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Power and Opposition in the Ancient Near Eastern and
Mediterranean World

edited by Mait Kõiv and Vladimir Sazonov

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Some Observations About Succession Principles in the Hittite New Kingdom

Siim MÕTTUS*

Abstract. *The discussion about the principles of succession in the Hittite kingdom has been largely focused on the Old Kingdom period and not so much on its later history. But through a variety of sources (diplomatic treaties, oath impositions etc.) from the New Kingdom, one could take a gander at how the passing of the throne was viewed at those times. Unsurprisingly, similar to the previous era, the norm was still that a son of a king was to inherit the throne, but there are enough hints in the text that sometimes the political whims and needs of a king (and a queen) superseded tradition and succession rules were more fluid. In addition, the fact that certain kings felt the need to constantly take steps to legitimize and secure their and their successor's position over rivalling branches of the royal family shows that the transference of power in the Hittite New Kingdom was still problematic.*

Rezumat. *Discuțiile cu privire la principiile succesiunii la putere în Regatul Hittit au fost concentrate în principal pe perioada veche a regatului, cea târzie fiind tratată mai puțin. Totuși, prin intermediul a diverse surse (tratate diplomatice, jurăminte publice, etc.) din timpul Noului Regat, poate fi dedus felul în care această succesiune era privită la momentul respectiv. Fără a fi surprinzător, norma încă era aceea ca fiul suveranului să moștenească tronul, dar există suficiente indicii în texte asupra faptului că uneori ambițiile politice ale unui rege (sau ale unei regine) erau mai presus de tradiție și că regulile succesiunii nu erau de fapt absolute. În plus, faptul că unii conducători simțeau nevoie să întreprindă acțiuni pentru a-și legitima și consolida poziția politică (împreună cu cea a succesorului său) în fața ramurilor inamice din cadrul familiei regale dovedește că problema transferului puterii în Noul Regal Hittit încă era una delicată.*

Keywords: Hittite New Kingdom; royal succession; treaties; Telepinu's edict.

There has been a lot of focus on royal succession principles in the Hittite kingdom as numerous historians have tried to find an underlying system in the inheritance of power. Research into this has been prompted by the constant violence and intrigue that accompanied the transmission of the Hittite throne, as seen from surviving historical records. Several theories have been suggested over time—matrilinearity, patrilinearity, avuncularity, elective kingship, etc.¹—but none of them have prevailed in the discourse. These models

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¹ Of the prominent advocates of different inheritance systems, RIEMSCHEIDER (1971) has favoured matrilinearity; GOETZE (1957, 87–88) elective kingship; SÜRENHAGEN (1998) and GOEDEGEBUURE (2006) avuncularity (in which he proposed that the king's nephew would inherit the throne, who would produce an heir of the throne with his cousin

typically heavily rely on modern reconstructions of the royal genealogies which, due to numerous gaps in the sources, are partly conjectural.

The investigations into Hittite royal succession have, however, mostly been focused on the Old kingdom period (17th–16th century BC). At the end of 16th century, king Telepinu issued an edict to end the long-lasting bloodshed caused by the struggle for power. He stipulated who had the right to kingship and established (or codified) a line of succession. According to his principle, the first-rank son of the king had priority for the title of the Great King. In the absence of a first-rank son, a second-rank son was to inherit the throne; and if the king had no sons at all the right would fall to the husband of the king's first-rank daughter.² The problem of succession therefore usually ends with Telepinu's edict in modern Hittitology. And it can be said in advance that, without a doubt, the patrilinear transference of power was the norm in the Hittite New kingdom period (15th–13th c.). Numerous texts hint at the king's sons and grandsons being the expected heirs, but one could perhaps find additional patterns by looking into the particularities of later succession principles and how they related to Telepinu's succession rule. So far, this has attracted only scant attention,³ yet it would be crucial for understanding the edict, one of the most significant texts of the Hittites, and its impact on succession and on the overall evolution of the Hittite kingship.

