Between Nephews and Sons: An Analysis of Royal Succession in the Old Hittite Period

Schön, Mara Elif

Leiden University

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BETWEEN NEPHEWS AND SONS

An Analysis of Royal Succession in the Old Hittite Period

Mara Elif Schön

s3150186

m.e.schon@umail.leidenuniv.nl

Supervisor: Dr. Willemijn J. I. Waal

Second Reader: Dr. Jan Gerrit Dercksen

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1. Introduction

The stereotypical rule of royal succession is typically understood as father-to-son, whereby a king passes his crown directly to his male offspring, ensuring royal bloodlines remain unbroken. Reflecting this patriarchal structure, children often bore patronyms, identifying themselves explicitly as "son of X." Many Hittite kings adhered to this practice. However, in approximately 1650 BCE, the Hittite king Ḫattušili I introduced an unusual deviation by defining himself in his *Annals* as: "the son of the brother of Tawananna."[1] This was an atypical and peculiar way of claiming royal legitimacy, as the title Tawananna was given exclusively to royal women by the Hittites (see below, Ch. 2.4). By emphasizing his relationship to his aunt rather than his father, Ḫattušili posed a profound challenge to established ideas about royal succession, leaving Hittitologists worldwide puzzled about the nature of kingship in the Old Hittite Period.

Further complicating the situation is the *Testament of Ḫattušili*, wherein the same king denounced his nephew Labarna, his initially appointed successor and the son of his sister. According to Ḫattušili, Labarna had been influenced by his mother's words and was too cold at heart. Consequently, he named Muršili as his successor. Muršili was not Ḫattušili's son; he is often considered to be Ḫattušili's grandson, yet, the exact kinship relation between Muršili and Ḫattušili remains uncertain (see below, Ch. 6.3). Therefore, this unusual series of successions (self-legitimization through a female relative and appointments of successors not directly descended from him) offers a pattern other than the conventional father-to-son succession.

Roughly 100–150 years after Ḫattušili's *Testament*, King Telipinu commissioned an edict, which contained an elaborate historiography of the kings before him and a passage where he states the rules of succession as: "The king shall be a son of the king, a son of first-rank. If there is no first-ranking son, whoever is the second-ranking son, he shall be king. When there is no son of the king, whoever is the first-ranking daughter, they shall pick the son-in-law for her, he shall be king."[2] It is often considered that in this passage Telipinu reformed the succession system, making it explicitly father-to-son, aligning with the patriarchal and patrilineal structure of the Hittites.

[1] CTH 4: KBo 10.1 (Akkadian) and KBo 10.2 (Hittite).
[2] CTH 19 §28. All translations are my own unless indicated otherwise.

Both Telipinu's intriguing passage along with Ḫattušili's accounts hint that another system of succession could have been in practice up until Telipinu's *Edict*. This raises the question: if succession during the Old Hittite Period was not strictly father-to-son, what was the nature of the system?

Some scholars have proposed that the succession followed an *avunculate* pattern—where inheritance passed to the son of the king's sister rather than his own son. In anthropology, the term "avunculate" refers generally to "a relationship between a man and his sister's children, particularly her sons." This system has precedents in other cultures and its possible practice among the Hittite royals offers a compelling explanation for the unusual succession accounts. However, few sources give us hints about the true nature of succession in the Old Hittite Period. The most substantial ones that shed some light on the matter, each previously introduced above, are: the *Annals of Ḫattušili*, the *Testament of Ḫattušili,* and the *Edict of Telipinu*.

While only the opening paragraph of the *Annals* is relevant for tracing succession dynamics, as the rest focuses on the deeds of Ḫattušili spanning five years; both the *Testament of Ḫattušili* and the *Edict of Telipinu* vividly portray an unstable period marked by assassinations, betrayals, and conspiracies. Therefore, both texts require careful analysis to answer a central question: Was an avunculate succession system, in which royal inheritance passed to the king's sister's son rather than his own son, truly practiced during the Old Hittite Period? I will try to answer this question throughout my thesis. My primary approach will be philological, employing close reading as a method particularly suited to carefully examining and thoroughly comprehending the *Testament* and the *Edict*.[3] Through detailed philological analysis focusing on key terminologies, contextual clues, and historical parallels within the *Testament of Ḫattušili* and the *Edict of Telipinu*, I aim to critically assess what these texts reveal about Old Hittite succession practices.

In the following of this chapter, I will present the Hittite sources, briefly outline the main features of the *Annals of Ḫattušili*, the *Testament of Ḫattušili*, the *Edict of Telipinu*, and include other evidence important to understand royal figures and kin relationships among Hittite royals, such as Offering Lists and seal impressions. Next, Chapter 2 will focus on the nature of

[3] My translations of the two texts are included in the Appendix. While I analyze selected passages in detail in Chapters 6 and 7, the full texts are provided to allow the reader to consult them in their entirety.

kingship in Hittite society, including essential concepts like the royal titles Labarna and Tawananna. Consecutively in Chapter 3, I will examine kinship terminology, review general anthropological insights about kinship systems and provide Hittite kinship terms relevant for understanding succession and royal relations. This will be followed by Chapter 4, an introductory chapter on the concept of the avunculate, where I will present anthropological examples from various societies and discuss relevant comparative examples from Indo-European and Elamite contexts. In Chapter 5, I will present the state of the debate and critically review arguments supporting avunculate, patrilineal, and matrilineal succession theories. Next in Chapter 6, having provided the essential groundwork for the research, I will start my philological analysis with the *Testament of Ḫattušili*, exploring how it supports or contradicts the avunculate succession theory through a close reading of key passages and terms. Similarly in Chapter 7, I will analyze the *Edict of Telipinu*, examine its historical narrative and explicit succession rules to determine whether it reflects a reform or codification of existing practices, and what implications this has for avunculate succession. Finally, I will bring together the findings from earlier chapters, clearly present the arguments for and against avunculate succession, and summarize what the texts reveal about Old Hittite succession practices in Chapter 8.

1.1. Hittite Sources

The Hittite kingdom was situated in central Anatolia, with their texts spanning approximately from 1650 to 1180 BCE. Their language Hittite, or *Nešili* as they called it, is the earliest Indo-European language ever attested.[4] They wrote primarily in cuneiform on clay tablets, though they also made use of Anatolian hieroglyphs mainly for their sealings and rock reliefs.[5] Writing, however, was introduced to Anatolia through Assyrian merchants during the Old Assyrian Colony Period (ca. 1950–1700 BCE), with Kaniš—also known as Neša, located in modern-day Kültepe (Kayseri/Turkey)—being its most important base. The Assyrian merchants wrote in Old

[4] *Nešili* means 'the language of (the people) of Kaniš/Neša.'

[5] Anatolian hieroglyphs have also been referred to as "Hieroglyphic Luwian" in the literature. It has been suggested that the Hittites used Anatolian hieroglyphs on wax-coated wooden writing boards. These boards, frequently mentioned in Hittite texts, might indicate the existence of two parallel scribal traditions: hieroglyphic writing for private and economic records, and cuneiform writing reserved primarily for administrative purposes. See Waal 2011.

Assyrian, a dialect of Akkadian. After the end of the Colony Period, cuneiform writing temporarily disappeared from the region. It was probably reintroduced during the reign of Ḫattušili I in the mid-17th century BCE. Due to the gap in written sources between the end of the Colony Period and the beginning of Hittite records, the details of the political shift and the emergence of the Hittite kingdom remain uncertain.

The Hittite records are predominantly written in Hittite, but there are also texts in other languages, including Akkadian, which was used for international diplomatic correspondence, as it was the *lingua franca* of the Mesopotamian civilizations throughout the second millennium BCE.[6] In contrast to the abundance of private archives of Assyrian merchants from the Colony Period, the Hittite corpora consist only of state archives. Hittite texts include ritual texts, hymns, prayers, oracle reports, incantations, annals, treaties, edicts, laws, instructions, letters, literary texts, mythological texts, lexical lists, (cult) inventories. Most Hittite texts have been found in Ḫattuša, their capital, situated at modern-day Boğazköy (Çorum/Turkey).[7]

Based on the linguistic and paleographic changes, the Hittite records are typically divided into three periods: the Old Hittite (1650–1400 BCE), Middle Hittite (1400–1350 BCE), and New Hittite (1350–1180 BCE).[8] While most surviving texts were written during the New Hittite Period, texts from the Old Hittite Period remain scant. Even the *Testament of Ḫattušili* and the *Edict of Telipinu* are preserved in later copies from the New Kingdom. Evidently, both texts were considered significant by later kings, and they remain crucial today for understanding this earlier period. Unfortunately, because Hittite texts are generally undated and the reigns of Old Hittite kings can only be estimated, the exact dates of these two texts are unknown.

1.2. Annals of Ḫattušili

Ḫattušili I is the first well-known Hittite king, probably reigned for around 30 years in the second half of the 17th century BCE.[9] One of the most important texts that sheds light on his deeds are

[6] The languages spoken in the Hittite world were not confined to Hittite and Akkadian. Other attested languages are Luwian, Palaic, Hattic, and Hurrian.
[7] Other important archives are found in Ortaköy (Šapinuwa), Kuşaklı (Šarissa), and Maşat Höyük (Tapikka).
[8] The linguistic taxonomy differs from the paleographic taxonomy, which is divided into three categories: Old, Middle, and New Scripts. The boundary between the Old and Middle Scripts is notably obscure. For a general overview of the Hittite language, see Yakubovich 2020.
[9] Bryce 2005: 62.

the above-mentioned *Annals*. It is a bilingual document written in both Akkadian and Hittite, only preserved in later copies.[10] It is possible that the *Annals* were written only in Akkadian during Ḫattušili's lifetime and translated into Hittite in the mid- or late 15th century BCE.[11]

The *Annals of Ḫattušili* primarily document the military campaigns and territorial expansions of the Hittite king Ḫattušili I.[12] They describe Ḫattušili's five regnal years, yet, it is not known whether they constituted the first five years or covered some other subsequent years.[13] The king began by attempting to reassert dominance in northern Anatolia, attacking rebellious cities such as Šanaḫuitta and Zalpa, though initially failing to fully subdue the former. Subsequent campaigns extended Hittite influence into northern Syria, targeting regions likely under the control or influence of the kingdom of Yamḫad, particularly the city of Alalaḫ and other territories west of the Euphrates. A brief expedition into Arzawan territories in the west is also noted, alongside the destabilizing rebellions and a Hurrian invasion occurring during Ḫattušili's absence. Following these events, the king conducted campaigns to re-establish control over his Anatolian territories and Šanaḫuitta. His final recorded campaign details extensive military successes and the crossing of the Euphrates.[14]

As stated previously, the relevant part of the *Annals* for understanding Hittite succession dynamics is its beginning, where Ḫattušili legitimizes himself as "Ḫattušili, [king of the land of Ḫatti], ruler of the city of Kuššar" and as the "son of the brother of Tawananna." Its importance for proposed avunculate succession models will be discussed further in Chapter 6.1.

1.3. Testament of Ḫattušili

The *Testament of Ḫattušili* (hence: *Testament*) is a bilingual text issued by Ḫattušili, written in both Akkadian and Hittite.[15] It is preserved in a single copy, likely rewritten from an original document in a later period.[16] Although discovered in Ḫattuša, the text itself states that it was

[10] For the translation, see Beckman 2006. CTH 4: KBo 10.1, KBo 10.2, KBo 10.3, KBo 50.198, KUB 23.41, KUB 57.48, KUB 23.20, KUB 23.33, KUB 40.6, KUB 23.31, IBoT 3.134, IBoT 4.264, and VBoT 13.
[11] Bryce 2018: 3.
[12] For an overall account of the reigns of Labarna and Ḫattušili, see Bryce 2005: 61–95.
[13] Beckman 2006: 219.
[14] Beckman (2006: 219) notes that Ḫattušili's boasts resemble, or even outshine, those of the infamous Akkadian king Sargon, who crossed the same river a few centuries earlier than Ḫattušili I.
[15] See Appendix A for the full text. It is written in four columns, column i and iv are in Akkadian while column ii and iii are in Hittite. CTH 6: KUB 1.16 and KUB 40.65.
[16] Klinger 2005: 142.

written in Kuššar, a city whose precise location remains unknown.[17] Its first translated edition, “Die Hethitisch-Akkadische Bilingue des Hattusili I” (HAB), was edited by Ferdinand Sommer and Adam Falkenstein in 1938 and since then, several other translations have been published.[18]

In a large section of the *Testament* Ḫattušili portrays the struggles caused by his family members, primarily by his sister and daughter. Yet, his main reason for issuing the *Testament* was to validate and appoint his adopted son Muršili as heir. Ḫattušili starts his account by denouncing his other adopted son Labarna from kingship because Labarna’s soul was not compassionate, not fit for a king. Labarna was the son of Ḫattušili's sister, whom Ḫattušili calls a "snake," accusing her and her other children of poisoning Labarna’s mind. Consequently, Ḫattušili does not kill but suspends Labarna from Ḫattuša, while calling his new heir, Muršili.

Betrayals and conspiracies did not end with his sister. Ḫattušili also recounts the rebellion of Ḫuzziya, possibly his own son, who ultimately died. Afterwards, with the aid of some noblemen, a daughter of his initiated another rebellion against Ḫattušili to make her son king. Clearly, Ḫattušili’s reign was marked by turmoil and familial betrayal. However, instead of executing his unfaithful family members, he chose to banish them. In the *Testament* he persistently instructs Muršili and his servants to listen only to his words for the prosperity and future of Ḫattuša. Perhaps he sensed that if disloyalty continued, the crown would suffer; which happened eventually, if we are to believe the *Edict of Telipinu*.

Ḫattušili instructed that the tablet be read aloud to Muršili every month, indicating that its message was meant for a wider audience. As he names a new heir, the negative events he recounts serve to justify his decision. While his perspective is valuable for understanding how he viewed these events, it ultimately represents only his side of the story.

The text will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 6, with a focus on how Ḫattušili uses kinship terms, how he adopts and disinherits his kin, and whether the stories he tells—when considered alongside other sources such as the Cruciform Seal (see below, Ch. 1.5)—reflect the existence of an avunculate succession system.

[17] For the attestations and importance of Kuššar in the Old Assyrian Colony and Hittite periods, see Barjamovic 2011: 143–50.

[18] See Beckman 2003; Klinger 2005; Goedegebuure 2006 "The Bilingual Testament of Hattusili I;" Haas 2006: 59–65; and Gilan 2015: 65–103.

1.4. Edict of Telipinu

The *Edict of Telipinu* (hence: *Edict*) is a more extensive text, composed in both Akkadian and Hittite, preserved in numerous copies from the New Kingdom.[19] No date is provided in the text itself. Therefore, its dating relies primarily on linguistic and paleographical analysis, which shows that the fragments demonstrate New Kingdom cuneiform sign forms, yet still contain Old Hittite linguistic features, along with a content that can be placed within the Old Kingdom Period.[20] The text recounts events happened from Muršili's reign to Telipinu's enthronement, and Telipinu's reign is often placed around 1525–1500 BCE.[21] If it is assumed that Ḫattušili died around 1600 BCE, and that the *Edict* was written around 1525 BCE, then the *Edict* spans approximately 75 years. However, as none of the Old Hittite kings' ruling dates are known, this remains only a rough prediction. While the events described in the *Edict* seem to follow a chronological order, neither their durations nor their exact dates are possible to determine. The pivotal scholarly edition of the text is Inge Hoffmann's dissertation "Der Erlaß Telipinus," published in 1984, and it has also been translated by other scholars since.[22]

The *Edict* begins with Telipinu's historical account: he first emphasizes a peaceful beginning of the kingdom and then depicts the dread that came after the beginnings of royal bloodshed. The first three kings mentioned are also known from the *Testament:* Labarna, Ḫattušili, and Muršili. These three kings reigned successfully and united their lands; however, bloodshed starts with the murder of Muršili shortly after his campaign against Babylon.

