According to Bailey¹ the previous oracles might have been appended against Israel as the larger context might demand, but this oracle was against Amalekites, Kenites, and a combination of Assyrians and Eberites. It is possible Balaam’s scope of starting from smaller to bigger nations was done to boost his

¹ Lloyd R Bailey. "*Leviticus-Numbers: (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary)*" (Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005) 529-531.

reputation, not unlike the biblical prophets whose oracles sometimes extend to surrounding nations.

In the larger editorial context of the book of Numbers where the oracles of Balaam are placed during the period of Israel's wilderness itinerary, a wider message emerges. Balaam speaks only for the Lord God of Israel, and not for a council of deities. In the first oracle, Balaam observes that Israel is as numerous as the dust (23:10), echoing the promise to Abraham at Genesis 13:16. In the second oracle, he reminds the king of Moab that God has made and irrevocable promises to bless Israel, a reaffirmation of Genesis 12:1-3. The third oracle describes Israel's future in terms of an idyllic paradise, in keeping with the "promised land" as one "flowing with milk and honey" (Exod 3:8). The fourth oracles speaks of a future ruler of Israel whose power will impact the territories in Transjordan, thus affirming Genesis 17:6, 16.²

According to Vaopuka³ the interpretation of the star of Jacob and the scepter coming from Israel (that will crush the borderlands of Moab) as someone who will crush barriers that stop the so-called other/s from entering salvation or promised-land, through three parts from reading of Matthew. The intertextuality of the Fetu Taki reading sees Jesus as the fulfilment of the oracle: Jesus as the sceptre who brings salvation.⁴

4.3 Oral scribal subtexture

In this subtexture, literary features such as recitation, recontextualization, reconfiguration, narrative amplication and thematic elaboration is used. As far as recitation goes, there are a few words that have similar meanings/ resemblances I would

² Bailey. *"Leviticus-Numbers,"* 530-531.

³ Iafeta Vaopuka, *An Inter-Textual Reading of Matthew 2:1-12 And Numbers 24:14-19 From A 'Tokelauan Farewell Experience'* (BTh thesis, Malua Theological College, 2021) 24-28.

⁴ Vaopuka, *An Inter-Textual Reading of Matthew 2:1-12 And Numbers 24:14, 27-29.*

like to bring to light. The three words I wish to cross examine are; prophets in Matt 2:5 and oracle Num 24:15; ruler in Matt 2:6 and sceptre in Num 24:17 and star in Matt 2:2 and Num 24:17.

4.3.1 ‘prophets’ in Matt 2:5 and ‘oracle’ Numbers 24:15

The word prophet in Matthew 2:5 προφήτου and oracle ⁵נְבִיאָה (BHS) or παραβολήν (LXX) are not synonyms. The definition of oracle defined by Freedman ⁶ linked to prophecy; oracle was information transmitted from the deity to human beings, usually either answers to important questions or revelations about future events. The reference of προφήτου by the Magi relocates this divine information as passed on from the Old Testament.⁷ The oracle that Balaam mentions in Numbers also has someone that will rise from the little tribe Judah and will rule over Israel. The significance of mentioning these prophecies and oracles, is the fact that will one day rule over Israel and save them from their miseries.

The fact that prophecies are a common denominator in the two rhetoric texts is that Balaam was able see the ruler who shall rise from Israel, but he wasn’t ready to be revealed to the world. Even though Magi couldn’t utter the prophecy and wasn’t given a preview of the ruler, but they eventually met the King of the Jew in baby Jesus. The fact the prophecy occurred in these two very two different ages, it supports historical intertexture, of a specific event occurring in different times and different locations.

⁵ Although discussions of prophecy in the OT often use the English word —oracle as a general term for any speech by a prophet, the RSV and other modern translations use it mostly to translate a single Hebrew word, *ma ā.* *Ma ā.* designates a specific type of speech used by ancient Israelite prophets. Thus when translating *ma ā.*, —oracle| indicates that a prophetic passage or speech belongs to this specific type. See definition for Oracles in Freedman et al, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol 6* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 6513-6515.