The present article offers some thoughts about the subject by focusing on the general concepts of royal succession expressed by sources written after the reign of Telepinu, especially in the New kingdom, and whether these concepts echo the principles laid out in his edict. There are no surviving documents comparable to Telepinu's edict that put forward a law-like enactment, but a lot of texts from different genres contain passages that deal with succession.⁴ Usually, these passages are not imposed on the king himself, like in Telepinu's edict, but rather on his subordinates—the members of his court or his diplomatic partners. But despite this, they do express the mentality that the Hittites had about kingship and to whom it should be passed on.

– the daughter of the old king); ATKINS (2000) so-called Omaha IV type succession (where the king's heir would alternate between a son-in-law and a son) and BECKMAN 1986 and BEAL 2003 have argued for patrilinearity. See also KLOCK-FONTANILLE 2014; BIN-NUN 1975; FINKELBERG 2006, 71–79; FORLANINI 2010.

² CTH 19 §28. First-rank was composed of the princes born from the king's main wife – the queen; second-rank composed of those born from concubinage; see PUHVEL, 2010: 303–304. The third option is a kind of uxori-local marriage, resembling the Mesopotamian *erēbu(m)* marriage, whereby the father of the bride would pay the bride price to the future son-in-law rather than vice-versa. This son-in-law (*antiyant*) would become a member of the bride's family and could also be adopted by the father-in-law; see BECKMAN 1986, 17; BEAL 1983, 117.

³ For example, see BECKMAN 1986. Also HOUWINK TEN CATE (2007, 197–199) has very briefly addressed this topic.

⁴ Most similar to Telepinu's edict is perhaps CTH 271, the so-called *Protocoles de succession dynastique* in which succession and legitimation seems to be a theme, but the tablets are heavily damaged. From what can be understood from these texts, they do not directly reflect any guidelines given by Telepinu, or the reflections of these ideas are simply hidden in the numerous lacunae; see MILLER 2013, 154–167.

The most evident of these are the diplomatic treaties between the Hittite king and his subordinate vassals or international counterparts. In some cases⁵ the parties agreed to acknowledge the successors chosen by the other as the next king. One glaring example:

*And when you take a wife and produce a son, he shall later be king in the land of Amurru. And as you protect My Majesty, I will likewise protect your son. You, Tuppi-Tešub, in the future protect the King of Hatti, the land of Hatti, my sons, and my grandsons.*⁶

These examples do not go to the same lengths as the Neo-Assyrian succession treaties from the reigns of Sennacherib and Esarhaddon,⁷ but sometimes the question was more elaborate. From these instances it is possible to obtain information about Hittite royal succession after Telepinu, and if his principles were followed. In some treaties only the vassal's succession is discussed. Although it is hard to state with full confidence that the succession principles of the vassals displayed in treaties paralleled those of Hittite kings, these treaties do reflect the attitude of the Great Kings towards the practices of their subordinates. On certain questions the Hittite kings could be quite assertive with their partners and force policies on them, when it came to taboos, for example.⁸ So this behaviour could apply to concepts of succession as well.

Important additions to the evidence are the loyalty oath impositions which are a subgenre of royal instructions. Issued on the behalf of the king, these documents prescribe in detail the acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of king's subordinates on threat of being "placed under oath", a violation of which evokes the anger of the oath deities.⁹ Among other topics, loyalty to the king and acknowledgement of rightful succession plays a big part in these texts.

Furthermore, succession principles can be studied through other miscellaneous texts like loyalty oaths and other instructive texts, but also from some historiographical documents, the most prominent of which is the Apology of Ḫattušili III (ca 1267–1237 BC).