Muršili was killed by his brother-in-law, Ḫantili—the husband of his sister Ḫarapšili—and Zidanta, whose exact kinship relation to Muršili is unknown. Muršili's brother-in-law Ḫantili took the throne after Muršili's death. However, after Ḫantili died, Zidanta killed Ḫantili's son Pišeni and became king. Subsequently, Zidanta himself was killed by his own son Ammuna. When

[19] See Appendix B for the full text. The primary exemplar A spans four columns and over 250 lines. CTH 19: Hittite fragments: **A.** KBo 3.1+KBo 12.5+KBo 3.68+KBo 12.7 (=BoTU 23 A). **B.** KUB 11.1 (=BoTU 23 B)+KBo 19.96. **C.** KBo 3.67 (BoTU 23 C)+KUB 31.2 (=BoTU 23 G)+KUB 31.17. **D.** KUB 11.5 (=BoTU 23 D). **E.** KUB 11.6 (=BoTU 23 E). **F.** KUB 11.2 (BoTU 23 F)+IBoT 3.84+KBo 19.97. **G.** KBo 7.15(+)KBo 12.4. **H.** KBo 12.6. **I.** VBoT 107. According to Hoffmann, fragment number KBo 12.12 should probably be placed in Rev. iii 28–33 (Hoffmann 1984: 1). Akkadian fragments: KUB 3.85(+)KBo 28.124(+)KBo 1.27, and KUB 3.89 (Koç 2022: 85, n.5).

[20] For instance, Hoffmann (1984: 4) dates fragments A and C to the reign of Tudḫaliya IV or later kings, and fragment B to an earlier period, possibly from Šuppiluliuma onwards or to Muršili II.

[21] For the dating, I follow Bryce 2005: xv.

[22] See van den Hout 2003; Goedegebuure 2006 "The Proclamation of Telipinu;" Gilan 2015: 137–177; and Knapp 2015.

Ammuna died likely due to natural causes like age, somehow the unclear figures Tittiya and Ḫantili were killed together with their sons by some high-ranking men.[23] Subsequently, Ḫuzziya became king. The roots of Ḫuzziya's claim to the throne are not told, yet, he is assumed to be the brother-in-law of Telipinu. After Ḫuzziya attempted to kill Telipinu and his wife Ištapariya, Telipinu managed to banish him and seize the throne.

While the *Edict* provides an extensive list of names and violent events, it leaves critical details—such as the precise familial relationships, motivations, and circumstances—largely unexplained, inviting the reader to fill in these gaps. The text was evidently intended for an audience familiar with these characters and events, and it raises far more questions than it answers for contemporary readers examining it 3,500 years later.

Following his account of these events, Telipinu introduces a set of "reforms" addressing various issues; including, most importantly, the rules of royal succession. The rules of succession, the text itself and the events, especially the relationships between the above-mentioned characters, will be analyzed in depth, with a focus on the possibility of an avunculate system, in Chapter 7. Telipinu, the author, was ultimately the king who secured the throne at the end of this bloody history. While the historical account provides us in-depth knowledge of the otherwise unknown period starting from Muršili I, it is important to acknowledge that it was not written for historical purposes, but served a political agenda. Therefore, it reflects the perspective of only one person above whom were only the gods.

1.5. Offering Lists and Seal Impressions

Hittite Offering Lists constitute records of sacrificial offerings made for deceased kings and royal family members.[24] They were primarily composed for cultic purposes, rather than administrative reasons as was done by Assyrians or Babylonians, who recorded their kings with their regnal years. Unfortunately, the information that can be deducted from the Hittite Offering Lists is often limited and unreliable.[25] The names appearing in these lists are not consistently listed in chronological order, and almost no extra information other than the names of the

[23] Ammuna likely died of natural causes, as in the *Edict,* unlike other kings who were murdered, Ammuna "became a god" ([m]*ammunašš≈a* DINGIR-*LIM-iš kišat,* §21 Obv. ii 4), a Hittite phrase used exclusively to describe the death of the kings.
[24] CTH 610 and 611.
[25] Bryce 2005: 376.

deceased is given. Moreover, since some kings shared identical names, it is frequently unclear exactly which individual is being referenced or how many kings shared a specific name.[26] However, the lists also adds up to our knowledge significantly, as they contain names of kings and queens which would be otherwise unknown to us, such as Kadduši, the principle wife of Ḫattušili I and Kali, the wife of Muršili I.[27]

The Offering Lists consist of several fragments, with one fragment in particular—text C, KUB 11.7—being essential for reconstructing Old Hittite genealogical relationships, especially concerning predecessors of Ḫattušili I.[28] This text lists the number of bovines and sheep offered to the deceased members of the royal family; kings and queens received one bovine and one sheep, while other family members received only one sheep. The first name in the list is often reconstructed as Ḫuzziya, with a singer calling his name, followed by sacrifices to Kantuzilli, PU-Šarruma son of Tudḫaliya, the father of Pawaḫdelmaḫ, father of Labarna. PU-Šarruma, explicitly identified by both his father and son, embodies a unique case for reconstruction purposes. The name Pawaḫdelmaḫ is often identified with Papaḫdilmaḫ, who appears in the *Testament* (see below, Ch. 6.3).[29] Possibly he was the father of Labarna, who is identified as Ḫattušili I, on line 20 in the Offering List C.

In addition to Offering Lists, seals and seal impressions belonging to Hittite kings and queens have been vital tools for reconstructing royal genealogies. While regular seal impressions assist in identifying the names of kings alongside their queens, one seal holds particular importance: the Cruciform Seal, a unique shape of a Maltese cross containing two seal impressions on its two sides, found in Ḫattuša. It records ten Hittite kings and nine queens along with their titles, in Anatolian hieroglyphs.[30] The most recent king among these is identified as Muršili II (1321–1295 BCE, hence the possible owner of the seal), appearing in the center of the obverse alongside his queen Gaššulawi[ya] and surrounded by four preceding kings. The kings on the reverse centered around Šuppiluliuma I and his queen Ḫenti, depict the earliest known Old Hittite kings (Tab. 1; the numbers next to the king names, 1–5, indicate their order

[26] Bryce 2005: 376.
[27] Gilan 2014: 85.
[28] Published by Otten 1951: 64–66, Text C.
[29] Sürenhagen 1998: 81–83; Beal 2003: 16–17; Forlanini 2010: 116–117.
[30] Dinçol et al. 1993. However, not all signs are perfectly preserved, the names are restored according to the preserved signs.

from oldest to youngest).[31] The kings' names follow a logical sequence: on the obverse, the names are read anti-clockwise, beginning from the right wing in ascending genealogical order; on the reverse, the reading is clockwise, probably starting from the left wing in descending genealogical order.[32] A genealogical gap undeniably exists between the wings of the obverse and reverse, with the oldest king on the obverse identified as Tudḫaliya I/II, and the youngest on the reverse as Muršili I.[33] Therefore, it is also possible that instead of one seal, two different seals sharing similar dimensions and inscribed on only one surface might have been used in its creation.[34]

Tab. 1: *Hittite Kings and Queens on the Cruciform Seal*

	Obverse			Reverse		
	King		*Queen*	*King*		*Queen*
Center	(5)	Muršili II	Gaššulawi[ya]	(5)	Šuppiluliuma I	Ḫenti
Right wing	(4)	[…][35]	Taduḫepa	(3)	Ḫattušili I	Kadduši(?)[36]
Top wing	(3)	Tudḫaliya III	*no queen	(2)	Labarna I	[Tawana]nna(?)
Left wing	(2)	[…][37]	[Ašmu]nikkal	(1)	[…]zi[…]	[…]
Bottom wing	(1)	Tudḫaliya I/II	Nikkalmati	(4)	Muršili I	Kali(?)

[31] Šuppiluliuma I (1350–1322 BCE) was Muršili II's father. Šuppiluliuma's two wives are known: Ḫenti and Tawananna, the Babylonian princess. Ḫenti could have been Muršili's mother, but no direct evidence confirms this. Muršili excluded his stepmother Tawananna from the seal, whom he held responsible for the death of his wife Gaššulawiya. Interestingly, Muršili did not include his brother Arnuwanda II (1322–1321 BCE), who ruled briefly after Šuppiluliuma's death, in the seal. Rather than presenting a consecutive line of kings, Muršili selected figures that underscored his genealogical ties and legitimized his rule. Similarly, Muršili excluded his stepmother Tawananna, whom he held responsible for the death of his wife Gaššulawiya (Campbell 2022: 236).

[32] We know this because on the reverse the hieroglyphic signs face left, whilst on the obverse they face right (Dinçol et al. 1993: 90).

[33] Dinçol et al. 1993: 96–7. This implies that the genealogies of the two sides do not complete or follow each other.

[34] Campbell 2022: 234, n.13.

[35] Possibly Šuppiluliuma (Dinçol et al. 1993: 103; Hawkins 2011: 89) or Tudḫaliya III? (Campbell 2022: 238–42).

[36] The names Kadduši and Kali are partially readable because of identified signs, yet, they are reconstructed according to Offering List C. As in the right wing only *ká* is readable, Dinçol et al. (1993: 94-5) suggest that the *ká* could have been used as a logogram, followed by *si*, read as *Kata-si* (for Kadduši). Likewise, in the bottom wing only *ká* is identified, the following sign could be *li* (for Kali).

[37] Almost certainly King Arnuwanda I, as Ašmunikkal is known to be his queen.

Two king names on the obverse and one on the reverse's left wing are unreadable. Tab. 1, I follow the identifications from the first publication by Dinçol et al.[38] However, since that initial study, several alternative readings and interpretations have appeared. Due to ongoing scholarly disagreement—particularly regarding the number of kings named Tudḫaliya and the possible existence of a Ḫattušili II—these identifications continue to vary among Hittitologists.[39]

The unreadable name on the reverse, placed among known Old Hittite kings, has received great attention, since it possibly was Ḫattušili's grandfather and Labarna's father. The sign *zi/a* is the only clearly readable element, potentially supporting the names Zidanza or Ḫuzziya.[40] Even though a Zidanta and a Ḫuzziya are known to be among Old Hittite kings after Muršili I (see below, Ch. 2.2). They are, however, unlikely to be the ones mentioned here, because the reverse does not really list the immediate ancestors of Šuppiluliuma I. Moreover, Zidanta II or Ḫuzziya II do not appear in the Offering Lists and are not likely to be counted among the great founding figures.[41] Given that the first king in Offering List C is reconstructed as Ḫuzziya, it seems plausible that the Cruciform Seal similarly features a reconstructed Ḫuzziya with his queen on the left wing. Although compelling, this reconstruction must be approached cautiously, as historical records contain no clear mention of an early king named Ḫuzziya.[42] Nevertheless, an earlier Hittite king must have existed, as Ḫattušili does mention his grandfather in the *Testament,* and the Offering List C give us a king that was called Ḫuzziya. Thus, the Cruciform Seal might indeed have included the earliest great Hittite king, regardless of whether his name was Ḫuzziya or not.

On the top wing of the reverse, the queen "[Tawana]nna" is reconstructed alongside Labarna. In Offering List B, Tawananna also appears before king Labarna and queen Kadduši.[43] Although "Tawananna" and "Labarna" are used both as titles and personal names in Hittite records to denote the queen and king respectively (see below, Ch. 2.4), it is more likely that they appear as personal names in the Cruciform Seal. This is supported by the fact that they appear

[38] Dinçol et al. 1993.
[39] For a recent summary of the suggested readings, see Campbell 2022: 237.
[40] Dinçol et al. 1993: 95, 105.
[41] Dinçol et al. 1993: 104–6.
[42] Gilan 2014: 91. However, Forlanini (2010) suggests that Ḫuzziya is mentioned in the Anitta text (KBo 3.22 Obv. 38-44). Gilan underlines the lack of definite proof for it, also that Uḫna, king of Zalpa, Ḫuzziya's predecessor according to the Zalpa text is absent in the Offering Lists.
[43] Otten 1951: 64, Text B.

alongside other identifiable royal couples, and according to Ḫattušili's account in the *Testament*, there was another Labarna prior to Ḫattušili (see below, Ch. 6.3).[44] This reconstruction is significant for understanding succession dynamics and will be addressed throughout Chapter 6.

The Cruciform Seal remains a unique artefact, as no other seals or seal impressions in this shape have been discovered. It presents royal bloodlines and appears to have been designed to display genealogy. Yet, it is also not giving clear or definitive answers to our questions, but instead it complicates it even more as it exemplifies how historical narratives can be manipulated and altered in line with the ideology and aim of the one in power. Despite certain ambiguities and gaps, the *Testament*, the *Edict*, Offering Lists, and the Cruciform Seal collectively contribute to our knowledge to Hittite royal genealogy and succession practices. Nevertheless, due to their fragmentary and often ambiguous nature, these sources inherently leave many questions unanswered, making a full reconstruction of the dynastic history a complex task.

[44] In line with this view, it is likely that Labarna was an *antiyant* (i.e., a son-in-law) whilst Tawananna was the daughter of the king (Beal 2003: 15–16; see also below, Ch. 6.3).

2. Hittite Kingship

Understanding the nature of Hittite kingship ideology and the historical context of the Old Hittite Period provides essential groundwork before analyzing the *Testament of Ḫattušili* and the *Edict of Telipinu*. This chapter introduces key aspects of the Hittite monarchy, outlining the religious and political roles of the king and queen. It also presents the attested kings of the Old Hittite Period and discusses the significant yet often ambiguous royal names/titles *Labarna* and *Tawananna*.

2.1. The Hittite King: Priest, Warrior, Judge

The Hittite king functioned as the earthly administrator of the gods. Upon his death, he "became a god" in the Hittite language, indicating the divine relationship between the king and the immortals. Yet, unlike in Egypt, Hittite kings were not worshipped as gods during their lifetime.[45] Even so, the king held the highest religious rank. He regularly performed prayers to secure divine favor and ensure the well-being of his kingdom, fulfilling essential duties to appease the gods, who would otherwise send disasters or diseases if displeased. Consequently, the king and queen directed religious festivals and visited important cultic sites and temples at specific times of the year.[46]

Among the many deities worshipped by the Hittites, the Storm-god *Tarhun*(*t*) (Hurrian *Teššup*) and his spouse, the Sun-Goddess of Arinna, held significant positions. One of the most notable visual depictions of this divine-royal relationship is the Fıraktın Relief, portraying Ḫattušili III (ca. 1267–1237 BCE) and his wife, Puduḫepa.[47] In this relief, the king stands before the Storm-god and the queen before the Sun-goddess (Fig. 1). Despite the symbolic significance of such representations, few representations of the Hittite kings survived in a small corpus of seals and rock reliefs. These representations are attested from the 14th century BCE onwards, with most accompanying the name of the king.[48]

[45] Bilgin 2015: 21–2. Bilgin also points out that the names of the Hittite kings were never written with divine determinatives.
[46] For the festival texts and the king's cultic visits, see Sir Gavaz 2011.
[47] For the dating, I follow Bryce 2005: 266.
[48] For the characteristics of the anthropomorphic representations of the Hittite kings, see Durusu-Tanrıöver 2019.

Fig. 1: *Fıraktın Relief: Ḫattušili in front of the Storm-god; Puduḫepa in front of the Sun-goddess*[49]

Alongside his religious duties, the king bore significant military responsibilities. He had to conquer other lands, not only to maintain prosperity but also to demonstrate his power and establish a kingship ideology.[50] He was the military leader, and surpassing his predecessors was essential to show his strength and worth.[51] The kings invaded lands, took captives, and brought booties back to Ḫattuša. One such example is observed in Ḫattušili I's *Annals*, where the king presents himself as being constantly in a flux of war with neighboring lands; he crossed the Euphrates, went to Syria, and was relentless in destroying and conquering cities. While some kings documented their raids in their annals, diplomatic relations are also reflected in the corpus through treaties and letters, such as those exchanged with Egypt during the New Kingdom.