⁶ Freedman et al, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6513.

⁷ Micha 5:2 But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

So eventually the prophecies and oracle guided the Magi and Balaam to *malama* that the respectful audience were waiting for. So the whole lead up of meeting the *malama* had been written, it was just a matter of time it was revealed. Despite Balaam and the people of Israel not able to witness, but the Magi were arguably the amongst the first to meet or *tali* the *malama* who will fulfil the prophecy once and for all.

4.3.2 ‘ruler’ in Matt 2:6 and ‘sceptre’ in Numbers 24:17

The word ruler in Matthew 2:6 ἡγεμόσιν and sceptre טַבָּעַל (BHS) ἀρχηγούς (LXX) all have a few things in common; they are all masculine nouns and they are all affiliated with leading. The meaning of טַבָּעַל which is rod, staff or club symbolizes authority and leadership. A common reference to the rod was the shepherd and his rod, how the shepherd uses his rod to guide the sheep. ἡγεμόσιν is leading or to govern its comes from the root word ηγεομαι which means to lead or guide. This verb's middle deponent voice is somewhat followed in the sense of "to be of the opinion" but always implying a natural authority rather than a formal one, and an intimate involvement rather than a remote dictatorship. Ultimately, a leader like this is part of the people led and forms his opinions from an intimate familiarity with the people led.⁸

This sounds like Jesus leadership, an intimate King who served, loved and saved his people. Not a leader who physically tormented and guided His people into accepting Him, but rather served His people and had an emotional bond with his disciples, who he healed and also those he preached to.

Many generations had waited for this put a face to this *malama*. The long-awaited fulfilment was in the hands of the Magi to understand and experience this new dawn in

⁸ Freedman et al, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6513.

Talimalama. Their experience ended with not only paying homage to the *malama*, but also gifting very sentimental gifts to the one and only *malama*.

4.3.3 ‘star’ in Matt 2:2 and Numbers 24:17

The word star in Matt 2:2 ἀστέρα (Matt. 2:2 BGT) and Num 24:17 כּוֹכָב (BHS) and ἄστρον (LXX) means to burn, to shine bright. That means that to the ancients, a star was literally a burner, or one that burns. According to Duguid⁹, Jesus as the Magi did at his incarnation, and submit your life to his lordship. Jesus became the star, the light source for those who needed it the most. Like the Israelites in Numbers, who were tested in the wilderness, had foreigners who never the best of Israel and its people (Balak) and attempted to curse Israel. In the end, the star always shone bright for His people.

The star which resembles the light source of the *malama*. From the sense of *Talimalama*, the star can also be seen from Numbers as the same star of Jacob, which shines bright and becomes the light source for those who are marginalised and oppressed. The birth of *malama* also shines righteousness to those who were after Israel such Balak and tribes in Moabites and Edomites who wanted to cause harm to Israel.

4.4 Analysis of Intertextual reading using *Aiga Talimalama* hermeneutics

The intertextual reading of Numbers allowed to shine light on other significant words such as prophecies, rulers and star. It enables to provide other dimensions of how to look at the narrative rather a text but as a *Talimalama* sequel. Therefore, the significant words were looked at from Biblical perspective but also from a *Talimalama* perspective.

⁹ Iain Duguid. *Numbers: God's Presence in the Wilderness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 286–289.

The whole prophecy from Numbers that Balaam had uttered, reiterates the importance of the many prophecies that were made leading up to this new dawn in *Talimalama*. The fact that it is one of many prophecies, its reference to Ruler and star makes it best suited for these reading of *Talimalama*.

The sceptre can be mistakenly interpreted as a violent leader, one who uses a weapon to guide and dictate authority. This is not how we look at the sceptre, but rather a leader who serves his people and has an intimate bond with them. This is what *malama* is all about, the new dawn that brings life does not wear and break life.

As for the star, the star resembles light, righteousness, resembles life! This is what the star of Jacob is all about, about the lives of Israel while tested in the wilderness. *Malama* is also about hope and bring that source of light and life when there it seems to be none. The *Talimalama* makes it all worthwhile waiting for as it continues to shine in our lives today.