Reading these texts, when it comes to the presumable heirs to the throne, it is not surprising to see the dominance of the male progeny of the kings. The Hittite kings asserted that their sons and their grandsons would be the ones to ascend to the throne. For example, in CTH 255.2 §2: "... after (me) you must protect the sons and grandsons, the seed of Tudḫaliya alone, for the lordship!". The same principle is repeated in numerous other texts in question.¹⁰ This is in accordance with Telepinu's edict, however the father-son succession being introduced only by Telepinu, and it setting aside some other model of inheritance, is questionable. The sons of

⁵ Not all treaties contain sections about succession. The most noteworthy examples have been chosen for this article.

⁶ CTH 62 §5; see BECKMAN 1999, 59–64.

⁷ For example, see PARPOLA and WATANABE 1988, 18, 22–24, 28–58; LAUINGER 2012.

⁸ CTH 42 §§25–27. See also COHEN 2002, 79–88.

⁹ These were the witnesses of the oath who could bring retribution to the one who breaks the oath; see FEDER, 2010, 121–126; MILLER 2013, 7.

¹⁰ For instance, see CTH 255.1 §9; CTH 85.2, 12'; CTH 62 §5; CTH 41.1 §12; CTH 42 §2; CTH 91 §11; CTH 105 §7.

the kings seem to have already been the default heirs to the throne before Telepinu because they were the ones who often stood between the throne and the usurpers and therefore had to be killed.¹¹ This edict did not drastically change the principles of succession, it was perhaps only a kind of codification and consolidation of the known practice, flavoured with admonitions for those who would infringe the normal succession process.

On some occasions the heir's birth from the Hittite queen was emphasised. Motherhood (*anniyatar*) and having children was definitely an important aspect of queenship, paralleling a king's valour and manliness (*pešnātar*), as apparent from a middle Hittite text:

And provide the king (and) queen with life, health, long y[ears] (and) children: male children (and) female children, to the first and second generations - (and) for the male (offspring) manliness (and) valour, (and) for the female (offspring) womanliness (and) motherhood (provide)!¹²

But the distinction represented in Telepinu's edict between first- and second-rank sons and the former having priority in the line of succession can be found only in a handful of later texts. "What son the king (with his) queen (has), protect (only) this queen's son for the lordship"—a line from a loyalty oath imposition from the reign of Ḫattušili III.¹³ This quote appears in the context of Ḫattušili still seeing as a threat his nephew Urḫi-Tešub, from whom he had usurped the throne. Therefore, Ḫattušili was still at that point more concerned about a rivalling line, rather than the priority among his own offspring. The specification of an heir being born from the queen is therefore noteworthy. A similar statement is presented in CTH 92:

... if from this day on you, [Bentešina], do not protect Ḫattusili, Great King, [your lord, and] Puduḫepa, Great Queen, your lady, as well as the son and grandson of King Ḫattušili and of [Queen] Puduḫepa [as] overlords, the oath gods shall oust(?) [you] and they shall burn(?) you!¹⁴

One could see the ambition of Puduḫepa behind the abovementioned rare examples. Perhaps these steps were taken by the queen to guarantee the prevalence of her own descendants over those Ḫattušili may have had from an earlier marriage.¹⁵ She even makes an appearance on a seal of Tudḫaliya IV which mentions her as the king's mother, a remarkable

¹¹ For example, Zidanta I had to kill Ḫantili I's son Pišeni, also Ammuna's presumable sons were killed for Ḫuzziya to come to power; see CTH 19 §§18, 21–22.

¹² KUB XV 34 ii 17'–19' (CTH 481.IA); after PRINGLE 1993, 21, 60.

¹³ In KUB XXI 37 12' (CTH 85.2): ANA ṽUTU-ŠI DUMU^{MEŠ} SALLUGAL ku-i-e-es nu DUMU SALLUGAL AŠ-ŠUM EN-UT-TI [pa-aḫ-ḫa-aš-ten]. See ŪNAL 1974, 116–117; also, the comments in SINGER 2001, 399–402.