In addition to his roles as the highest religious and military authority, the king also served as the supreme judge. He held the title ^{d}UTU-*Šİ,* meaning "my sun," reflecting a special bond between him and the Sun-god. Therefore, Hittite tradition might reflect a parallel with the Mesopotamian concept of the Sun-god as the deity of justice.[52] The king was regarded as the restorer of order, yet, at least in the Old Hittite Period he was not completely alone in his court.

[49] *Felsrelief von Firaktin*. Wikimedia Commons, public domain.
[50] Gilan 2011: 279.
[51] Bryce 2005: 83.
[52] Bilgin 2019: 19.

He also had a board called *panku,* that served as an advise-giving mechanism that did not restrict the powers of the king.[53] Apart from the *panku*, many high-ranking officials accompanied the king as military commanders. They witnessed important state documents, oversaw administrative institutions, and participated actively in ceremonies, rituals, and festivals.[54]

Given this historical background, it becomes apparent that royal texts inevitably aimed to justify and reinforce the ruler's legitimacy. The available sources originate exclusively from the royal palace archives, preserved by subsequent kings who likely sought to validate their own authority. Consequently, no independent accounts verify the events described in foundational documents like the *Testament* and the *Edict*, heavily impacting their reliability. Even under ordinary circumstances, stories can differ substantially when recounted by different witnesses. Moreover, it could be that royal narratives were manipulated to favor the ruling king. Therefore, a critical perspective is essential when interpreting such documents as the *Testament* and the *Edict*.

2.2. Old Hittite Kings

As previously stated, the *Testament* and the *Edict* are our main sources for the Old Hittite Period and the earliest Hittite kings. While other sources like Offering Lists and the Cruciform Seal suggest that there were additional Old Hittite kings (see above, Ch. 1.5), their kinship relations to the known kings remain unclear. Tab. 2 below lists only those kings explicitly mentioned by Ḫattušili and Telipinu. Their relationships to previous kings are listed, as indicated in the *Testament* and the *Edict*. However, it must be noted that the dates provided are only estimates, as none of the Old Hittite kings' exact reigning years are known.[55] Since the events described in the *Edict* provide no clear chronological information, it is almost impossible to determine precisely how long each king reigned after Ḫattušili I.

[53] Bilgin (2019: 16) remarks *panku* to be a "remnant of pre-state institutions," as evidence for it comes mostly from the Old Hittite period, with a few references from the Empire period.
[54] Bilgin 2019: 97.
[55] For the estimated dates, I follow Bryce 2005: xv.

Tab. 2: *Kings of the Old Hittite Period*

Approximate Dates	Kings	Relation with Previous King(s)
-1650	Labarna	unknown
1650-1620	Ḫattušili I	son of Tawananna's brother
1620-1590	Muršili I	unknown[56]
1590-1560	Ḫantili I	Muršili's brother-in-law
1560-1525	Zidanta	unknown[57]
	Ammuna	son of Zidanta
	Ḫuzziya I	unknown[58]
1525-1500	Telipinu	Ḫuzziya's brother-in-law

The first known Hittite king is called Labarna. He is known from both the *Testament* and the *Edict*. In the *Testament* Ḫattušili points out that his grandfather appointed his son Labarna to Šanaḫuitta (see below, Ch. 6.3). However, Labarna's kinship relationship with Ḫattušili is unclear, as are those of Muršili and Ḫuzziya. Interestingly, the kinship ties between other kings and their predecessors were not typically those of father and son: Ḫattušili was the son of Tawananna's brother, Ḫantili and Telipinu were brothers-in-law, and Ammuna was the only son who succeeded his father.

The first Labarna was not the only king to bear this name. In the *Testament,* Ḫattušili calls himself Labarna as well (in fact he never refers to himself as Ḫattušili throughout the text), and he mentions another Labarna, his initial heir and nephew (his sister's son), whom he later rejected in favor of Muršili (see below, Ch. 6.1). Therefore, at least three Labarna's were documented in this period. Consequently, *Tawananna* and *Labarna* emerge as critical terms for comprehending historical texts regarding Hittite kingship. Both terms seem to function as titles and personal names simultaneously, complicating their interpretation even further.

2.3. Labarna/Tabarna

Labarna and *Tabarna* were used interchangeably in the Hittite sources.[56] For instance, in the *Testament*, Ḫattušili calls himself *Labarna*, whereas in the colophon written in Akkadian, he calls himself *Tabarna*. The division could reflect a language preference: *Labarna* for Hittite and *Tabarna* for Akkadian.[57]

It is clear that *T/Labarna* functioned both as a personal name and as a royal title.[58] As a personal name, *Labarna* appears in Old Assyrian texts, and is found in Anatolian hieroglyphs as both a personal name and a mountain name.[59] The name attestations in Hittite appear in the Old Hittite Period, typically in land donation deeds. The first known Old Hittite king had it most likely as a name (Tab. 2), rather than title. It has been suggested that *T/Labarna* was a personal name first, which turned to be a title afterwards.[60] Thus, even though some etymologies have been suggested for the word, if it was initially a personal name, also likely to be with a non-Indo-European origin, attempts at establishing an etymology would be unproductive.[61]

Evidence for *Tabarna* being used as a title comes from the royal seals. The formula of the kings' seals in land deeds and official introductions frequently include the title *Tabarna*, such as in "^{NA_4}KIŠIB LUGAL.GAL *ta-ba-ar-na Ḫuzziya*," translating as "seal of the great king, Tabarna, Ḫuzziya." In these instances, *Tabarna* is consistently preferred over *Labarna*.[62]

Importantly, the usage of *T/Labarna* extended beyond the Old Hittite Period, persisting until the collapse of the Hittite Empire. Except for Šuppiluliuma I and his immediate successors Arnuwanda II, Muršili II, and Muwatalli II, all Hittite kings retained this title.[63] However, it is not attested as a personal name and appears only as a title from the Middle Hittite Kingdom on. Additionally, buildings and houses mentioned in Hittite sources were also named after Labarna, further demonstrating the significance and widespread recognition of this term.[64]

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[56] For attestations and the distribution of the different spellings, see CHD L–N, s.v. "Labarna." The title was largely spelled with *la-* in Hittite rituals; while in Hattic and Palaic ritual texts it is always spelled with *ta-*.
[57] Kloekhorst 2008: 520–1.
[58] Therefore, it is often resembled to the Latin name/title *Caesar*.
[59] RLA Band 6, s.v. "Labarna": 405–6.
[60] For a chronological overview of the use of *T/Labarna* both as a proper name and as a title, see Soysal 2005: 207–8.
[61] Kloekhorst 2008: 521.
[62] CHD L–N, s.v. "Labarna": 42.
[63] Soysal 2005: 189.
[64] CHD L–N, s.v. "Labarna": 42. Examples include instances such as É *la-ba-ar-na.*

2.4. Tawananna

The definition of the *Tawananna* cannot be simply reduced to "queen" or "wife of the king." Although the full range of its meaning is difficult to grasp, it is clear that the term was used both as a personal name and as a title, like *T/Labarna*.[65] Even though the term is encountered from the Old Kingdom to the New, it is hard to deduct the precise roles of *Tawananna,* since no historical texts explicitly detail its functions. *Tawananna* appears in a decree dated to Ḫattušili I (see below), in Ḫattušili's *Annals*, royal offering lists, seal impressions, prayers composed by Muršili II against his Babylonian step-mother, and ritual texts.[66]

The earliest historical references to *Tawananna* are from Ḫattušili I's reign: the first known *Tawananna* was his aunt, mentioned in his *Annals*.[67] Some scholars propose that *Tawananna* was her personal name, although the possibility that it represented her title—or indeed both—cannot be entirely ruled out.[68]

A second *Tawananna* appears in the damaged decree KBo 3.27,[69] which is datable to Ḫattušili's reign based on references to historical events similar to those in his *Testament*. In the decree, the king explicitly forbids the pronunciation of *Tawananna*'s name. Thus, while the term may have functioned as a title without indicating the woman's actual name, we cannot exclude the possibility that it was still used as a personal name.[70] Although the decree does not explicitly state her kinship relation to Ḫattušili, she was most likely either his sister or daughter; one of the two disruptive royal women mentioned in his *Testament* (see below, Ch. 6).[71]

Ḫattušili I's case thus demonstrates that at least two different individuals bearing the name/title *Tawananna* were not his wives, but rather close female relatives. It is sometimes

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[65] RLA Band 13, s.v. "Tawan(n)anna": 488–90.

[66] For Muršili's prayers concerning his step-mother, the Babylonian *Tawananna*, see Singer 2002: 70ff. For attestations of *Tawananna* in ritual texts from the Old Hittite period, see Carruba 1992: 85–7.

[67] Bryce 2005: 92.

[68] In the RLA (Band 13, s.v. "Tawan(n)anna": 488), Beckman lists her under "Personal Name." Yet, the self-legitimization of Ḫattušili through this woman also suggests that she held a high-ranking position that surpassed any identification through a male relative. Thus, it is possible that she bore both the name and the role of *Tawananna*.

[69] CTH 5.

[70] Cf. Carruba 1992: 77–82.

[71] Bin-nun (1975: 74–5) identifies the *Tawananna* mentioned in KBo 3.27 as Ḫattušili's daughter. However, it is also plausible that she was his sister, as suggested by Carruba (1992: 81), who questions the likelihood of her being Ḫattušili's daughter due to the contradiction between the *Testament*—where he states he will not do evil to her—and Yiğit (2007a: 6–7) notes a parallel between the snake imagery in the decree, which would "cover Ḫattuša," and the snake simile used for the sister in the *Testament* (§2 Obv. ii 10).

suggested that his aunt *Tawananna* was married to Ḫattušili's predecessor, Labarna (see also above, Ch. 1.5).[72] Logically, if his aunt has indeed been Labarna's wife, Ḫattušili would have legitimized his claim to the throne through Labarna (see below, Ch. 6.4). His avoidance of such a claim makes it clear that *Tawananna* and *T/Labarna* were not necessarily a married royal couple.[73] Interestingly, aside from the two *Tawananna*s associated with Ḫattušili's reign, it is not known whether any of the women married to the Old Hittite kings held this name or title.[74]

In later periods, it is known that *Tawananna* was also used as a personal name by the Babylonian wife of Šuppiluliuma I.[75] But it mostly appears in the seals of queens as a royal title and in a number of ceremonial texts, as a personal name.[76] In contrast to the Old Hittite Period, the titles *T/Labarna* and *Tawananna* specifically designated the reigning royal couple in the New Kingdom. By the 13th century BCE, each *Tawananna* was the wife of the reigning king without exception.[77] However, the queens in the New Kingdom were rarely called by their title *Tawananna* in the documents at our disposal, as they are mostly referred to with the title MUNUS.LUGAL ('queen') only.[78]

The role of the *Tawananna* also entailed religious duties, though the exact nature of these responsibilities remains unclear. If these religious functions were significant, the *Tawananna* would presumably have received training either from religious authorities or from her predecessor during her lifetime. Furthermore, given that the queen herself also performed

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[72] RLA Band 13, s.v. "Tawan(n)anna": 488.

[73] Bin-Nun (1975: 51–104) suggests that kings in pre-Hittite Anatolia could marry their sisters, reflecting a succession system similar to one known from early Elamite practices, where brother-sister marriages were common (however this discourse is outdated, see Ch. 4.3). In this system, the king held the title *Tabarna*, while his sister-wife was *Tawananna*. Upon settling in Anatolia, the Hittites initially adopted this system but later revised it. Although the titles *Tabarna* and *Tawananna* continued to indicate a brother-sister relationship symbolically, the practice of sibling marriage was abandoned. Consequently, the responsibilities associated with the *Tawananna*—notably religious duties and managing particular royal revenues—shifted from paternal aunt to niece (the king's daughter); whereas the son of a *Tawananna* maintained secondary succession rights, ranking after the direct sons of the reigning king and queen. Bin-Nun's suggestions are interesting, however, the available evidence is insufficient to conclusively assert either that *Tawananna* and *T/Labarna* systematically represented brother and sister, or that royal daughters regularly inherited the title.

[74] Cengiz 2021: 57.

[75] Her Babylonian name is unknown. *Tawananna*, the wife of Šuppiluliuma I, had her own seals and was politically active, as her seals appear alongside the king's in a political document. She was a high priestess and kept her power even after the death her husband. Muršili II, Šuppiluliuma's successor, accused her of using black magic to kill his wife Gaššuliyawiya. Muršili banished her instead of killing her, still fearing that the gods might disapprove the deposition of their high-priestess (Singer 2002: 70ff.).

[76] For attestations of *Tawananna* in rituals, also accompanied with *T/Labarna*, see Carruba 1992: 85–9.

[77] RLA Band 13, s.v. "Tawan(n)anna": 490.

[78] Bin-Nun 1975: 160.

prestigious religious duties due to her role as the consort of the head of state, the differentiation between the religious roles of the queen and the *Tawananna* remains unclear. It is unfortunate that the sources do not reveal more about its precise functions, nevertheless, it is clear that the meanings of *Tawananna*-ship changed over time and that in the kingdom's initial phases she held a prominent role in the succession.

3. Kinship Terms

Despite extensive research on genealogy and succession in Hittite society, scholars rarely consider Hittite kinship terminology explicitly. This oversight is significant, as the semantics of kinship terms play a crucial role in understanding royal family structures and succession dynamics.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of kinship terminology in its broader anthropological context, to highlight the complexities involved in assigning one term to one kin relationship. Kinship terms are deeply culture-specific, and their usage cannot be assumed to follow universal patterns. After this general overview, the chapter then turns to Hittite kinship terminology, followed by an overview of kinship term usage in the Hittite language, which is essential for decoding succession-related expressions found in the primary sources.

3.1. Kinship Terminology in Anthropological Context

The usage of kinship terminologies varies widely among societies and it has been of great interest to social anthropologists since the 20th century. Differences in kinship terms among societies were considered clues to understanding social evolution.[79] Typically, kinship terminologies are categorized as either *descriptive* or *classificatory*.[80] *Descriptive* terms refer to a unique kinship relationship, with a single term corresponding exclusively to one biological relationship; for example “mother” refers exclusively to one's biological mother in English. In contrast, *classificatory* terms encompass a broader group of relatives under a single term. For instance, in the Crow system, named after the native Crow Tribe of Montana, one's mother and maternal aunts are all termed "mother." The children of the maternal aunt are called “brother” and “sister” instead of “cousin,” as in English. This system assigns similar familial roles and responsibilities to what English terminology would classify as distinct relationships (e.g.,

[79] White (1958: 384) for example, revealingly states that “the transition from primitive society to modern, civilized society was accompanied by a transition from *classificatory* to *descriptive* systems.”

[80] These terms were first coined by Lewis Henry Morgan in his 1871 work, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*. However, these terms have been criticized in the 20th century for reasons such as subjectivity and the argument that all kinship terms are ultimately *classificatory*; see White 1958.

uncles), and it is not only an important aspect of their language but also their culture.[81] The Crow system is only one of the six globally recognized major terminological systems, alongside Hawaiian, Iroquois, Omaha, Sudanese, and Eskimo, each named after the initial ethnographic groups or regions where these systems were first documented.[82]

Given that language plays a central role in conveying cultural values, societies practicing avunculate systems might use distinctive words to refer to the uncle or nephew. The Wayuu people (historically referred to as Guajiro in colonial sources), an indigenous group inhabiting in northwestern Colombia, use specific kinship terms for the maternal uncle (*talaula*) the sister's children (*tasipü*).[83] These terms are *classificatory*, covering multiple kinship relations rather than one exclusively.[84] Kinship terms in Wayuu society are fluid; for instance, a grandmother's brother may be called "grandfather" but also "uncle," albeit in a weaker sense.[85]

Another example, the Selepet-speaking people in New Guinea, differentiate between the sister's child (*behât*) and the brother's child (*iwa*).[86] Moreover, the same kinship term is used to denote both to the father's brother and brother's child (*yâwut*). Unfortunately, research on this subject remains scarce, and there is no comprehensive study that systematically examines kinship terminology across avunculate societies.