4.5 Summary

To summarise this chapter, the intertextual reading of Matthew 2:1-12 Numbers 24:14-19 using the *Taliamalama* hermeneutics has indeed been a fulfilling exercise. There is a relationship between the star of Jacob and the star mentioned in Matthew, also the Sceptre and Ruler and lastly star mentioned in Matthew and Numbers. The fact they had all been waiting for the new dawn for the Ruler to be born, is something they all have in common.

In the next chapter, an extension of exegesis is explored using a challenge-response approach concentrating on the different audience (e.g., King Herod, magi, etc).

CHAPTER FIVE:

Social and Cultural Texture

5.1 Introduction

Robbins 'Challenge- Response (riposte)' feature in Social and cultural texture will be utilised model to analyse the text. Riposte is defined by Robbins as a continuous tug-of-war, a game of push and shove.¹ The theme of 'Jesus is the light' or as the star has been validated in the innertexture and intertexture study, will be focus of this analysis.

5.2 Challenge-response (riposte)

There are two forces in the Riposte model that Robbins demonstrate; the source (challenger) and receiver. The relationship of different characters and the backgrounds they represent (e.g., Herod- Jews, magi- gentiles, etc) received Jesus and his birth. Jesus seen as the source, who challenges a Jewish orientated society (none other than the king)- King Herod. Jesus was the source of light, that guided the magi which revealed His place of birth. There is more to the source that just light, it was the birth than the light that had shone not just in Jerusalem but all countries of the world. King Herod didn't see that and found it hard to accept. This is where the social and cultural setting was challenged that I will discuss in this chapter.

According to Robbins, the challenge-response has three phases.

- 1- The challenge in terms of some action (word, deed, or both) on the part of the challenger
- 2- The perception of the message by both the individual to whom it is directed and the public at large; and
- 3- The reaction of receiving individual and the evaluation of the reaction on the part of the public.²

¹ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 80-82.

² Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 80.

In the context of the selected text, I have identified Jesus as the source or challenger. The message is seen in the theme of this study ‘Jesus is the light’ through his birth and the light source in his teachings as depicted throughout Matthew.³ The receiver in this analysis is first King Herod and the magi.

5.2.1 Jesus the challenger- embodies the message of ‘Jesus is the light.’

As outlined in chapter 3, Jesus as the embodiment of light is evident throughout his teachings and sayings throughout Matthew. It is the birth narrative of Jesus which initiates the theme of Jesus, He is revealed to the world through the light of a star. We also need to understand, before Jesus was born there was already a world who saw him as something else. They saw Jesus as a threat, even before he was born. They had seen Him as a challenge. As Robbins says in Riposte, the challenger claims to enter the social space of another.⁴ To others who existed at the time, they saw Jesus as that, as challenge. His name was King Herod.

If we look closely at the magi’s question in verse 2, the ownership of the star is what link Jesus to the star. It is as if, Jesus owns the star which resembles he is the star. asking, “*Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.*” This is supported by LXX αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστέρα where the αὐτοῦ pronoun is genitive case. This reveals that even before Jesus was born, a light source was already in the skies representing Jesus, this was His initiation to the world.

This message was supposed to see as a positive message to most, but unfortunately it never turned out that way.

³ See chapter three of this thesis (3.2) Matthew 2:1-12 as a narrative and a rhetorical unit about Jesus the Light (*O le anofale faa-le-tusiga ia Iesu o le malamalama*).

⁴ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 80.

5.2.1 King Herod the receiver- perception of the message

King Herod was the king of Jews, supported and had a close relationship with Pharisees, tax collectors and majority of Jewish leaders.⁵ According to Josephus documents Herod reigned from about 37 to 4 BCE. Herod was insecure especially when it came to his throne. It is believed his personal life had a big influence on the way he ruled over Judah. He was known to be a palace intrigue and was rampant. He had many wives and they believed to be jealous over each other, to the extent Herod actually thought his wives were plotting against him. This is why he saw the birth of this new so-called King as a challenge.⁶ Herod's words in v3 reveal this fear but what it shows more is his insecurity, "*When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him,*". However, Jesus was more than just a message, He was 'the' message. What is also revealed in this verse, was that Jerusalem was behind their king. The verb ἐταράχθη also extends its emotions to being in doubt or agitated. Perhaps the news put them in a state of shock.