¹⁴ CTH 92 §9; see BECKMAN 1999, 100–103. A similar phrase could be present in a lacuna in KUB XXI 46 vs i 8' (CTH 254); see GIORGIERI 1995, 261–262.

¹⁵ Nerikkaili, who briefly acted as a crown-prince, but was later replaced with Tudḫaliya, a son of Puduḫepa's, could have been from Ḫattušili's earlier marriage, see BRYCE 2005, 465, note 437 and the bibliography cited there.

admission as the genealogies of the Hittite kings only mention the male ancestors.¹⁶ Generally, however, these specifications about royal motherhood are absent.¹⁷ The heirs were rarely connected with the queen in the context of succession and the heirs appear in Hittite texts as sons of kings (DUMU.LUGAL) and not sons of kings and queens. However, it could be that the heir being born from a queen was taken for granted and was therefore not often expressed in literary sources.

The problem of differentiating between first- and second-rank descent may be present in the Apology of Ḫattušili III, and more precisely in its parallel account where Ḫattušili states that: “*Therefore, since my brother did not have a ḫuiḫuiššuwali-son [of his wife], I took up Urḫi-Tešub, son of a concubine. I put him into lordship over Hatti Land*”¹⁸ The word *ḫuiḫuiššuwali*, attested only a few times,¹⁹ was previously read as *šaḫuiḫuiššuwali* and was (and is still by some) translated along the lines of “legitimate”.²⁰ This contrast would not mean that Ḫattušili saw Urḫi-Tešub as illegitimate.²¹ In the other documents where Ḫattušili III mentions Urḫi-Tešub this distinction as a second-rate progeny of his brother is absent.²² A study by Košak has however shown that *ša-* should be separated from the word and read as the Akkadian *šA*. This does not help with the translation, however. Košak suggests “own, natural” (*leiblich*).²³ Singer and Knapp advocate for “adult”.²⁴ In the latter case, it is possible that Urḫi-Tešub might have been appointed *tuhkanti*, only for the time being, until some of the Muwatalli II’s higher rank sons came of age. Somehow Urḫi-Tešub remained in position and ascended to the throne. Nevertheless, Ḫattušili III’s choice of words implies that the son of a concubine was definitely a secondary option. Although Ḫattušili does not reproach his nephew even once for not having sufficient descent for the kingship, some others may have. An oft-cited line from a treaty supposedly shows Mašturi’s, the king of the land of Šeḫa River, opinion of Urḫi-Tešub: “*Afterwards Mašturi did not protect his son Urḫi-Tešub, but went over to my*

¹⁶ This seal impression appears on a tablet found in Ras Šamra (RŠ 17.159): “*Seal of Tudḫaliya, Great King, King of Hatti, the Hero, Son of Hattušili, Great King, the Hero; and Puduhepa, Great Queen of Hatti; Grandson of Muršili, Great king, the Hero*”; see LAROCHE 1956: 111–112.

¹⁷ Sometimes it can be explained by the fact that the Hittite queen’s reign continued after their king’s death into the successor’s rule. For example, in KUB XXVI 57 Vs i 8’–9’ (CTH 253): “*... we will hereby swear this oath to the person of Šuppiluliuma, Great King, and to Tadu-Ḫepa, Great Queen, and to the sons of the king...*” Tadu-Ḫepa was the wife of Tudḫaliya III, the preceding ruler. Therefore, one would not expect any connection here.

¹⁸ CTH 81 §10b; also, KUB XXI 15 + 760/v i 5’–10’ (CTH 85); see VAN DEN HOUT 2003, 199–204.

¹⁹ KUB XIX 64, KUB XIX 68, which are part of the Hattušili’s apology (CTH 81) and KBo VI 29 (CTH 85) which parallels the apology.

²⁰ OTTEN 1981, 20–21; VAN DEN HOUT 2003, 202; HED VII, 145–146.