3.2. Kinship Terminology in Hittite Society

Research on Hittite kinship terminology is limited, and it is admittedly hard to understand from ancient sources exactly what these terms entailed or whether they were used literally or

[81] Anna DeCrane, a member of the Crow Tribe explains the kinship terminologies and its cultural reflection as such: "In the Crow way, first cousins are considered our brothers and sisters. Another way we have extended family is through Crow adoptions. The Crow clan system is an important concept. It provides an extended family, accountability for your behavior, and encourages respect for all people. I belong to the Ties in the Bundle Clan because that is my mothers' clan and a child of the Sore Lip Clan which is my father's Clan. Members of the Sore Lip Clan are my clan aunts and uncles. Ties in the Bundle members are my clan sisters and brothers. We also have teasing clans who are allowed to tease you, usually for unacceptable behaviors. My teasing Clans are the children of male members of the Sore Lip Clan." (DeCrane 2025: n. pag.).

[82] These terms were also coined by Morgan (see n.83).

[83] Goulet 1981: 309. The father's brother, on the other hand, is called *tashici*.

[84] See Goulet 1981: 305. *Talaula* can designate to: MMB, MMMZS, MMZS, MFBS, and MMMZDS. *Tasipü* can designate to: MZDS, FBDC, MZDS, and FBDS.

[85] A similar example can be observed in Turkish, although the avunculate is not practiced in this culture: the maternal uncle is called *dayı*, and the grandmother's brother can also be called *dayı*, as he is one's mother's maternal uncle.

[86] McElhanon 1968: 301.

metaphorically. One comprehensive study, the dissertation of Jacqueline Pringle, approaches Hittite kinship systems from a social anthropological perspective.[87] She first acknowledges that Hittite terminology could be labeled as belonging to the Eskimo type, since "one word refers to all the children of one's parents' siblings regardless of whether they are patri- or matrilateral cross-cousins (father's sister's or mother's brother's children) or patri- or matrilateral parallel cousins (father's brother's or mother's sister's children), and because it distinguishes them from 'brothers and sisters.'"[88]

Later in the same chapter focusing on the term "cousin," however, Pringle suggests that Hittite kinship resembled the Omaha kinship type, in which parallel cousins (father's brother's children)[89] are distinctly differentiated from cross-cousins (father's sister's children).[90] According to her, in Hittite, the term $^{(LÚ/MUNUS)}$ *ānninniyami-* was used for both maternal cousins (children of the mother's siblings) and paternal cross-cousins (children of the father's sister). However, there was one key exception: paternal parallel cousins (children of the father's brother) were referred to with sibling terms rather than "cousin." This usage aligns with what is typical of Omaha-type systems (see also above, Ch. 3.1), as Pringle observes.

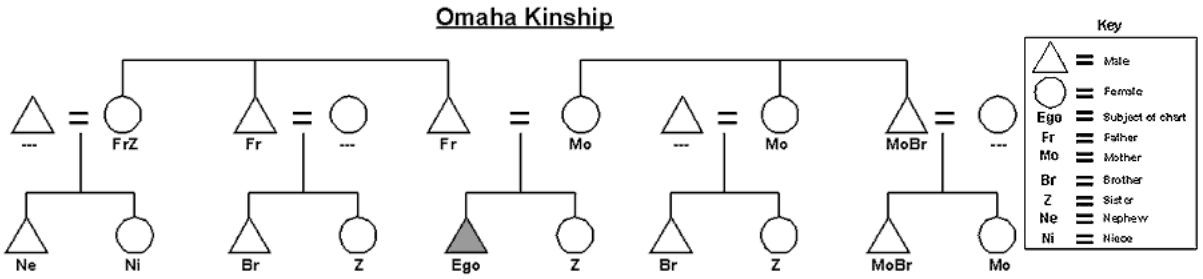
However, Pringle also identifies a significant difference. In the Omaha system, the father's sister's children are generationally lowered and referred to as nephew or niece, while the mother's brother's children are generationally raised and referred to as uncle or mother (see Fig. 2). The Hittite system, by contrast, does not seem to distinguish between paternal cross-cousins and maternal cousins; a differentiation that is explicitly maintained in Omaha kinship structures. This observation demonstrates that kinship terminology may not align neatly with typological models focused solely on Western-oriented kinship structures, reminding us of the need to remain attentive to culture-specific linguistic differences.

Detecting kinship term references from written sources can be very challenging, especially when any kind of attribution to "cousin" is sparse, as is the case for the Hittite

[87] See Pringle 1993. Pringle's study does not focus only on kinship but also on marriage. The relevant parts for this study are the first two chapters, which delve consecutively into kinship terms, terms related to family, clan, and descendants.
[88] Pringle 1993: 62.
[89] A parallel-cousin is the child of the parent's same-sex sibling, whereas a cross-cousin is the child of the parent's opposite-sex sibling.
[90] Pringle 1993: 66–7. The Omaha kinship system is named after the Omaha Native American tribe, among whom it was first studied and described.

sources. While Pringle's observations are noteworthy, and it is also not the only study suggesting a parallel between Hittite kinship and the Omaha type, further research would be required to clarify the nature of the Hittite kinship system, which exceeds the scope of this study.[91]

Fig. 2: *Omaha Kinship Structure*[92]



When lineage or inheritance was essential, the Hittites typically avoided general terms, opting instead for explicit descriptions such as "son of my father's brother," rather than simply "cousin." For example, in his Annals, Muršili II defines Ḫutupianza, the prince, as "son of Zidaya, the chief of the guards, Zidaya who was the brother to my father."[93] The term "cousin," although attested, was evidently insufficiently specific for critical lineage contexts. A similar practice can be observed in modern Turkish, where even though the term "cousin" exists, people often prefer using specific lineage-based expressions, such as "amca oğlu" (son of my paternal uncle) or "teyze kızı" (daughter of my maternal aunt).[94]

Fictive kinship, a term for non-literal usage of kinship terms, was also present in Hittite texts. Just as one might call a close friend "brother" in English, in his letters Ḫattušili III referred to the Egyptian pharaoh Rameses II as his "brother." Kinship terms were used beyond their literal meanings for millennia and it is difficult to decide which meaning, literal or fictional, is intended only by reading the texts.

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[91] See also Atkins 2000: 152, 168. Atkins classifies the Hittite kinship system specifically as Omaha IV. He supports his claim suggesting that this kinship system was the most characteristic among Indo-European societies.

[92] *Omaha-kinship-chart*. Wikimedia Commons, public domain.

[93] KBo 5.8 Obv. ii 18–20 (CTH 61.7.A): (18) ^{m}*ḫu-u-tu-pí-an-za-an-ma* (19) DUMU.LUGAL DUMU ^{m}*zi-da-a* GAL ^{LÚ}*ME-ŠE-DI* ^{m}*zi-da-a-aš ku-iš* (20) *A-NA A-BI-IA* ŠEŠ-*ŠU e-eš-ta.*

[94] This could be due to variations in family sizes. In larger families, where some individuals have more than five siblings and numerous cousins, using the term "cousin" for ten or twenty people might be redundant and simply unpractical.

3.3. Documented Kinship Terms in Hittite

Kinship terms were written both syllabically and logographically. While the Hittite language explicitly distinguished some kin relations, others remain unknown or unattested, because they are only attested in logographic spelling.

Tab. 3: *Kinship Terms in Hittite Language*

Kinship Term	Hittite	Akkadogram	Sumerogram
father	*atta-*[95]	*ABU*	AD
mother	*anna-*[96]	*UMMU*	^{MÍ}AMA
parents	*attaš annaš*		
son	unknown[97]	*MĀRU*[98]	DUMU,[99] IBILA
daughter	unknown	*MARTUM*	DUMU.MUNUS
son-in-law	*antiyant-*		
brother	*nikna-/nekna-*	*AHU*	ŠEŠ
sister	*nega-/neka-/nika-/annaneka-*[100]	*AHĀTU*	NIN
grandfather	*ḫuḫḫa-*[101]	*ABU ABI*	
grandmother	*ḫanna-*		AMA.AMA
grandson	*ḫašša-*	*MĀR MĀRI*	DUMU.DUMU
granddaughter	unknown		
great-grandchildren	*ḫanzašša-*		

[95] The word for "stepfather" is also attested in Anatolian hieroglyphs as *tatawann(i)-*.
[96] The word for "stepmother" is also attested in Anatolian hieroglyphs as $^{(MUNUS)}$*annawanna-*.
[97] One word also used for "son," though not exclusively, is *haššant-*. It appears as the participial form of *ḫaš(š)-* ('to beget, procreate, bear, give birth to'). For attestations, see HW Ḫ: 391ff.
[98] The Akkadian word for "son," *MĀRU,* typically appears as a phonetic complement following the Sumerogram DUMU, such as DUMU-*RU/RI.*
[99] DUMU.NITA is also encountered in the contexts which necessitated the contrast of male and female offspring (Pringle 1993: 27).
[100] Puhvel (A: 58) notes that the compound *annaneka-* (*anna-* meaning mother and *neka-* meaning sister) was most likely used only in the plural. The term might specifically refer to sisters sharing the same mother.
[101] *Ḫuḫḫa-* could also mean "ancestor," depending on the context (Pringle 1993: 53).

cousin	(LÚ/MUNUS) *ānninniyami-*[102]		
uncle	unknown		
aunt	unknown		
nephew	unknown		
niece	unknown		

Notably, essential nuclear family terms like "daughter" and "son" remain unknown. Likewise, the words for “aunt,” “uncle,” “niece,” and “nephew” are never attested neither in Hittite nor as a logogram. However, genealogical relationships denoting these terms are indicated more *descriptively* such as “my sister’ son” or “my father’s sister’s son.” The absence of distinct terms for some relationships does not necessarily imply their non-existence, as the terms might not appear explicitly in available texts.

The word “grandson” DUMU.DUMU, although the Hittite word itself is not yet attested, is consistently used in royal genealogies by kings from Ḫattušili III onwards. Ḫattušili indicated not only that he was the son of Muršili but also that he was the grandson of Šuppiluliuma.[103] In the New Kingdom royal genealogies, even the “great grandson” is attested as DUMU.DUMU.DUMU(-*ŠU*).[104] In contrast to the wider usage of “grandson,” the term “granddaughter” is never attested in Hittite texts.

Furthermore, Hittite might be distinguishing between the maternal grandparents and paternal grandparents as some languages do.[105] AMA.AMA could have been denoting the maternal grandmother, however, the equivalent for the paternal grandmother AMA *ABI* has not been attested.[106]

[102] Although, as explained above in Ch. 3.2, Pringle suggests that the Hittites distinguished parallel cross-cousins, I believe the topic requires further investigation. For this reason, I use the term here to refer to all types of cousins, including parallel cross-cousins.
[103] KUB 26.58 Obv. 1–4 (CTH 224).
[104] Pringle 1993: 61. Literally meaning ‘son of the son of his son.’
[105] Pringle (1993: 49–50) suggests that *ḫuḫḫa-* designates the father of the father, while KUB 13.23 3 (CTH 275) provides a fragmentary example that may contain the logographic writing referring to the maternal grandfather (*ABU* AMA).
[106] AMA.AMA is attested in KUB 15.5 Obv. i 11–12 (CTH 583).

Although this chapter outlines basic issues concerning Hittite kinship terminology, a comprehensive study is beyond the scope of this thesis and remains an open area for further research.

4. Avunculate Practices: Now and Then

In this chapter, the avunculate succession, a core aspect of this research, will be explored through a variety of anthropological examples and a critical examination of Indo-European avunculate practices based on Bremmer's extensive analysis. Furthermore, comparative insights from the Elamites, contemporaries of the Hittites, will be introduced to provide a broader context for understanding avunculate customs within ancient West Asian societies.

The avunculate, deriving from the Latin word *avunculus*, meaning "uncle" or more specifically "little grandfather," refers to the particular social relationship between a man and the children of his sister, predominantly his nephews. According to the Encyclopædia Britannica, the avunculate typically grants the maternal uncle a degree of authority over his sister's children, along with specific duties in their upbringing, initiation, and marriage arrangements.[107] Correspondingly, these nephews (and sometimes nieces) often enjoy privileged rights to the uncle's property.

Anthropological studies have shown that the avunculate relationship has existed in various societies worldwide. Studies presented in this chapter demonstrate that avuncular customs are neither limited by geography nor time. Bremmer's research reveals avuncular practices among various Indo-European groups, including ancient Indians, Greeks, Romans, Celts, and Germanic peoples; it shows the avunculate's widespread historical presence and considers the possible structural necessity of this institution in patriarchal societies.

Closer to the Hittite context in geography and historical period, the case of the Elamite rulers may present an example of avunculate succession. As demonstrated by Potts, numerous Elamite kings explicitly identified themselves as "sister's son of PN," suggesting the political and social significance of this relationship in ancient Mesopotamian societies.

4.1. Avunculate Practices Around the World

The Wayuu (see also above, Ch. 3.1) separate their genealogical relation with the father and mother using two distinct concepts: while they share *ashâ* (blood) with the father, father's father, and brother's child (but not with mother's father), they share *êirruku* (flesh) with the

[107] Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d.

mother, mother's mother, mother's brother, and sister's child (but not with father's mother).[108] Consequently, a man would not fight or die for his own children's crimes, but would fight and die for his sister's children, because they share the same flesh.[109] This results in a profound relationship between the uncle and sister's son among the Wayuu.

However, seniority appears to be a limiting factor as a similar relationship is not observed between all uncles and sister's sons: it is restricted to the oldest brother of the mother and the eldest son.[110] While theoretically the uncle leaves his inheritance to his nephew, it is common for the uncle to give his assets to his own sons during his lifetime, leaving his nephew something only if the uncle is rich enough.[111] Interestingly, there is a special relationship not only between the senior uncle and nephew but also between the senior uncle and all of his nieces.[112] The senior uncle had a say in deciding the most suitable husband for his nieces.

Brideprice is another related topic to the maternal uncle and nephew relationship. Among South African tribes, where the avunculate is observed, if the nephew wants to get married, the maternal uncle is responsible for providing part of the brideprice.[113] However, he pays this brideprice from the cattle he already received from the husbands of his nieces, or he gives it as a loan from the cattle he will receive as the brideprice of his nieces.

The Wayuu practice a similar custom, in which the maternal uncle receives the brideprice, even though he does not contribute to their dowries.[114] As preferential cross-cousin marriage is often expected (boys are expected to marry the daughter of the maternal uncle), the nephew would pay his maternal uncle the brideprice, which contributes to the property to stay inside the extended family.[115]

The Ossetians, an ethnic group situated across the northern and southern sides of the Caucasus Mountains, also make sure that the maternal uncle gets a share of the brideprice.[116] Perhaps due to a similar distinction between blood and flesh, like the one observed among the Wayuu, the Ossetian maternal uncle could also avenge the death of his sister's son.

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[108] Goulet 1981: 299–300.
[109] Goulet 1981: 318.
[110] See Cruz 1941.
[111] Cruz 1941: 2–7.
[112] Cruz 1941: 7–11.
[113] See Radcliffe-Brown 1924: 25–6.
[114] Cruz 1941: 2–7.
[115] Stoll 1970: 3.
[116] Bremmer 1976: 67.