Herod's reaction in vv3-4 and vv7-8,⁷ by summoning his leaders and finding out more information about this new messiah, is evidence he started to question his worth. He seeks guidance but validation through his leaders by the pretence act of instructing them to find where the baby is born. This is a feature of riposte as the receiver seeks his

⁵ Turner, *Matthew*, 36.

⁶ Turner, *Matthew*, 36.

⁷ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born....Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." (Matt 2:3-4, 7-8)

worth in the challenger. What he does in the interim which is plotting against Jesus is proof that he is judging the Messiah, as if he is greater than the Messiah.⁸

Metaphorically speaking, if we were to insert this receiver's actions in light of our theme, we can also exemplify that Herod is in the dark. Not willing to accept Jesus or even worse, he believes he is greater than the Messiah who has been aware to him by the magi. Turner also refers to Herod as an evil pretender, who comes up with the deceptive plot to send the magi to find Jesus than return and let him know. Not knowing his endgame was to eliminate the messiah. This evilness portrays darkness and wickedness which only proves his heart was never ready to receive the light through Jesus.⁹

5.2.3 The reaction of receiving individual-magi accepting the light and aftermath.

The magi were also receivers however, their inception of Jesus was completely different from Herod. At the start of the chapter, the magi are arguably the instigators of this whole mission- to find the light.¹⁰ In comparison to Herod, they took Jesus as a challenge in a very positive manner, rather than plot against they received and had accepted him. As supposed to Herod who could not encompass the bigger picture as prophesied by former prophets. The acceptance of the message by the magi was evident at how they encountered Jesus, they were overwhelmed with joy. To act on their emotion of joy, they paid homage and provided gifts for the Messiah. This is without an absolute doubt that the magi had accepted and embraced the light through Jesus. Despite their

⁸ The receiver as a response to the riposte, questions whether he is equal to the challenger. He challenges the receiver as he believes is of higher level than the receiver. See Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 80-81.

⁹ Turner, *Matthew*, 83-85.

¹⁰ Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 125-127

background and gentiles, it is ironic that the Judean King failed to accept the message of light but accepted by three wise men who had no ties to the Messianic line.¹¹

5.2.4 Riposte- Magi's response to Herod

In the last verse of the text, reveals the riposte the magi's had responded to Herod. There is a mention of a dream however, there are no details about the dream as opposed to Matt 2:13.¹² This was the magi's reaction to Herod's command in v8, that they were not to return to Herod but seek a different route to their home. This was their quick, clever response to King Herod and his plotting scheme. Although no words were exchanged because they never got to meet again, but it is seen as the magi accepted the message in the dream. This only validates that the magi's were all about caring for Jesus, their true acceptance of Jesus as the light they searched for through the star.

5.2.5 Challenge-response from an Aiga Talimalama perspective

The message of Jesus as the *Malama* is seen being accepted and rejected in the narrative. Herod was more about his status, honour and power and could not bear to accept the light as instigated by the magi's. However, the magi's who were gentiles had opened up their hearts when they had met Jesus, they were overfilled with joy. The magi confirm the *Talimalama* role, as they fulfilled their mission by identifying and locating the Jesus the *Malama* (light) as they searched and found *Tali* Him. Their acceptance of the *Malama*, is evidence in the event they did not return to Herod after paying homage to the *Malama*. This can also be seen as the magi sustaining life in the *Malama*, because who knows what would have happened if they did return to Herod.

¹¹ Turner, *Matthew*, 85-86.

¹² Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." (Matt 2:13)

5.3 Summary

What does this challenge-response tell us in the narrative? It confirms the fact that two parties responded differently in accepting the message of Jesus as the light. Herod was too content as a ruler and could not see the light. Filled with wickedness and deception, he failed to see Jesus as the light.