²¹ Delegitimising Urḫi-Tešub would be counterintuitive for Ḫattušili as he declares himself responsible for his nephew’s coronation; see KNAPP 2015b, 151, note 195. This might be an overstatement, however, as Urḫi-Tešub was already designated as a crown-prince (*tuhkanti*) during his father’s rule; KNAPP 2015a, 118.

²² FOR EXAMPLE, IN KUB XXI 37 18’ (CTH 85).

²³ KOŠAK, 1996, 95–97.

²⁴ SINGER, 2002, 744–745; KNAPP, 2015a, 118–119.

*father, thinking: Will I protect even a bastard (paḫḫurši)? Why should I act on behalf of the son of a bastard?"*²⁵ However, one has to keep in mind that this quote has survived as Tudḫaliya IV's words condemning Mašturi for his disloyalty and not for his views on Urḫi-Tešub's legitimacy.

The vassals were sometimes also pressured into following the same path and designating the princes born from their main wives as their successors. This was usually the case when the vassals were given a Hittite princess in marriage to further the bond between the parties. They were forced to consider the Hittite princesses as their main spouse, above all the other wives the vassal may have had, and appoint the sons born from the Hittite princess as their heirs:

*The son of Bentešina and his grandson, the progeny of Bentešina and the son of my daughter, shall hold the kingship of the land of Amurru. ... As long as Bentešina has not yet taken the princess (Gaššuliyawiya sexually) and has not yet gotten any sons, Bentešina may elevate (to crown prince) either a prince of the land of Amurru, or his brother, or his nephew, or any citizen of his land.*²⁶

This paragraph shows vividly that Ḫattušili III's daughter Gaššuliyawiya was supposed to be the begetter of Bentešina's heir. Bentešina, the ruler of Amurru in north-western Syria, was active already in the time of Muršili II²⁷ and thus probably already had a queen and numerous descendants. He must have had children with a previous wife because one of his daughters was given to a Hittite prince called Nerikkaili in marriage, as recorded in the same text (§5). However, this injunction on Muršili's part had probably more to do with his political motivations than with some kind of forced cultural diffusion. Having a grandson as a future ruler in the vassal country would certainly benefit the king's influence over the area.

Šuppiluliuma I expressed a similar idea when he insisted on her daughter being the main wife of Šattiwaza, whom Šuppiluliuma had helped to take the throne of the Mitannian kingdom:

*Concubines will be allowed for you, Šattiwaza, but no other woman shall be greater than my daughter. You shall allow no other woman to be her equal, and no one shall sit as an equal beside her. You shall not degrade my daughter to second rank. In the land of Mitanni she shall exercise queenship. The sons of Šattiwaza and the sons of my daughter - their sons and grandsons - shall in the future be equals in the land of Mitanni. [...] and the sons of Prince Šattiwaza - his sons and grandsons [...] - shall be brothers and equals to my grandsons.*²⁸

²⁵ CTH 105 §§7-8; see B 103-107.

²⁶ CTH 92 §8; see BECKMAN 1999, 95-98.

²⁷ KLENGEL 1992, 168-169.

²⁸ CTH 51 §7; see BECKMAN 1999, 42-48.

This treaty does not state directly that only a son from their marriage should be the next king of Mitanni, but it is not a stretch to assume that Šuppiluliuma was expecting just that, especially as the treaty (and its parallel account CTH 52, which is supposed to represent the point of view of Šattiwaza) mentions several times in the later sections the (future) sons and grandsons of Šattiwaza and Šuppiluliuma's daughter, almost as a condition to the fulfilment of the treaty.²⁹ In the case of infringement of the treaty, Šattiwaza's other progeny is mentioned: "... so you, together with any other wife whom you might take (in place of my daughter), and you Hurrians, together with your wives, your sons, and your land, shall thus have no progeny."³⁰ But again, these stipulations are believably prompted by Šuppiluliuma's personal interests and not any strict succession principles, but nevertheless they show the distinction between differently ranked sons.