The Selepet-speaking people in New Guinea (see also above, Ch. 3.1) also exhibit a special relationship between the nephew and the maternal uncle. The maternal uncle is expected to provide token gifts such as food to his nephew during his childhood, and the nephew is expected to reciprocate when he grows up.[117] Moreover, when the nephew is old enough, the maternal uncle formally introduces him to the men's house, a house where young boys are allocated during puberty and remained until marriage.[118] Like in the case of the Wayuu and Ossetians, the maternal uncle and the niece has a materialistic bond: at the birth of her first child, the husband of the niece has to provide a game and a pig to the maternal uncle.[119]

In the northwest of Liberia, the Luma (also known as Toma) practice the avunculate. Reciprocity holds a crucial place in the relationship between the nephew and the maternal uncle. The nephew has to perform various services for his uncle, such as "working on his farm, cutting firewood, and tapping palm wine."[120] The nephew has to sit by his uncle's side when he is sick, or dig his grave when he dies. Later on, the nephew's duties might be rewarded with the marriage of one of the uncle's daughters, enabling cross-cousin marriage.

4.2. Bremmer and the Avunculate Among Indo-Europeans

An important study on the avunculate and fosterage among Indo-Europeans has been conducted by Bremmer.[121] In his research, he finds that various Indo-European societies demonstrated a special relationship between the mother's brother and the sister's son, either in more recent times, or in more ancient times, as is evident through historical texts or literary sources such as epics and sagas.[122] According to Bremmer, evidence for this special maternal uncle-nephew relationship is found among ancient Indians, ancient Persians, the Ossetians, Hittites, ancient Greeks, ancient Romans, the Slavonic peoples, ancient Germans, ancient Icelanders, the Celts, in pagan and Christian circles, and medieval literature.

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[117] McElhanon 1968: 302.
[118] McElhanon 1968: 300. Not only young boys were allocated in these men houses but also men who had widows in their households as well as widowers.
[119] McElhanon 1968: 302.
[120] Currens 1972: 113.
[121] See Bremmer 1976.
[122] Bremmer 1976: 66–71.

Bremmer further investigates why such a relationship was necessary and why nephews were occasionally raised or fostered by their maternal families. He claims fosterage, the upbringing of the child outside the paternal home, was a common practice among Indo-Europeans.[123] However, even in this practice there was a hierarchy: the foster-father would be considered as an inferior of the giving father. While Bremmer acknowledges fosterage to be a longstanding tradition, he cannot come with any motivations for it. Nevertheless, he suggests that the reason of giving the child to the maternal family could be linked to family structures, as people tended to live in extended family units rather than nuclear families, as is common today. In a patriarchal society, these extended families would be headed by the oldest male, with his male descendants and their families residing together. Consequently, fostering children in their maternal families could have been a practical solution, as there would have been limited alternatives.[124] Bremmer further argues that this arrangement might explain how the avunculate system sustained itself within patriarchal societies.

A drawback in this research, however, as Bremmer himself acknowledges, is the scarcity of prior studies on the topic.[125] Another is, that even though Bremmer points out that the avunculate relationship is also encountered throughout the world, especially in African societies, he primarily attributes this practice to Indo-European societies. He concludes that the extended family structure and the patriarchal society resulted in the avunculate and fosterage in the maternal family.[126] I suggest that extended family structures and patriarchal societies could result in avunculate and fosterage not only among Indo-Europeans but also among different ethnic groups around the world. I see no reason why this phenomenon should be attributed solely to Indo-Europeans.

Bremmer further notes that if a child was brought to the maternal family, the grandfather could potentially play a bigger role than the uncle, but this is not the case.[127] The reason for this, Bremmer suggests, is the stronger bond between the brother and sister, due to the absent role of the father and the role of the brother as a provider. It could have been that the brother, as the maternal uncle, was responsible for providing and caring for the women in

[123] Bremmer 1976: 73.
[124] Bremmer 1976: 74.
[125] Bremmer 1976: 72.
[126] Bremmer 1976: 74.
[127] Bremmer 1976: 72.

his family. Thus, the avunculate could have served as a way of taking responsibility and ensuring the safety and security of the family, especially the children of the female line, after the grandfather's death.

4.3. The Elamites and the Avunculate

In the second millennium BCE, claims of descent through the sister's son was not restricted to the Hittite king Ḫattušili. Similar claims are also documented among Elamite rulers. The Elamites were a civilization situated primarily in the southwest region of modern Iran, centered around Susa. The *Sukkalmaḫ* period spanned through the first half of the second millennium BCE and got its name after "a dynasty of Elamite rulers that initially reigned under the authority of the kings of Šimaški, who contributed to the downfall of the Sumerian Ur III dynasty."[128] During this period, no fewer than 11 Elamite rulers were said to descent from a "sister's son of PN." Additionally, one case is attested from the late second millennium and another from the early first millennium BCE.[129]

Discussion of avunculate succession among Elamites predates the corresponding Hittite debates. At the beginning of the 20th century, scholars had assumed that such succession claim must have been the result of brother and sister marriage, an incestuous case.[130] Later, interpretations evolved, and the identification of kings as a "sister's son" was viewed instead as evidence of an earlier matrilineal succession system, similar to the case of the Hittite avunculate as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

In her study where she develops a new chronological and historical framework for the transition between the end of Ur III control and the establishment of the *Sukkalmaḫ* regime at

[128] De Graef 2012a.

[129] According to Potts (2023: 38), the Elamite rulers identified as a sister's son in the early second millennium are: **1.** Idaddu I, sister's son of Ḫutran-Tepti (EKI 48), **2.** Attaḫušu, sister's son of Šilḫaḫa (EKI 48; UAA 191), **3.** Kuk-Kirwaš, sister's son of Šilḫaḫa (EKI 38), **4.** Širukduḫ I, sister's son of Šilḫaḫa (EKI 48), **5.** Ṣiwepalarḫuḫpak, sister's son of Širukduh (EKI 3 and 48), **6.** Kuduzuluš, sister's son of Širukduh (UAA 195), **7.** Temti-Agun, sister's son of Širukduh (UAA 196), **8.** Kuk-Našur II, sister's son of Temti-Agun, sister's son of Šilḫaḫa (UAA 198; EKI 38a), **9.** Širukduḫ II, sister's son of Kuk-Našur II (UAA 199), **10.** Temtiḫalki, sister's son of Šilḫaḫa (EKI 48; UAA 200), **11.** Kuk-Našur IV, sister's son of Tan-Uli (EKI 48); in the late second millennium: Ḫumban-numena, sister's son of Šilḫaḫa (EKI 39m); in the early first millennium: Šutruk-Naḫḫunte II, sister's son of Huban-Nikaš I.

[130] Potts (2023: 38) states that the logic, or rather the illogic, of the scholars stems from three presuppositions: first, kings identified themselves as "sister's son of X"; second, the crown "always" passes from father to son, so the father must have been the previous king, resulting in a sibling marriage; and third, identification through the female line implicates a matrilineal succession.

Susa, De Graef observes that instead of calling himself the "son of Kindattu," Attaḫušu identifies himself as the "sister's son of Šilḫaḫa" in his inscriptions.[131] However, according to De Graef, as the "sister's son of Šilḫaḫa" was also used by kings that came afterwards, some of which ruling centuries after the reign of Šilḫaḫa, the term likely held an honorary rather than biological significance. As it was unlikely that all the kings were the sister's son of Šilḫaḫa, scholars have been translating the title as "legitimate descendant of Šilḫaḫa."[132] Nevertheless, De Graef suggests that Attaḫušu himself was likely a genuine biological descendant, considering he was the first to use this title, implying Šilḫaḫa's sister may have been married to Attaḫušu's father Kindattu. Only after Attaḫušu's reign the title became honorary.[133]

De Graef also raises an intriguing question: Was claiming descent from Kindattu (of Šimaškian lineage) at some point insufficient to legitimize royal authority, prompting Attaḫušu to emphasize his connection to Šilḫaḫa instead? She suggests that a political shift at the time may explain this change in emphasis.[134]

More recently, in his research on Elamite kinship, Potts highlights two types of kinship terms (which were already introduced in Ch. 3): *descriptive* kinship terms, which clearly distinguish close family members from distant ones, and *classificatory* kinship terms, which group various degrees of relatedness under a single term.[135] He points to an Elamite example which he considers to signify the usage of a *classificatory* kinship term, demonstrating that a term like "father" did not necessarily imply a biological filiation, and could be used for "different kinds and degrees of biological relatedness."[136] Potts criticizes overly literal interpretations by scholars and highlights the importance of understanding cultural contexts in historical analyses.

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[131] De Graef 2012b: 541. The expression is written as "DUMU NIN_9 / *ruhu šak* Šilḫaḫa." According to de Graef, Attaḫušu was called in only one text "son of Kindattu;" and "sister's son of Šilḫaḫa" in all other inscriptions.

[132] De Graef 2012b: 541.

[133] De Graef 2012b: 541. Yet, de Graef notes that this this interpretation of Attaḫušu's relation to Šilḫaḫa is speculative and cannot be confirmed with certainty.

[134] She supports this view in emphasizing the fact that Šilḫaḫa, who became king after Ebarat II, does not appear in the Šimaškian king list—implying a break or shift in dynastic tradition.

[135] Potts 2023: 33.

[136] Potts 2023: 33. Potts discusses the inscription by Elamite king Hutelutuš-Inšušinak, where he names three previous kings—Šutruk-Nahhunte, Kutir-Nahhunte, and Šilhak-Inšušinak—as his "fathers." This terminology sparked speculation among scholars regarding literal biological relationships, including theories of incest and complex familial ties. However, Potts argues that such interpretations neglect the *classificatory* nature of kinship terms in Elamite culture, where "father" can denote a range of male relatives and forebears, not strictly biological fathers.

Returning to the Elamite identification of rulers as "sister's-son," Potts underscores the likelihood that the term "sister" might have been used as a *classificatory* kinship term, referring broadly to female relatives beyond biological sisters.[137] Even if "sister" was *descriptive*, Potts argues, identifying oneself as the "sister's son" would not represent an exceptional scenario, as it occurred more frequently than previously recognized. He offers numerous examples illustrating the special status of a king's sister's son in royal succession and inheritance across different cultures and periods. Among these are literary figures such as Cú Chulainn, Beowulf, Tristan, and Parzival; historical examples including the succession dispute in Ellipi (8th century BCE), Roland, Charlemagne's nephew, Tancred during the First Crusade, and medieval Pictish succession customs; as well as anthropological references from Tacitus' Germania, where the bond between uncle and sister's son was considered especially sacred.[138] While it is important to acknowledge these widespread attestations, caution is necessary before concluding that similar kinship dynamics systematically shaped royal succession practices across cultures. In my opinion, although the prominence of the sister's son is evident historically and culturally, it does not necessarily indicate the presence of a structured avunculate system of royal succession.

To sum up, the avunculate, as discussed throughout this chapter, appears as a recurring social structure across various societies, both historically and in contemporary examples. It involves not only a notable bond between the maternal uncle and his sister's son, but also between the maternal uncle and his niece. Inheritance and cross-cousin marriage practices repeatedly emerge as crucial elements supporting the avunculate, helping to preserve family assets and reinforcing family ties.

[137] Potts 2023: 40.
[138] Potts 2023: 40–42.

5. State of the Debate: The Succession Models in the Hittite Kingdom - Matrilinear, Patrilinear, or Avunculate?

The true nature of the rule of succession among the Hittite royals has been a matter of debate for almost three quarters of a century. While the patrilineal nature of succession in the New Kingdom has remained largely uncontroversial, the meager yet intriguing sources of the Old Hittite Period, —namely the *Testament of Ḫattušili* and the *Edict of Telipinu*— along with the ongoing palace murders described in the latter, have made it hard for scholars to settle on the topic. Ḫattušili I's self-legitimization as "the son of the brother of Tawananna" is especially puzzling, and is treated with care in each study discussed below. Although some once proposed a matriarchal or matrilineal social structure, it is now generally accepted that the avunculate could function within a patriarchal and patrilineal society.

Before discussing matrilineal or avunculate succession systems, it is important to note that they were not the only models proposed for Hittite royal succession. In 1957, after examining the *Edict*, in which Telipinu occasionally addresses the *panku*,[139] Albrecht Goetze suggested that the Hittite monarchy had been elective from the start.[140] Goetze interpreted the *panku* to be an "entirety of nobles" which served to check on the king's power.[141] According to him, even the *Edict* did not erase this institution; it merely reinforced the hereditary principle while retaining the role of the nobles in approving the new king.

Yet, Ferdinand Sommer contested this view, arguing that "being united" in the *Edict* simply indicated the absence of internal strife such as intrigues, uprisings, and bloody palace revolutions.[142] According to him, the king held ultimate authority in designating his heir. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the king sought advice from the *panku* in this process. Instead, the *panku* appears to have played a passive role, merely witnessing royal reforms and the king's decisions, rather than actively influencing succession.[143]

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[139] See Appendix B: §26, §30, §33.
[140] See Goetze 1957a. According to Goetze, the earliest Hittite kings had to be recognized by the members of their clan and their warriors, i.e., nobles.
[141] *Panku* is translated as 'ensemble, assembly, (judicial) body' (Puhvel P: 86). However, there is no direct evidence showing that the *panku* ever approved the king or the future king; see Beckman 1986a.
[142] Sommer 1935: 279.
[143] Beckman 1982: 440–42.

In 1957, V.V. Ivanov made a crucial observation as described by Kaspar Riemschneider: the *Testament*'s reference to raising a sister's son would be inexplicable unless the sister's son was traditionally the rightful heir.[144] Subsequently, based on Riemschneider's account, Dovgjalo developed this idea into a full theory about matrilineal succession in the Old Hittite Kingdom.[145] He argued that the murders described in the *Edict* were not random acts of violence but reflected a systematic conflict between different succession principles. According to Dovgjalo's theory, as interpreted by Riemschneider, each king who took the throne sought to establish his own son as heir rather than his nephew, leading to a recurring struggle in which the king's biological sons had to be eliminated for the adopted nephew to become ruler.

Dovgjalo also proposed that the term "son" (DUMU) was not necessarily restricted to biological sons, but could also refer to a sister's son (nephew). However, Riemschneider rejected this argument, stating that it is implausible for a single word to designate both kin relations in Hittite.[146] Instead, he suggested that Ḫattušili's use of "my son" when referring to his nephew was likely emotional rather than formal.

According to Riemschneider, Ḫattušili's claim to the throne was based on Tawananna's royal lineage rather than Labarna's.[147] Labarna was not a legitimate figure to claim descent from, so Ḫattušili legitimized himself through his aunt Tawananna rather than his father. This suggests that Tawananna, as a royal woman, was more critical in defining dynastic legitimacy than Labarna, a male affinal relative.

Moreover, Riemschneider emphasized that the role of royal wives in succession was limited. The importance of a king's wife (queen) was secondary, unless she was also the sister of the previous king and the mother of the heir to the throne; meaning her importance stemmed from her maternal lineage rather than her marital status.[148] He exemplifies the case of Ḫuzziya's sister, Ištapariya, who only became queen because her husband, Telipinu, took the throne.

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[144] V. V. Ivanov 1957, *non vidi*, as cited in Riemschneider 1971: 83.
[145] Dovgjalo 1963, 1964, 1968, *non vidi*, as cited in Riemschneider 1971: 80.
[146] See Riemschneider 1971.
[147] Riemschneider (1971: 101) assumes that Labarna was the husband of Tawananna. According to him, Tawananna had no children of her own, so succession had to follow the female line. Therefore, Ḫattušili defines himself as the "son of the brother of Tawananna."
[148] Riemschneider 1971: 101.

This pattern may suggest that while kingship was not strictly matrilineal, there was a strong emphasis on descent through royal women. Male affinal relatives, such as Labarna, who married into the royal dynasty, were apparently less important in establishing a right to the throne compared to direct blood ties to royal women like Tawananna.