On the contrary, the magi who were complete gentiles were able to accept the message of Jesus as the light, who were filled with joy by worshipping and paying homage to the Messianic King. This is the magi also fulfilling their role as they did not return to Herod.

The magi have shown to the be *Talimalama* (waited for Jesus) who accepted Jesus *Malama*.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

In exploring Matthew 2:1-12 reading from a Samoan 'Aiga Talimalama' hermeneutics. The main question of this work revolved around the idea of whether the new dawn in *Aiga Talimalama* could be understood as the new morning that Jesus was born. Upon completion of the exegetical chapter, such connection of the two is very possible based on the textual evidences of the text.

The inner texture analysis examined how the narrative text grouped together its words, with the use of specific words that were repeated throughout the text to describe the narrative of the birth of Jesus Christ. The innertexture exegesis of the text has allowed to see the characters mood's and intentions in depth by analysing key verbs and nouns. Aspects of the Aiga Talimalama I had listed have been successfully used to read the text. These include *faasinomaga* (identity), *tautua* (service) and *faamanuiaga* (blessings/reward). I was also able to find evidence of the notion of waiting for the dawn of a new day to reveal the identity of the lost boy.

The intertexture analysis discussed recitations of keywords in Numbers 24:14-19. I was able to find a relationship between the star of Jacob and the star mentioned in Matthew, also the Sceptre and Ruler and lastly star mentioned in Matthew and Numbers. The fact they had all been waiting for the new dawn for the Ruler to be born, is something they all have in common. The social and cultural feature using challenge-response identifies Jesus as the message, who was not received by Herod but accepted by magis.

Aiga Talimalama derives from the family in Salesātele village, who were responsible for the search and the upbringing of *Salamasina's* son in *Salesātele* giving them their identity, known as Aiga Talimalama. The characteristics of the *Aiga Talimalama* in *Taliamalama* (awaiting new dawn) Malama (Light) developed a

hermeneutical lens to analyse Matthew 2:1-12? These characteristics such as *faasinomaga* (identity), *tautua* (service) and *faamanuiaga* (blessings/reward) were evident throughout the narrative.

Jesus as the light or *Iesu o le malamalama (Malama)* was a paramount theme throughout the narrative which reflects in the story of the *Aiga Talimalama*. The magi are seen as *Talimalama*, who awaited, searched and paid homage to the Jesus *Malama*. The elements of *tautua* (service) were reflected in their search, which entitled them to *faamanuiaga* (blessing/ reward). On the contrary, Herod can be seen as the character who did not serve the *Talimalama* role, rather plotted a deceptive plan to eliminate the *Malama*. This is because of wickedness and insecurity which does not illuminate features of the *Malama*.

As Samoan Christians of Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS), the awaiting of the new dawn is celebrated on the first Sunday of September every year (*Aso Sā o le Talalelei*). This year commemorates 192 years since the shores of Samoa were enlightened by London Missionaries. This event resonates with the *Aiga Talimalama* perspective.

It is also a reminder to my context as a fourth year Malua Theological student the importance of *Malama*. Although celebrated annually by the CCCS however, accepting *malama* must be an everyday reminder. Every morning we wake up, is a reminder of new dawns and new challenges we face. We shall not forget that every morning we wake up is also our way of accepting *Malama*. For us to receive and accept Jesus the *Malama*, is a *faamanuiaga* (blessing). So how do we respond to *Malama*, we respond through our *tautua* (service) as servants of Christ our duty to share and spread the light in Jesus we have been blessed to receive.

In moving this thesis forward, I hope to continue to use Samoan Hermeneutics as a reading lens to conduct additional inquiries of the Biblical text. This will enable me to contribute more to the Samoan and Pasifika library.

Appendix

Appendix 1- Interview with Leleimalefaga Esau

Original interview in Samoan, followed by English Translation.