A kind of antithesis for this can be found in the treaty between Tudḫaliya IV and Kurunta, the ruler of Tarḫuntassa:

*And in regard to the fact that it is stipulated on the treaty tablet of my father as follows: "Set in kingship in the land of Tarḫuntassa the son of the woman whom the Queen (of Hatti) will give you in marriage" – at the time when they made the treaty tablet in the reign of my father, Kurunta had not yet even taken this woman for himself. If Kurunta now takes this woman for himself, or if he does not take her for himself this matter will not be taken up further. Whichever son Kurunta approves, whether he is the son of this woman or of some other woman, whichever son Kurunta has in mind, and whichever son he approves, he shall install in kingship in the land of Tarḫuntassa. No one shall determine this matter for Kurunta.*³¹

Tudḫaliya IV was seemingly more lenient with his diplomatic counterpart, allowing lesser-ranked heirs, in contrast to his father Ḫattušili III who demanded a first-rank heir from a prearranged marriage. This woman, given to Kurunta by Ḫattušili's queen Puduḫepa, was not a daughter of the royal couple, as was with the case with Ḫattušili's relationship with Bentešina. Kurunta was a nephew of Ḫattušili and marrying one's cousin was considered taboo by the Hittites.³² Also, Tudḫaliya would presumably call her "sister" if she had been one and not "this woman". But she can definitely be regarded as a first-rank wife and their prospective offspring as first-rank progeny. So here, too, the differentiation between ranks is visible, albeit through the lens of Tudḫaliya's indulgent attitude towards the matter.

When we search the treaties and instructions for any hints of *antiyants* or sons-in-law in general—the tertiary heirs to the throne—we come up almost empty. It is understandable

²⁹ CTH 51 §16 (rev 70'–75'), CTH 52 §10 (rev 35–39): "And you, Šattiwaza, your sons and grandsons by the daughter of the [Great] King, [King of Hatti] – the Hurrians shall accept you(!) for kingship for eternity."; see BECKMAN 1999, 48.

³⁰ CTH 51 §15; BECKMAN 1999, 48.

³¹ CTH 106.I.1 §19; see BECKMAN 1999, 114–123.

³² See note 8.

that, as the last clause of Telepinu's succession law, it was only for the most extreme situations and emergencies and did not need to be mentioned in these texts. Surely the kings hoped that they would be succeeded by their sons and would not have to resort to elevating a son-in-law to the position of crown prince. But we know that there were a couple of kings who had to do exactly that, first and foremost Telepinu himself who was succeeded³³ by his son-in-law Alluwamna.³⁴ It is even possible that one of Telepinu's aims when compiling the edict was to secure and legitimize his son-in-law's position as an heir after, according to §27 of the text, Telepinu's son Ammuna, the primary candidate for the throne, had been killed.³⁵ Secondly, we know that Arnuwanda I was married to the daughter of Tudḫaliya I/II and was adopted by the king, even co-reigning with his father-in-law.³⁶ There has also been speculation that Šuppiluliuma I was a son-in-law rather than a son of Tudḫaliya III.³⁷ In the cases of Arnuwanda and Šuppiluliuma I, they were both named as son of Tudḫaliya I/II and Tudḫaliya III respectively on their royal seals, as are other *antiyants* known from other sources called sons and not sons-in-law.³⁸ Therefore, it is possible that when writing the stipulations of the treaties concerning succession, there was no need to differentiate between sons and adopted sons-in-law—*antiyants* were legally admissible as sons.