Aside from Ḫattušili, however, no other Hittite king refers to himself—nor is referred to by others—in relation to a woman.[149] Typically, the kings claim legitimacy through their fathers rather than their mothers or maternal uncles. As Bin-Nun notes, "None of the Hittite kings relates himself or is related by others to his mother. We find very few female names mentioned in Hittite documents, even the queens remain unnamed in most texts."[150] This lack of references to royal women challenges the notion of a matrilineal society and emphasizes their relatively limited attestation in the sources.

Back in 1970, in the excursus of his book, Volkert Haas was the first to introduce the anthropological term *avunculate* to refer to the special aunt-nephew relationship among the Hittites.[151] He systematized the avunculate and suggested that it functioned as such: first, with Tawananna as queen, the son of the queen's brother would become king. Second, cross-cousin marriage would occur between the brother's son and the king and queen's daughter. Haas assumed that its existence supported a matrilineal succession. Matrilineality, however, could not have been practiced in Hittite society.[152] The available sources—linguistic usage, legal formulations, and historical texts—suggest that descent and legitimacy were predominantly understood in patrilineal terms. Royal inscriptions and succession narratives typically emphasize male kinship ties, with fathers, sons, and brothers playing central roles.[153]

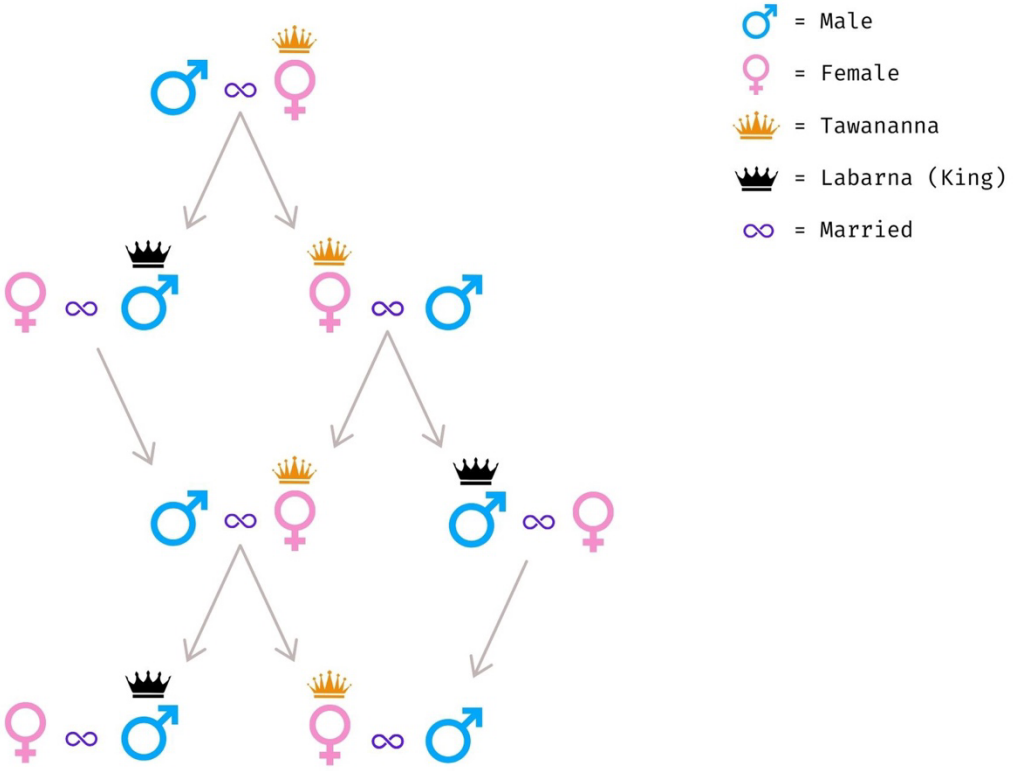
27 years after Riemschneider's article, Dietrich Sürenhagen revisited the topic, making the crucial observation that an avunculate system of succession did not necessarily presuppose a matrilineal order.[154] The avunculate succession and the patrilineal kinship

[149] Bin-Nun 1975. Especially Bin-Nun's first chapter "Is the Position of The Hittite Queen a Relic of a Matriarchal Society?" is diligently discussing the topic.
[150] Bin-Nun 1975: 16. However, Bin-Nun notes that Tudḫaliya IV is the only exception for he mentions his mother Puduḫepa after his father Ḫattušili on seal RŠ 17.159.
[151] See Haas 1970.
[152] See Beckman 1986a.
[153] Beckman (1986a: n.6) makes an anachronistic, yet, incisive comment saying: "No historian would see matriarchy or a matrilineal rule of succession in sixteenth-century England, based on the reign of Elizabeth I". Indeed, in patrilineal societies female figures can hold a nonconventional position, yet, these individual circumstances cannot be used to generalize the society's opinion on women's position.
[154] See Sürenhagen 1998.

systems were not necessarily exclusive: within the patrilineal system avunculate succession could operate without weakening the other.

According to Sürenhagen, avunculate succession enabled strategic cross-cousin marriages: the king's sister would marry her cousin, ensuring the kingship remained within the same dynasty while redirecting succession through the maternal line; not to the king's sons, but to his sister's son. The title Labarna, as he suggested, may have designated kings who were affiliated with the royal family through a specific genealogical or familial status, possibly formalized through adoption. Similarly, the title Tawananna appears intrinsically linked to this succession system, with each Tawananna's daughter becoming the future Tawananna while the king would be the Tawananna's son. Although the avunculate system prevented the king's sons from inheriting the throne directly, the kingship would ultimately return to his line through his grandson (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: *Cross-cousin Marriage Among the Royal Family According to the Avunculate Succession Model*



However, Sürenhagen noted that, since the Hittite society fundamentally maintained patrilineal family structures, the coexistence of avunculate practices with the usual father-to-son inheritance created persistent tensions. These conflicts within the royal palace led to the *Edict*, a reform that attempted to end the ongoing murders and succession challenges by formally ending the avunculate system and permitting the son of the king to become the next king.

Similar to Sürenhagen, Forlanini regarded the *Edict* as a crucial reform aimed at stabilizing the royal succession and preventing internal conflicts. While Sürenhagen focused on avunculate succession within a patrilineal framework, Forlanini emphasized the political dynamics between different branches of the royal family, maintained through strategic marriage alliances.[155] His distinctive interpretation identified two main branches of the royal family: the northern branch, associated with Zalpa and descended from Ḫuzziya, and a southern branch, connected to Kaniš/Kuššar and linked to the Labarna line. According to Forlanini, the system of cross-marriages between these branches initially created unity, as referenced in the *Testament*, but eventually led to competing succession claims between the king's sons and their in-laws.

Atkins focused on the son-in-law, or *antiyant* in Hittite, rather than on the nephew.[156] Taking into consideration the Hittite king lists and sacrificial offering lists, and by comparing the different succession chronologies proposed by Beal and Bryce, he concluded that a father-to-son succession pattern was not consistently practiced. He observed that among all known Hittite kings up until Šuppiluliuma I, only six were the sons of kings, whereas ten came to the throne through other relationships, and four had unknown origins.[157] Additionally, he underlines that the *antiyant*s were also considered as "sons" of the king.[158] According to him, Telipinu was a son-in-law of Ammuna and his proclamation is the earliest document designating the son-in-law separately from the sons. Atkins also underscores the role of the

[155] See Forlanini 2010.
[156] See Atkins 2000.
[157] Atkins (2000: 152) bases these numbers on Beal's proposed king list.
[158] For this, Arnuwanda is given as an example of an *antiyant* king. Arnuwanda was married to Ašmunikal. Both Arnuwanda and Ašmunikal call Tudḫaliya their father. However, as sibling marriages were prohibited by Hittite laws, it has been suggested that Arnuwanda was the son-in-law of Tudḫaliya (Atkins 2000: 160).

Tawananna: with clan-exogamous marriages, the kings were chosen from the Tawananna's co-lineals: namely her fathers, brothers, or sons.

Beal attempted to reconstruct the pre-Ḫattušili period using various sources, including the often-overlooked historical section of the Zalpa Text.[159] While he does not delve deeply into the succession system, he explicitly rejects any kind of "matriarchal" or "matrilineal" succession in Hittite kingship, as proposed by Riemschneider. Instead, he argues that the female line only became relevant when there was no male heir—whether due to chance or murder.[160]

Criticizing Beal for ignoring Sürenhagen's work on Hittite succession, Petra Goedegebuure revisits the question of whether Telipinu tried to introduce a new reform when he laid out the rules of succession, or if he was simply codifying an existing rule as law.[161] Referring to only Bremmer's work which was written two decades earlier (see above, Ch. 4.2), she points out that the avunculate was common among Indo-Europeans, and at least one documented case of cross-cousin marriage in Old Hittite history supports its possible application among the Hittites.[162]

Following Sürenhagen's reconstruction, Goedegebuure concludes that the Tawananna was both the sister of a Labarna and the mother of a Labarna within an avunculate succession system. This would make Ḫattušili a legitimate ruler only if he was the son of the Tawananna. However, since Ḫattušili legitimizes himself as the "son of the brother of Tawananna," she suggests this was because Labarna, the brother of Tawananna, adopted him as the future king.[163] If he had been the natural son of Tawananna's brother, Ḫattušili would not be legitimate under the avunculate succession model. As she proposes, Ḫattušili does not legitimize himself directly through Labarna, even though he was adopted by him, because his legitimacy ultimately stemmed from his mother, the Tawananna. By calling himself the "son of the brother of Tawananna," Ḫattušili emphasizes both his connection to Tawananna and his adoption by Labarna as the selected heir.

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[159] See Beal 2003.
[160] Beal 2003: 14.
[161] See Goedegebuure 2004.
[162] Goedegebuure 2004: 10. The marriage in question is that of Zidanta I—whom is considered to be the son of Muršili I—to the daughter of Ḫarapšili and Ḫantili. As Ḫarapšili was Muršili's sister and Ḫantili was presumably Zidanta's father-in-law; Zidanta was married to his paternal aunt's daughter. However, the identity of Zidanta and his precise relationship to Ḫantili and Muršili remain uncertain (see below, Ch. 7.3).
[163] Goedegebuure 2004: 14–15.

According to Goedegebuure Telipinu was also not legitimate, and that is why he issued the *Edict* —to end the ongoing murders and legitimize his son as the rightful heir. As the *Edict* describes previous kings and murders mostly without explicitly stating kin relations, the legitimacy of each enthroned king appears questionable. Goedegebuure tries to explain the murders and the succession within an avunculate succession system, suggesting possible cross-cousin marriages. She comes to a similar conclusion to that of Sürenhagen's, that the challenges must have been a result of the clash between the prevailing patrilineal character of the Hittite society and the avunculate succession system.

At this point, it is clear that there is no trace of a matriarchal or matrilineal system among the Hittites. However, the possibility of an avunculate succession system remains open to debate, as it does not require a matriarchal or matrilineal social structure. Both the *Testament of Ḫattušili* and the *Edict of Telipinu* can be analyzed in multiple ways because they contain much content that is open to interpretation, with each interpretation offering its own strengths and weaknesses. In the following chapters, I will delve deeper into these arguments, aiming to clarify whether an avunculate pattern coexisted with the standard father-to-son inheritance in the Old Hittite Kingdom.

6. Analysis of Ḫattušili's Testament

Ḫattušili tells stories within stories in his *Testament,* addressing various people throughout various sections: the *panku*, the elders, Muršili, and a woman called Ḫaštayar. The *Testament*'s rhetoric is well crafted: it selects specific examples to support his claim, depicts good and evil characters in a certain way, alternates between positive and negative aspects, and makes use of a non-chronological sequence.[164] Aiming to convince his audience, Ḫattušili talks about his family, and close kin, giving us an opportunity to analyze whether an avunculate succession is reflected through these stories.[165] To examine one of the key arguments supporting the avunculate model, this chapter begins with a brief discussion of Ḫattušili's legitimization through his aunt in his *Annals*, followed by a detailed analysis of his *Testament*.

6.1. Ḫattušili's Legitimacy

The beginning of Ḫattušili's *Annals* has long been interpreted as providing evidence of a succession system alternative to the traditional father-to-son succession model. Because in the text, Ḫattušili identifies himself as the "son of the brother of Tawananna" (§1 Obv. i 1–3):

(1) [LUGAL.GAL *tabar*]*na* ^{m}*Ḫattušili* LUGAL.GAL
(2) [LUGAL KUR ^{URU}*ḪAT*]*TI* LÚ ^{URU}kuššar KUR ^{URU}*ḪATTI*
(3) [LUGAL-*ezzia*]*t* ŠA ^{f}Tawananna DUMU.ŠEŠ-*ŠU*

I, the great king, the Tabarna, Ḫattušili; [king of the land of Ḫatti], ruler of the city of Kuššar, exercised kingship in Ḫatti.[166] The son of the brother of Tawananna.

Ḫattušili's choice to legitimize himself through his paternal aunt is puzzling. This kind of legitimization is not encountered anywhere else in the Hittite history until now, Hittite kings

[164] Hoffner 2013: 139.
[165] Even though the author of the *Testament* is typically regarded as Ḫattušili, Liverani and Pecchioli Daddi suggested that the author could have been Muršili, whose political interest the *Testament* serves (de Roos 2001: 401, n.4). Due to limitations of this study I do not follow this argument in depth.
[166] Strikingly, Ḫattušili refers to himself as "Man of Kussar(a)." Melchert (1978: 7) proposed that the entire titulature "Ḫattušili the Great King, King of the Land of Ḫatti, Man of Kussar(a)" was a later insertion, possibly adjusted to fit the Neo-Hittite titulary pattern.

typically legitimize themselves through their fathers. However, in this unique instance Ḫattušili refers to his paternal aunt, with not indicating who his father was.

From the *Edict* (§1) as well as the Cruciform Seal, it is known that a king Labarna ruled before Ḫattušili. Ḫattušili identifies the same Labarna in §20 (see below, Ch. 6.2), although partly reconstructed, as the son of his grandfather. This suggests that Labarna I, despite being his predecessor, was not Ḫattušili's father, but possibly his uncle. However, this scenario raises issues regarding Ḫattušili's self-legitimization through Tawananna. Because if his uncle Labarna I was king, he could have adopted Ḫattušili, as Ḫattušili himself later adopted Labarna III (see below, Ch. 6.2), and become his "father."

A widely accepted interpretation is that Labarna I was an *antiyant*, a son-in-law.[167] It is derived from the Cruciform Seal that Tawananna and Labarna were a married couple (Tab. 1). If Labarna was indeed an *antiyant* from a non-royal lineage marrying into the royal family, this would explain why Ḫattušili avoided directly legitimizing himself through Labarna, and why Labarna is identified as the "son" of Ḫattušili's grandfather rather than his father.

However, if Ḫattušili was indeed "the son of the brother of Tawananna," this would not make him legitimate under avunculate succession. Because the legitimate king would be the king's sister's son, and not the sister's brother's son. To address this discrepancy, Goedegebuure suggests another possible interpretation: Tawananna and Labarna were siblings, not spouses, and Ḫattušili could have been Tawananna's biological son, subsequently adopted by her brother, Labarna I.[168] She argues that, in line with avunculate succession, adoption held an important part of the succession principles: Labarna I adopted Ḫattušili because he chose him as his heir, a similar motive is attested in the *Testament*, where Ḫattušili similarly adopts his own successors, Labarna III and Muršili I.

Ḫattušili's legitimization remains unclear. Whether through his aunt, his uncle, or through adoption, the text does not offer a definite answer. Still, it forms the basis for the avunculate model, and must be considered carefully before turning to the *Testament*, where succession is addressed in more direct terms.

[167] Atkins 2000: 155; Beal 2003: 23; Forlanini 2011: 119.
[168] Goedegebuure 2004: 15.