Tasi nei o taofi o se tasi o matai e suafa ia Leleimalefaga. Esau, e uiga ile mafuaaga na mafua ai ona maua le Aiga Talimalama i Salesatele i Falealili.

E tusa ai ma le sailiiliga ile Aiga Talimalama, i nisi o matai sa suesueina, o le fetalaiga ia Tagitagiapua.Faafetai, ma Lalau Timoteo, o nisi o tulafale o le nuu, e aofia ile lio o le Aiga Talimalama o lo o ile tusi faalupega, sa maumau tutu lo laua taofi, e faapea e tasi lava le tala a le aiga, o le finagalo lava o Leleimalefaga. Esau. O le mau foi lena ale Aiga Talimalama.

I le molimau ale Fetalaiga ia Leleimalefaga. Esau. E tusa ai ma tala tuutaliga mai e lona tuua o Leleimalefaga Pulemau. E faapea le tala, o le Malaga Salamasina ma lana au malaga e agai atu i Leulumoega mo Lotofaga.

Fai mai e taunuu tonu le faigamalaga i gatai o Salesatele i Falealili, ae ua faaifo le la i lona nofoaga.

Ona manao lea o Salamasina,e afe le aumalaga, sei asi lana tama, lea ua nofo i Taoaluga ma Taoalalo i Salesatele.Ma sei momoli iai lona fanoga pe aise lava, ua le toe fia foi mai ai, i lo latou aiga.

Fai mai sa manao nisi o le aumalaga e tuu tuu loa lo latou sa,ona o la e faatali mai Lotofaga, ae a afe nei o lona uiga ua faatei le afioaga,ae sa malo le finagalo o le Tupu Tafaifa, fai mai ua afe le au Malaga, e asi le alo o Salamasina.

Fai mai e taunuu atu le faigamalaga i gauta,ua maea meai o le afiafi ua oo i faasauga o le po.Sa faateia Tapumanai i le oo atu o le faigamalaga. Ua feiloai Salamasina ma le

aumalaga ma Tapumanaia. Ua manao Tapumanaia e logo Lelei ma Lalau, aepeitai, e lei manao Salamasina e faatigaina le nuu, ma lona naunautai, e toe fia foi vave le faigamalaga ile vaveo pe a tafa ata, ona o lo o faatali mai le afioaga o Lotofaga mo le latou feiloaiga masani.

E moni le upu e fai taliga o au pa, fai mai na logo tala, Lelei i le tulua o po ma ao, o lo o malotia le maota i Taoaluga ma Taoalalo, ua afio atu le Tupu Tafaifa.

Ona tapena loa lea, o faaaloaloga masani e pei ona iai le atunuu, ua tapena le sua, ma le palapala o malo e fai ma faaoso o le malaga. Ao tapena mea ia, o le taimi lea na agai ai loa lele, ile maota i Taoaluga ma Taoalalo, ua saofai I luma o le fale i le tulua o po ma ao, e faatalitali le taimi e maleifua ai le Tupu Tafaifa, i nei alu loa le malalaga a Salamasina ma toe ave lana tama, o Tapumanaia.

Fai mai I le taimi lea sa iai Lelei i luma o le fale na iloa e le Tupu, ma ua avea o se ala e le lelei ai lana malologa.

Fai mai ua tafa ata o le aso fou, ua togo malama ona fesili loa lea o Salamasina i lana tama po o ai lava le tagata tino ese o lo o saofai mai i luma fale.

Ua tali Tapumanaia o Leleimalefaga, ua feiloai le aumalaga ma Lelei ae lei malamalama, ma ua fai faaaloaloga masani, i tu ma aga e masani ai le atunuu.

Ua sauni le Salamasina ma le aumalaga e toe foi, ona saunoa faafetai lea o le Tupu Tafaifa, e tusa ai male ava o le feiloaiga, ma faaloaloga masani ae maise le faaoso, ona ia ofo alofa lea ma faapea, Lelei ma Lalau leitoa a le toe fia foi atu lau tama, o lea ua maualuga la outou faaloalo, ae e leai se tau i ou te avatu, lo outou agalelei, Lelei o le a faaumi lou suafa ie Leleimalefagaiaega, e pine ail au tautua lelei i le faga i aena o lo o e nofo ai. O le a to lo oulua igagato, ma maua lo oulua aiga i Samoa o le Aiga Talimalama, e le gata sa lua talitali i le vao poo se aitu poo se tagata ae o lea ua o oulua talitali foi le malama o le fetu ao, aua le faigamalaga nei.