On a more curious note, the treaties of Ḫattušili III and Tudḫaliya IV with Kurunta offer an alternative to the son-in-law-succession:

*Someone of the male line (of Kurunta) shall take them; those of the female line shall not take them. But if there is no male line of descent, and it is extinguished, then only someone of the female line of Ulmi-Tešub (=Kurunta) shall be sought out. Even if he is in a foreign land, he shall be brought back from there and installed in authority in the land of Tarḫuntassa.*³⁹

One deviation from Telepinu's succession principle as a son of a king's daughter is to become the next king and not her husband. It is not known whether any Hittite king during the New kingdom ascended to power from such a position, but it seems that they might still have been open-minded about such an inheritance. Why was a son-in-law not considered here as a potential heir? During the conclusion of the treaty between Ḫattušili and Kurunta the latter was probably too young to have grandchildren, but he could have daughters. In a

³³ To be precise, it is still not clear whether a poorly attested king Taḫurwaili reigned before or some time after Alluwamna; see Freu and MAZOYER 2007, 154–156.

³⁴ Alluwamna's wife was the daughter of Telepinu – KUB XXVI 77 2' (CTH 23).

³⁵ MÖTTUS 2018, 60.

³⁶ BEAL 1983, 115–119.

³⁷ TARACHA 2016, 492.

³⁸ See Arnuwanda I's in GÜTERBOCK 1967, 31–32, no. 60: ^{[N]A⁴}KIŠIB ta-ba-ar-na ^mAr-nu-an-ta LUGAL.GAL DUMU ^mDu-u[t-ḫa-li-ia LUGAL.GAL UR.SAG?] – “Seal of the tabarna Arnuwanda, the Great King, son of Tudḫaliya, the Great King, the hero”. For another example of a son-in-law being called a son, see the Inandik tablet in BALKAN 1973, 42–44.

³⁹ CTH 106.II.2 §1. This passage is almost verbatim reproduced in CTH 106.I.1 §20; see BECKMAN 1999, 109, 119.

time of need, designating a son-in-law as one's heir would definitely be faster than waiting for a grandson to come of age and take on the power.

Some texts clearly show that there were multiple pretenders to the royal power. In one of the loyalty oath impositions, Tudḫaliya IV is adamant about rejecting any rivalling claims to the throne: “*And you shall not recognize My Majesty's full brothers, born of the queen subsequently, nor those who are sons of a secondary wife of the father of My Majesty.*”⁴⁰ There are hints that in at least one case he had grounds for concern. Ḫešni was one of the sons of Ḫattušili III and a (half?) brother of Tudḫaliya IV. One text of a court proceeding about the matter has survived. Ḫešni, together with a group of other dignitaries, planned to kill Tudḫaliya and some of his closest supporters. But the matter became public and Ḫešni was brought to trial. The motive behind the coup d'état can only be guessed at, but succession rights seem the most likely. He might have tried to restore the other competing branch of Ḫattušili III which had been sidelined by queen Puduḫepa.⁴¹

Tudḫaliya even saw danger from his much-distant relatives who could interfere with the succession process:

The land of Ḫattuša is full of royal progeny. In Ḫattuša the progeny of Šuppiluliuma, the progeny of Muršili, the progeny of Muwatalli (and) the progeny of Ḫattušili are numerous, and (yet) you shall recognize no other man for the lordship.

⁴²

This could mean that royal succession was not self-evident so the king had to impose further measures to secure his and his successor's positions. Of course, demanding loyalty to the king and his descendants was probably typical for any ruler, but Tudḫaliya IV was especially insistent and very detailed in this matter, which could mean that these texts were composed as a reaction to specific problematic situations. It is remarkable how much time and effort Tudḫaliya had to devote to self-legitimation and the propagandistic quashing of his rivals. He was either very insecure about his position or very paranoid, maybe still suffering from the stigma of his father Ḫattušili III's unruly ascension. It is thought that the dynastic struggles starting from the usurpation of Ḫattušili III, causing the need for the kings to focus on the matter of securing their position rather than focus on the other matters of the state, were contributing factors to the downfall of the Hittite Kingdom.⁴³

One of the aspects where Telepinu's rule was lacking, possibly causing problems and internal strife, was what would happen if no-one met the necessary requirements for the title. There is no provision for who should take the throne, if a king—maybe due to his youth and short span of reign or his health—leaves behind no descendants at all: no first- or second-

⁴⁰ CTH 255.1 §24; see MILLER, 2013, 290–291. See also §§4, 5, 9 and CTH 105 §7 for a similar statement.