6.2. Disinherited Labarna, the Sister's Son

The reason why Ḫattušili issued his *Testament* was to name his new heir. However, since he already had an heir, he needed to officially justify his decision to deprive him of the throne. The *Testament* starts with the denouncement of the young Labarna, who was the crown prince before Muršili. We learn that, before changing his mind, Ḫattušili had adopted his sister's son Labarna, and he called Labarna "my son" explicitly (§1 Obv. ii 3–4):

(3) LUGAL-*uš≈an≈za*]

(4) DUMU-*la≈man ḫalziḫḫun*

I, [the king], named [him] my son.

By calling Labarna his "son," Ḫattušili emphasized Labarna's adoption. One might initially assume that, in line with the avunculate system, the sister's son was the natural heir to the throne. However, this assumption is complicated by Ḫattušili's explicit claim that he himself selected Labarna (§2 Obv. ii 8–11):

(8) LUGAL≈*šan eppun n≈an≈za≈ka*[*n šaštim≈mi arnunun*]

(9) *nu kuit namma≈z* DUMU.NIN-*TI-ŠU* [*ŪL kuiški šallanuzi* LUGAL-*aš uttar*]

(10) *ŪL dāš nu anna≈ššaš* MUŠ[*-aš kuit uttar nu apāt dāš*]

(11) *nu≈šši* ŠEŠ^{MEŠ}*-uš* NIN$_9$^{MEŠ}*-uš u*[*ddār ekuna pēdaeškir*

I, the king, selected him. [I brought] him [to my couch]. Why would anyone raise his sister's son again? He did not take [the advice of the king]. His serpent mother[']s advice, that he took]. (His) brothers and sisters [have been placing cold] w[ords] in him.

The selection of heir and the adoption that consecutively followed might suggest that Labarna was treated differently and the sister's children were not called by the maternal uncle "son" by birth. Perhaps a ceremonial event took place when Ḫattušili named Labarna his "son," as his heir. It is possible that Ḫattušili chose his heir among his sister's sons, which would still align

with the avunculate succession.[169] However, it is uncertain whether he also called the rest of his sister's children "son" or "daughter." This seems rather unlikely since, in this same passage, Ḫattušili talks about his other nephews and nieces from his sister distantly, almost like enemies, similar to his own sister. Thus, it could be that he only named Labarna his "son," using the term in the meaning of "heir," specifically to formalize the adoption and declare Labarna as his successor publicly.

Notably, young Labarna and Ḫattušili shared the same name. Throughout the *Testament*, Ḫattušili exclusively uses his other name, Labarna; in fact, the name "Ḫattušili" never appears. Ḫattušili had the same name with Labarna I, his predecessor, originally. Initially, Ḫattušili bore the titular name Labarna, just like his predecessor. Scholars suggest Ḫattušili (meaning 'man of Ḫattuša') renamed himself upon conquering Ḫattuša.[170] Possibly, he renamed the younger Labarna at the moment of selection as heir. Had Labarna III succeeded, three Labarnas would have ruled consecutively in the early Hittite kingdom.

After selecting Labarna as heir, Ḫattušili raised him. From the distant mention of Labarna's other siblings, it appears unlikely that Ḫattušili raised any other of his sister's children. While Ḫattušili does not state Labarna's age upon adoption, he explicitly expresses his disappointment of whom he turned out to be (§1 Obv. ii 5–7):

(5) *nu≈šši āppan ḫuwaišk*[*inun apāš≈ma* TUR-*aš ŪL uwauaš uwattat*]

(6) *ŪL išhaḫruwattat Ū*[*L≈aš genzuwait* …]

(7) *ekunaš≈aš n≈aš ŪL g*[*enzuwalaš*][171]

[I] have constantly back[ed] him up. But he was a boy unfit to be seen! He did not weep. [He did] n[ot have kindness]. He is coldhearted. He is not c[ompassionate].

[169] Goedegebuure 2004: 14.

[170] HAB 1938: 20. An alternative view regarding Ḫattušili's renaming is that he received his name after his presumed birthplace, to distinguish him from his uncle Labarna I (Beal 2003: 25; see n.73). Beal also notes (following Kempinski and Košak, and Sürenhagen; see references therein) that in KBo 3.38 Obv. 19 the Hittites are called "[men] of Ḫattuša" in parallel with the elders of Zalpa, and that Ḫattuša was already referenced as the location where the treaty was signed, thus suggesting it functioned as the Hittite capital already during Ḫattušili's grandfather's or father's reign.

[171] The first passages of the *Testament* are largely restored from the Akkadian version, see HAB.

Ḫattušili's criticism focuses solely on Labarna's emotional shortcomings and negative character traits, without mentioning any failures in his priestly duties (see below) or interactions with dignitaries.[172] Of course, Labarna's cold heart was not the only reason for his denouncement; the fact that Labarna was still listening to his mother, brothers, and sisters displeased him. Apparently, Labarna had still contact with his nuclear family after his adoption. Interestingly, Ḫattušili does not mention Labarna's father, who as an *antiyant* might have been considered irrelevant or had possibly already deceased.

Ḫattušili could grant kingship, but he could also take it away if he wished to. The text demonstrates that, even if an avunculate succession existed, it was not unchangeable. The *Testament* emphasizes the king's ultimate authority: even if the sister's son received the throne by customary right, it remained revocable; regardless of whether the succession was avuncular or father-to-son.

Ḫattušili symbolically disinherits Labarna by no longer calling him his "son" (§3 Obv. ii 14–19):

(14) *dāla ŪL* DUMU-*IA ap*[*āš anna≈ššiš≈ma* GUD-*uš mān*]
(15) *ḫuišwanti≈wa≈mu≈kan* ^{G}[^{UD}AMAR-*un* ÚR *šarrier ḫarganuer≈war≈an nu≈war≈an*]
(16) *kueti* LUGAL-*š≈an idalu* [*kuitki iyanun ŪL≈an* ^{LÚ}SANGA *iyanun*]
(17) *n≈an para aššūi ḫu*[*ittiyannieškinun ŪL≈ma≈aš* ZI]
(18) LUGAL*≈aš genzuwait m*[*aḫḫan≈aš apel* ZI-*aš aššuli*]
(19) ^{URU}KÙ.BABBAR-*ši genzu ḫ*[*arzi*]

Enough! He is not my son (anymore). [His mother (bellowed) like a cow]: "[They deployed] the c[alf], to me living, [from (my) lap]! [They ruined him]! "You will kill [him!"] [Did I], the king, [do anything] evil to him? [Didn't I make him a priest?] I [have always] si[ngled] him [out]. [But] he was [not] gentle with the king's [soul]. H[ow can he, that soul], h[ave] fondness for the well-being of Ḫattuša?

It appears that the denouncement of Labarna was due in part to his own heartlessness, and in part to the disruptive influence of his mother on Ḫattušili. Ḫattušili does not take any

[172] Christiansen 2022: 733.

responsibility for having harmed Labarna; yet, despite his initial favor he still turned out to be unworthy of the throne. After adopting him, Ḫattušili even appointed Labarna as a priest—an indication that becoming king required training and preparation. Being a successor came with responsibilities, and Ḫattušili fulfilled his own role in preparing Labarna for kingship. However, Labarna ultimately failed in this training. Ḫattušili thus carefully explains Labarna's unsuitability, further detailing catastrophic futures should Labarna become king (§4). After publicly naming an heir, stepping back is complex, especially involving close kin who wield considerable palace influence. Thus, rather than admitting to any misjudgment, Ḫattušili strategically places the blame on Labarna and his mother.

Yet Labarna's cold heart alone was apparently insufficient grounds for execution, as Ḫattušili instead banishes him (§6 Obv. ii 30–33):

(30) *kāša*]

(31) DUMU-*mi labarni* [É-e]*r peḫḫ*[*un* A.ŠÀ$^{Ḫ.A}$-*še me*]*kki*

(32) *peḫḫun* GUD$^{Ḫ.A}$-*še me*[*kk*]*i pehhu*[*n* UDU$^{Ḫ.A}$-*še mekk*]*i peḫḫun*

(33) *nu azzikkiddu* [*a*]*kku*[*ški*]*dd*[*u mān≈aš aššuš*]

[Just now], I have giv[en] a [hous]e to my son Labarna. I have given (him) [ma]ny [fields], I have give[n] m[an]y cows, I have given [man]y [sheep]. He shall eat and [d]rin[k. As long as he behaves well].

Even though Labarna was unfit for kingship, Ḫattušili generously grants him property, possibly as compensation to prevent rebellion. Though, if Labarna was the rightful heir to the throne as his sister's son, wouldn't his rebellion be just? Under an avunculate succession, young Labarna's kingship would be perfectly legitimate and Ḫattušili would be breaching Labarna's birthright. As noted above, Ḫattušili may have chosen one sister's son from among several, so the heir's legitimacy stemmed from the king's own preference. This reading still fits an avunculate model, yet the fact that the king picked a sister's son does not, by itself, prove that an avunculate system was in effect.

Whether Labarna was the rightful heir or not, Ḫattušili took Labarna's position as heir from his hands. In contrast to the earlier moment where he symbolically disinherits Labarna by saying, "He is not my son anymore" (§4 Obv. ii 14), he refers to him as his son again in §6 Obv. ii

31 (see above). How can this contrast be explained? It is intriguing to suggest that in the first instance, Ḫattušili uses "son" in the sense of "heir," whereas in the second, he may still consider Labarna his son—perhaps not as heir, but as an adopted or once-adopted son. It seems unlikely that the maternal uncle would have used "son" for his nephew in a consistent, structured way, especially since, as discussed above, Ḫattušili's use of "son" seems to have coincided with Labarna's adoption. Nevertheless, the term "son" as used here appears to be closely tied to the social and political roles it carried, rather than to descriptive and strictly biological definitions of kinship.

6.3. New Heir: Muršili

With the *Testament*, Muršili I officially became Ḫattušili's successor. Just as he had done previously with Labarna, Ḫattušili formalizes Muršili's adoption and appointment as heir by explicitly calling him "son" (§7 Obv. ii 37–39):

(37) [*k*]*āšma* ^{m}*Muršiliš* DUMU-*I*[*A nu≈z*]*a ap*[*ūn šekten*]

(38) [*nu*]*≈šša*n *apūn ašešte*[*n* …] *x* […*-z*]*a peyan≈pat*

(39) [DINGIR-*LI*]*M-iš* UR.MAḪ-*aš pedi* UR[.MAḪ-*an≈pat tittanuzi*

[N]ow, Muršili is m[y] son. [You shall recognize] h[im]! You shall plac[e] him (on the throne)! […] precisely given. [The go]ds will [place] a li[on], in the place of a lion.

Even though Ḫattušili calls him his "son," Muršili's precise bloodline remains unknown. Nowhere in the *Testament* does Ḫattušili elaborate on his exact kinship relationship with Muršili. If Ḫattušili selected his heir in line with avunculate succession, Muršili could indeed have been another nephew, perhaps from a different sister, especially given Ḫattušili's strained relationship with Labarna's mother.

Scholars often assume that Muršili was Ḫattušili's grandson, primarily based on evidence from the Talmi-Šarruma Treaty.[173] This treaty was concluded between King Muwatalli II of Ḫatti and Talmi-Šarruma of Aleppo. Although Muwatalli's exact regnal years are uncertain,

[173] KBo 1.6 Obv. 13 (CTH 75).

the text presumably dates to the 15th century BCE. In this treaty, King Muwatalli refers to Muršili's destruction of Aleppo: "After Ḫattušili, King of Ḫatti, Muršili, Great King, grandson of Ḫattušili, Great King, destroyed the kingship of Aleppo and the land of Aleppo."[174] According to Sürenhagen, Muršili's enthronement as the grandson aligns perfectly with avunculate succession, since the throne would naturally pass to young Labarna's sister's son, who would be ultimately Ḫattušili's own grandson.[175] However, as we know nothing about Muršili's mother and the treaty stands centuries after the events it recalls, we must treat this evidence with caution.

Returning to the passage above, it is particularly noteworthy that Ḫattušili elevates Muršili's character immediately after thoroughly discrediting Labarna in previous sections. This narrative strategy highlights Ḫattušili's deliberate rhetorical effort to reinforce Muršili's legitimacy and superiority as his chosen heir. Muršili was to become a lion, just like Ḫattušili himself.[176] Under a strong leader, the land would achieve unity—an important recurring theme throughout the *Testament* and later also emphasized in the *Edict*.[177] To warn the possible palace listeners, Ḫattušili retells the stories of Ḫuzziya and his daughter to set them as an example.

Ḫattušili had appointed Ḫuzziya as the lord of Tappaššanda, but local elites there seemingly caused Ḫuzziya to rebel against Ḫattušili, resulting in his death by the Hittite people. The kinship relationship of Ḫuzziya to Ḫattušili is unknown. A damaged part of the *Testament* is often reconstructed as "[*autteni* DUMU-*l*]*a≈man* ^{m}*Huzziyan*" translating "[Consider (pl.)] my [son] Ḫuzziya" (§12 Obv. ii 63). Although uncertain, it is plausible for Ḫuzziya to be Ḫattušili's son, as kings generally had offspring, and the early Hittite kings sent their sons to govern other cities, according to the *Edict*.[178] Yet, if succession was strictly father-to-son, Ḫuzziya's rebellion

[174] Adapted from Beckman (1996: 89).
[175] Sürenhagen 1998: 88.
[176] Ḫattušili uses animal metaphors such as snake, cow, and lion throughout the *Testament*. For his use of animal imagery in other texts as well, see Collins 1998.
[177] See the *Testament* §§8 (Obv. ii 42–47), 9 (Obv. ii 48–52), 20 (Rev. iii 33–45), 21 (Rev. iii 46–54); and the *Edict* §§1 (Obv. i 1–4), 5 (Obv. i 13–16), 29 (Obv. ii 40–45), 32 (Obv. ii 59–65), 33 (Obv. ii 66–73).
[178] See *Edict* §§3–4 and 6. The text states that early Hittite kings sent their sons to govern other cities, implying a system in which royal children gained administrative and military experience before inheriting the throne. In the *Testament* §8, although Ḫattušili was already ill and Muršili likely remained in Ḫattuša, he still commands that Muršili be raised as a heroic king and sent on campaign in his third year, reflecting similar educational ideals. Although separated by more than two millennia, a comparable custom is attested in the Ottoman Empire (1299–1922 CE), which arose in the same region. There, princes were sent to govern provincial cities at a young age: initially around 7–8 years old, later often between 13–21, to prepare them for rulership (Kurtaran 2014: 763).

against his father becomes puzzling, as he would presumably inherit the throne anyway. It could have been that Ḫuzziya was not in good terms with his father, or he was too hasty to dethrone him. Other possible explanations include the existence of another son above Ḫuzziya who died during these events, or, if following avunculate succession, Ḫuzziya might not have been the rightful heir. These scenarios rely heavily on the assumption that Ḫuzziya was indeed Ḫattušili's biological son. The term "son" is reconstructed from the passage, and as discussed earlier, "son" in Hittite texts did not necessarily reflect biological ties explicitly. Therefore, it is conceivable that Ḫattušili did not send his actual sons to govern cities, and perhaps Ḫuzziya was either a 'fictive' son, another kin relation, or even an *antiyant*—the husband of Ḫattušili's daughter—given that her rebellion is described next (§13 Obv. ii 68–74):

(68) [LUGAL-*ša* ^{m}*Ḫuzziyan natt*]*a ēppun nu≈kkan* DUMU$^{MEŠ\ URU}$*ḪATTI*

(69) [^{m}*Ḫuzziyan kuen*]*ir namma* DUMU.MUNUS *ēppir apāš≈a ḫašātar*

(70) [DUMU.NITA-*an kuit ḫarta nu≈mu*] *kūrurīyaḫḫier attaš≈ttaš≈wa*

(71) [^{GIŠ}SÚ.A-*ši* DUMU.NITA NU.GÁL A]RAD-*iš≈wa≈ššan ešari* ARAD-*iš≈wa*

(72) [LUGAL-*ueizzi apāš≈a na*]*mma* ^{URU}*Ḫattušan šallai≈a*

(73) [É-*ir edi nāiš nu≈mu* ARAD^{MEŠ}-*IA*] *Ù* DUMU^{MEŠ} É.GAL-*IA kūrurriyaḫḫier*

(74) [*utnē≈ma ḫūman ḫarna*]*mniēt*

I, [the king], did [no]t take hold of [Ḫuzziya]. The people of Ḫatti [kill]ed [Ḫuzziya]. Then they seized (my) daughter. [Because] she [had male] offspring. They became hostile towards [me]. "[Because] your father [has no son to (sit on) the throne, a s]ervant will sit (on it) and a servant [will become king". And th]en, [she] [turned] Ḫattuša and the pal[ace] (against me). [My servants] and my sons of the palace (i.e., palace attendants) became hostile towards me. [And] she [inci]ted [the whole country].