Ma o le mafuaaga lea na maua ai le Aiga Talimalama, e oo mai le aso o lo o faamauiina ile tusi faalupega.

English Translation

According to matai Leleimalefaga. Esau, Elder and High chief of our family at Salesatele in Falealili.

According to a survey of Aiga Talimalama, most matais interviewed had a consensus with Esau explained Aiga Talimalama to be. High chief's Tagitagiapua Faafetai, and Lalau Timoteo, other village chiefs, included in the Aiga Talimalama (as per village honorifics). They all declared and agreed that the family had but one thing to say, the opinion of Leleimalefaga. Esau.

In Leleimalefaga. Esau's testimony. the oral accounts from his ancestors Leleimalefaga Pulemau. It is said that Salamasina and his crew traveled to Leulumoega for Lotofaga.

The crew is said to have reached the shores of Salesatele at Falealili, but the sun has set at its place.

Salamasina then wished the crew to stop to visit her son, who was living at Taoaluga and Taoalalo in Salesatele.

It is said that some of the crew wanted to leave their ban as they were waiting for Lotofaga, but if they did stopped, the village would be shocked, but King Tafaifa prevailed and insisted, to visit the son of Salamasina.

He said the voyage had reached the mainland, they had finished dinner and had reached the end of the night. Tapumanai was surprised by the arrival of the voyage. Salamasina and the delegation meet with Tapumanaia. Tapumanaia wants to inform Lelei and Lalau, however, Salamasina does not want to offend the village, and he is determined

to return as soon as possible in the early hours of the morning. the village of Lotofaga is waiting for their regular meeting.

True is the saying, "Good morning, the house at Taoaluga and Taoalalo are in good health," said King Tafaifa.

Then ready, the usual tributes as in the country, the juice is prepared, and the soil of the guests as the trigger of the journey. While these things were being prepared, he flew to the palace at Taoaluga and Taoalalo, where he sat in front of the house in the middle of the night, awaiting the resurrection of King Tafaifa. go away Salamasina and took back her son, Tapumania.

He said that at this time Good was in front of the house which the King knew, and it was a way for him not to rest well.

It is said that at dawn the new day dawned, and Salamasina asked her son who the big man was sitting in front of the house.

Tapumanaia of Leleimalefaga replied that the delegation had met with Lelei but did not understand, and had paid homage to the customs and traditions of the country.

Salamasina and his entourage were ready to return, and King Tafaifa thanked them for the honor of the meeting, and the usual courtesies and greetings, and then offered his love and said, Lelei ma Lalau leitoa a your son does not want to return, so your respect is high, but I will give no reward, your kindness, Well your name will be extended to Leleimalefagaiaega, soon your good service in the bay where you live. You will catch your fish and find your home in the Samoan Family of the Host, not only have you been waiting in the wilderness or a ghost or a human but now you are also waiting for daylight, don't travel now.

And this is the reason why the Host Family, to this day recorded in the title book.

Glossary

<i>Aiga Talimalama</i>	Family in <i>Salesātele</i>
<i>Aiga</i>	Family
<i>Faalupega</i>	honorifics
<i>Faamanuiaga</i>	blessings/ reward
<i>Faasinomaga</i>	identity
<i>Falealili</i>	District in the south east of Upolu Island
<i>Lotofaga</i>	village in the south of Upolu island
<i>Malama</i>	light/ dawn
<i>Salesātele</i>	village of Falealili district
<i>Tafaiā</i>	legendary King of Samoa with four titles
<i>Tali</i>	to receive
<i>Talimalama</i>	to receive the light/ await the dawn
<i>Tautua</i>	service

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