⁴¹ On the matter, see TANI 2001, 155–165. The court proceeding is collected under CTH 297.8.

⁴² CTH 255.2 §2; see MILLER 2013, 296–297.

⁴³ GIORGIERI 2020, 157.

rank sons, nor any daughters. Both Arnuwanda II and Arnuwanda III were in this situation and in both cases their brothers would become kings.⁴⁴ This did not go over without problems as Talmi-Tešub, ruler of Carchemish, felt it necessary to justify his support of Šuppiluliuma II, brother of the late Arnuwanda III, as the new but ultimately the last (known) king of the Hittite kingdom:

[... The men] of Ḫatti [did not] oppose him (i.e. Arnuwanda III), and I did not misbehave. If he [had] had [offsp]ring, I would not [have rejected] them. I would have protected his offspring, but he had no offspring. I inquired after a [pregnant] woman, but there was no pregnant woman. If Arnuwanda had [had offspring], would I have caused misconduct? Would I have rejected the offspring [of my lord]? Would I have made [another] the lord? Tudḫaliya had [another] physical son. [Because he was a physical] son, [I placed] Ḫattusa - women and men - in [his hand].⁴⁵

Talmi-Tešub is quite apologetic here. His defence demonstrates that he met some opposition concerning the installation of Šuppiluliuma to the throne—or at least he went against an existing tradition, even in the face of such a dire situation where there were no legitimate heirs to be taken.

Conclusion

In summary, father-son succession was without a doubt the standard model in the Hittite dynasty of the New Kingdom period, and in the majority of instances the throne of the king was passed on according to this principle. Second-rank sons begotten by some secondary wife of the king or a member of his harem were inferior to those born of a ruling queen, although they are not always visible in the texts addressed here. Some queens were especially adamant in making it known that their progeny was above all others. Also, when giving a daughter to a vassal, the Hittite king's demand was that she should not be denigrated to a lower rank. As the sons-in-law who inherited the throne were usually not named as such but referred to as sons of the king, it is hard to distinguish them from the king's natural sons.

But still, as seen from the evidence presented in this article, there seems to have been some fluidity in some cases and sometimes traditions of succession had to take a back seat to day-to-day politics, as each king acted on the basis of his own contemporary situation and needs and not as much under the influence of Telepinu's edict. We can also see that the kings tended to be more assertive on the question of succession if their own position was not particularly secure, taking extra steps by justifying and legitimising their ascension and guaranteeing their subjects' loyalty. These measures were necessary because, despite the

⁴⁴ BIN-NUN 1975, 279–282; BRYCE 2005, 327.

⁴⁵ KUB XXVI 33 1'–17' (CTH 122); see BECKMAN 2019, 38–40.

more-or-less entrenched practice of succession, those who were sidelined from the dynastic line could still, and sometimes did, cause trouble.

How does the edict of Telepinu relate to all of this? The later kings were probably aware of the document and its principles as, according to palaeographical analysis, all surviving copies are from the New Kingdom period.⁴⁶ However, no king ever directly refers to the edict or its guidelines in their texts. There was certainly some default view about who should inherit the throne; whether this was the direct result of Telepinu's legislation is debatable.

The evidence does suggest that because of the different deviations over time from the edict's principles, the continuing succession problems, and the wariness of the kings when it came to their close relatives who could threaten their position, royal succession in the Hittite kingdom was still standing on feet of clay.

Abbreviations

- CTH Laroche, Emanuel. *Catalogue des textes hittites*. Paris, 1971.
 HED Puhvel, Jaan. *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*. Mouton; 1984–... .
 KBo *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi* (Leipzig, Berlin).
 KUB *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi* (Berlin).

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⁴⁶ STARKE 1985, 103–104.

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