It is compelling to suggest a connection between Ḫuzziya and Ḫattušili's daughter since their narratives closely follow each other. Even though it remains largely reconstructed, this passage explicitly highlights an extraordinary circumstance: Ḫattušili lacked a (suitable) son or successor, and consequently, his daughter rebelled, causing widespread upheaval. It also reveals that Ḫattušili's daughter had children, yet, they were against their grandfather as well.

Interestingly, Ḫattušili does not accuses them directly for their disloyalty, but keeps his focus on the main villain, his daughter.

Ḫattušili's daughter insistently accuses him for not having a "son," saying that a "servant" will sit on the throne. This could be a sign that a "son" was expected to sit on the throne. Under an avunculate succession system, the lack of a biological son should not cause significant unrest, if a nephew was the rightful heir. Labarna's appointment would thus render the daughter's accusations illogical. Yet, viewed through a father-to-son succession lens, it makes sense that Ḫattušili appointed Labarna because he had no sons of his own, or at least none surviving or suitable. It could be that he considered the disrespectful children of his unworthy of the throne, leading him to seek for alternative solutions, such as his nephew Labarna and ultimately Muršili.

The following sections (§§14–15) describe the outcome of the rebellion and the bloodshed that followed. Finally, even though his daughter caused terror in the Hittite lands, Ḫattušili does not kill her. Instead, he explicitly disinherits her as he did previously with Labarna, yet refraining from physically harming her (§18 Rev. iii 23–25):

(23) [*šumeš≈man idālu l*]*ē iyatteni apāš idālu iēt*
(24) [*ugan idālu āpp*]*a ŪL iyammi apāš≈mu≈za attan*
(25) [*ŪL ḫalzaiš*] *uganza* DUMU.MUNUS-*TI ŪL ḫalziḫḫi*

You [may n]ot do [evil] (to her). She has done evil. (But) I will not do [evil bac]k. She [did not call] me father, and I will not call her my daughter.

By withdrawing his recognition of Labarna and his daughter as his "son" and "daughter," Ḫattušili symbolically disinherits them both. Not receiving the respect he desired from these family members, he emphasizes obedience in his advice to Muršili (§19 Rev. iii 28–29):

(28) *mān attaš uttar paḫḫašta*
(29) [NINDA-*an ēzzašš*]*i wātar≈a ekušši*

If you have obeyed the words of (your) father, you will [ea]t [bread] and you will drink water.

Ḫattušili calls himself clearly the father of Muršili, whether Muršili was his blood or not. After addressing Muršili, Ḫattušili again stresses the necessity of obedience, this time directing his words towards his servants. He sets an historical example as a cautionary tale (§20 Rev. iii 40–45):

(40) [*nu≈šše* ^{UZU}Ú]R-*dan ḫattandaru ieni ḫuḫḫa≈man*

(41) [^{m}PU-LUGAL-*ma*$^{?}$ *ud*]*dār≈šše̬t ŪL* DUMU^{MEŠ}-*ŠU edi nāer ḫuḫḫaš≈miš*

(42) [*Laba*]*rnan* DUMU-*šan* ^{URU}*Šanaḫuitti iškunaḫḫiš*

(43) [EGIR-*anda≈m*]*a≈kán* ARAD^{MEŠ}-*ŠU* $^{LÚ.MEŠ}$GAL.GAL *uddār≈šše̬t ḫurtallier*

(44) [*nu≈šš*]*an* ^{m}*Papaḫdilmaḫan ašešer nu mašiēš* MU$^{ḪI.A}$ *pāer*

(45) [*mašieššа*]*≈kan huwāer ŠA* ^{LÚ}GAL.GAL-*TIM* É-*ZUNU kuwapi ŪL-at ḫarkēr*

> As for that, did not (his) sons disregard my grandfather [PU-Šarruma's(?) wo]rds? Did not my grandfather appoint his son [Laba]rna to the city of Šanaḫuitta? [But afterwards] his servants and elders subverted his words. They placed Papaḫdilmaḫ. How many years have gone by? [How many] have escaped? Where are the houses of the elders? Did they not perish?

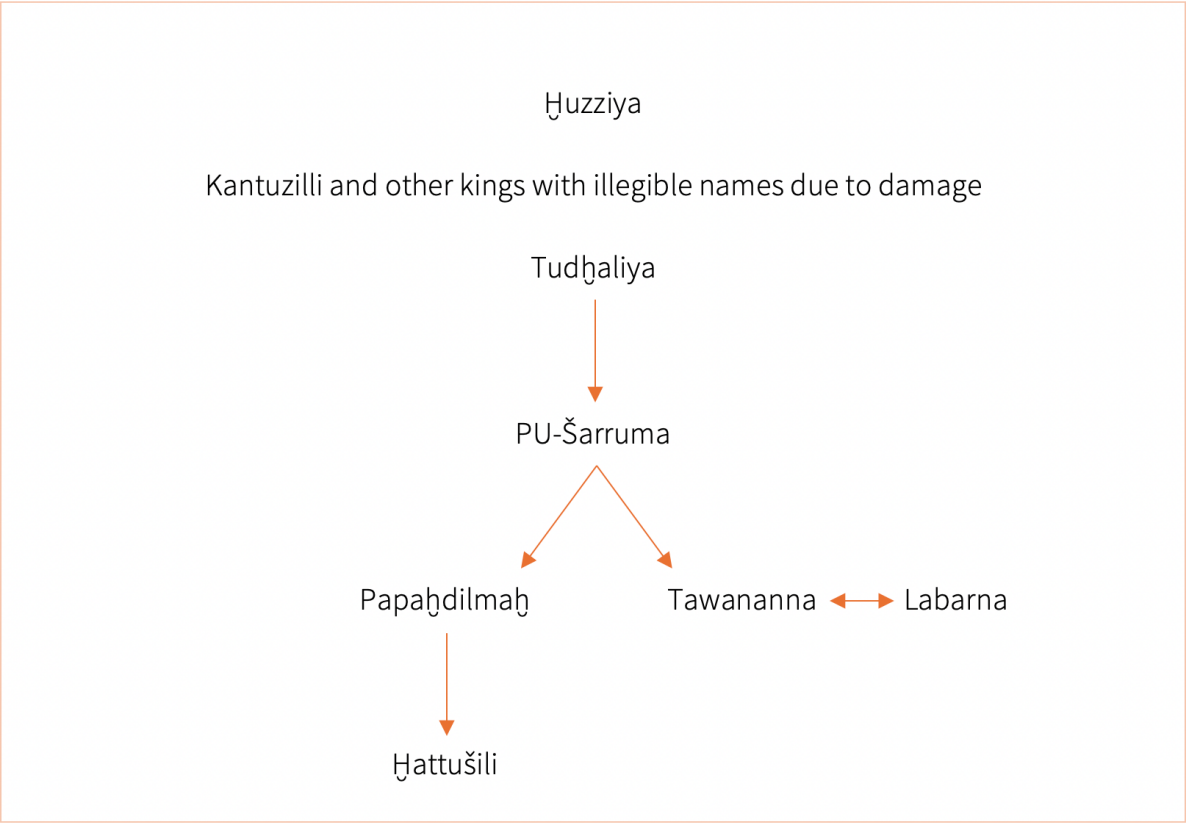
§20 is crucial for our understanding of Ḫattušili's predecessors. However, its damaged nature leaves it open to interpretation. As explained in Chapter 6.1, the Labarna I mentioned here is known to be Ḫattušili's predecessor, even though not his father. Labarna I was likely the *antiyant* of Ḫattušili's grandfather. But whether he was the husband or brother of Tawananna depends on various interpretations.

The exact kinship relationship between Papaḫdilmaḫ and Ḫattušili remains ambiguous. From the passage above, we learn that Labarna's enthronement coincided with Papaḫdilmaḫ's rebellion. Papaḫdilmaḫ is also mentioned in Offering List C (line 20; see also above, Ch. 1.5) as "PU-Šarruma son of Tudḫal[iya], [fath]er of Pawaḫdelmaḫ, father of L[abarna]." Since no other Papaḫdilmaḫ (i.e., Pawaḫdelmaḫ) is presently known, scholars typically assume this refers to the same individual. Consequently, Ḫattušili's grandfather is frequently reconstructed as PU-Šarruma, son of Tudḫaliya. Yet, this reconstruction does not fully comply with the Cruciform Seal (Tab. 1),[179] which indicates Ḫuzziya as Labarna's predecessor (see above, Ch. 1.5.).

[179] Dinçol et al. 1993: 104–6.

In Offering List C, Kantuzilli (line 18) and other kings with unreadable names appear between Ḫuzziya and Tudḫaliya.[180] Although this list might not represent exact chronological succession, Tudḫaliya could have preceded PU-Šarruma and succeeded Ḫuzziya if he had lived to reign. If an avunculate succession was in practice, there is no reason to assume that the father of the king was the king as well. Thus, Tudḫaliya might have not been the king at all, though one wonders why he was still listed in the lists. A possible reconstruction of Ḫattušili's predecessors based on Offering List C and the *Testament* would be as follows (Fig. 4):

Fig. 4: *Ḫattušili's Predecessors According to the Offering List C and the Testament*



In a father-to-son system, Tawananna and Papaḫdilmaḫ might have been siblings. While Papaḫdilmaḫ is likely Ḫattušili's father, his rebellion complicates the matter. Could the son of a rebel still ascend the throne? If so, why does Ḫattušili not elaborate on this point to reinforce his legitimacy? Or does he deliberately omit it to avoid raising further doubts about his right to rule? These questions remain unresolved, largely due to the fragmentary nature of the

[180] Otten 1951: 65.

evidence. Nevertheless, it is clear that Ḫattušili grounded his legitimacy primarily in his connection to Tawananna.

If Labarna and Tawananna were a married couple, this may suggest that either they had no children of their own, or that an avunculate succession system was indeed in operation, or perhaps other motives played a role. There is also no reason to rule out the possibility that Tawananna and Papaḫdilmaḫ had another brother, who may have been Ḫattušili's actual father but died before these events happened. Notably, all available evidence originates from the time after Ḫattušili, with no primary sources from the Hittite kings older than Ḫattušili I, thus limiting our interpretations.

After providing this intriguing example about royal history and warning his servants again to obey his words (§21), Ḫattušili instructs Muršili to read this tablet monthly (§22). He also advises Muršili to consult the *panku* when needed, yet finalizes his advice by stating "My son, do which is in [your] heart." Muršili was expected to be wise, receptive to counsel, yet ultimately independent in judgment.

The ending of the *Testament* (§23) is noteworthy. Abruptly, Ḫattušili addresses a woman called Ḫaštayar. He shows concern over her consultation with the Old Women (MUNUS^{MEŠ} ŠU.GI), advising her to consult only him (§23 Rev. iii 71–73):

(71) EGIR-*pa≈mu≈za pununuški≈*[*pat*]

(71) [*nu≈tta*] *uddār≈m*[*et šāki*]*škemi* SIG$_5$-*an*[*≈za≈mu arri*]

(71) [*taggan*]*i≈ya≈ta≈mu≈z≈apa and*[*a ḫarak*] *nu≈mu tagga*[*ni≈ya≈ta*]

(71) ⸢*taknaz paḫši*

Always consult me [only]. I will always [revea]l m[y] words [to you. Wash me] well, [hold] me in your [breas]t, save me from earth [in your] brea[st].

Contrasting starkly with the earlier problematic family members who brought chaos to Ḫattušili's life, Ḫaštayar emerges as a trustworthy confidante, perhaps the only figure the king relied on during his final days.[181] He entrusted her with arranging his own burial, and the

[181] Yiğit 2007b: 799.

emotional tone suggests she was likely a wife, a concubine or perhaps a daughter.[182] Many scholars propose Ḫaštayar as the daughter of Ḫattušili and the mother of Muršili.[183] Under avunculate succession, even though the king's son does not become king, a king's grandson eventually does. Thus, accepting this hypothesis would imply that Muršili was Ḫattušili's grandson, suggesting that Ḫattušili himself might have chosen the heir who would ultimately succeed according to the avunculate succession.

6.4. Reflections

From the colophon, we learn that the tablet was written in Kuššar, likely where Ḫattušili began his reign and became ill.[184] However, it remains uncertain whether he truly died immediately after issuing the tablet. Although essential to understanding Ḫattušili's reign, the events described in the *Testament* are not necessarily chronological, nor do they specify the time intervals between events. Moreover, as the text survives only as a later copy; when copying the tablet, the scribe could have added his own interpretation. It is notable that later Hittite kings ordered it to be copied. Was this out of respect for Ḫattušili, or because it documented a critical turning point in royal history? Or perhaps it was purely due to historical interest? Ḫattušili himself required the text to be read aloud monthly, perhaps as a constant reminder to Muršili and his servants about Muršili's legitimacy as the chosen successor.

Considering kinship terms, the *Testament* shows that the term "son" had three meanings: biological son, adopted son, and heir. It is natural for languages to adapt kinship terms with social practices;[185] however, in our ancient sources, it is challenging to determine precisely which meaning applies since the society itself is not directly observable. Other than "son;" "sister" (DUMU.NIN), "brother" (ŠEŠ), "daughter" (DUMU.MUNUS), and "grandfather"

[182] Although his wife Kadduši is encountered in the Offering Lists and the Cruciform Seal, Ḫaštayar might have been either Ḫattušili's second wife if Kadduši died somehow, or a secondary wife.
[183] Beal 1983: 122–4; Beal 2003: 34, n.b.; Yiğit 2007b: 799; Forlanini 2010: 124. The name Hištayra (i.e., Haštayar) also appears in the Palace Chronicles (KBo 3.34 II 1–4, i.e., CTH 8), where she is identified as the wife of Maratti. The text is dated to the reign of Muršili I. Since Kadduši appears as the wife of Ḫattušili in the Offering Lists and possibly on the Cruciform Seal, she may have been his principal wife. Therefore, it has also been suggested that Ḫaštayar was a concubine of Ḫattušili (Melchert 1991: 185). However, it is less likely, as she is associated with Maratti—not Ḫattušili—in the Palace Chronicles (Beal 2003: 34, n.b).
[184] Bryce 2005: 68.
[185] Heath 2006: 215.

(*ḫuḫḫa-*) are encountered. These kinship terms were likely used descriptively throughout the *Testament*.

Undeniably, according to the *Testament*, whether avunculate succession was practiced or not, Ḫattušili's adoptions of both Labarna III and Muršili I demonstrate that adoption was part of the succession model. If the heir was not the biological son of the king, he adopted and trained him before granting him the throne. Thus, it was important for the new heir to be recognized as the king's "son," which was essentially a patrilineal characteristic. It is possible that Ḫattušili's self-recognition as "son of the brother of Tawananna" also included a form of adoption: Ḫattušili might have been adopted as Tawananna's son by Tawananna's brother. Within a patrilineal model, an avunculate succession could still function. Consider these two assumptions:

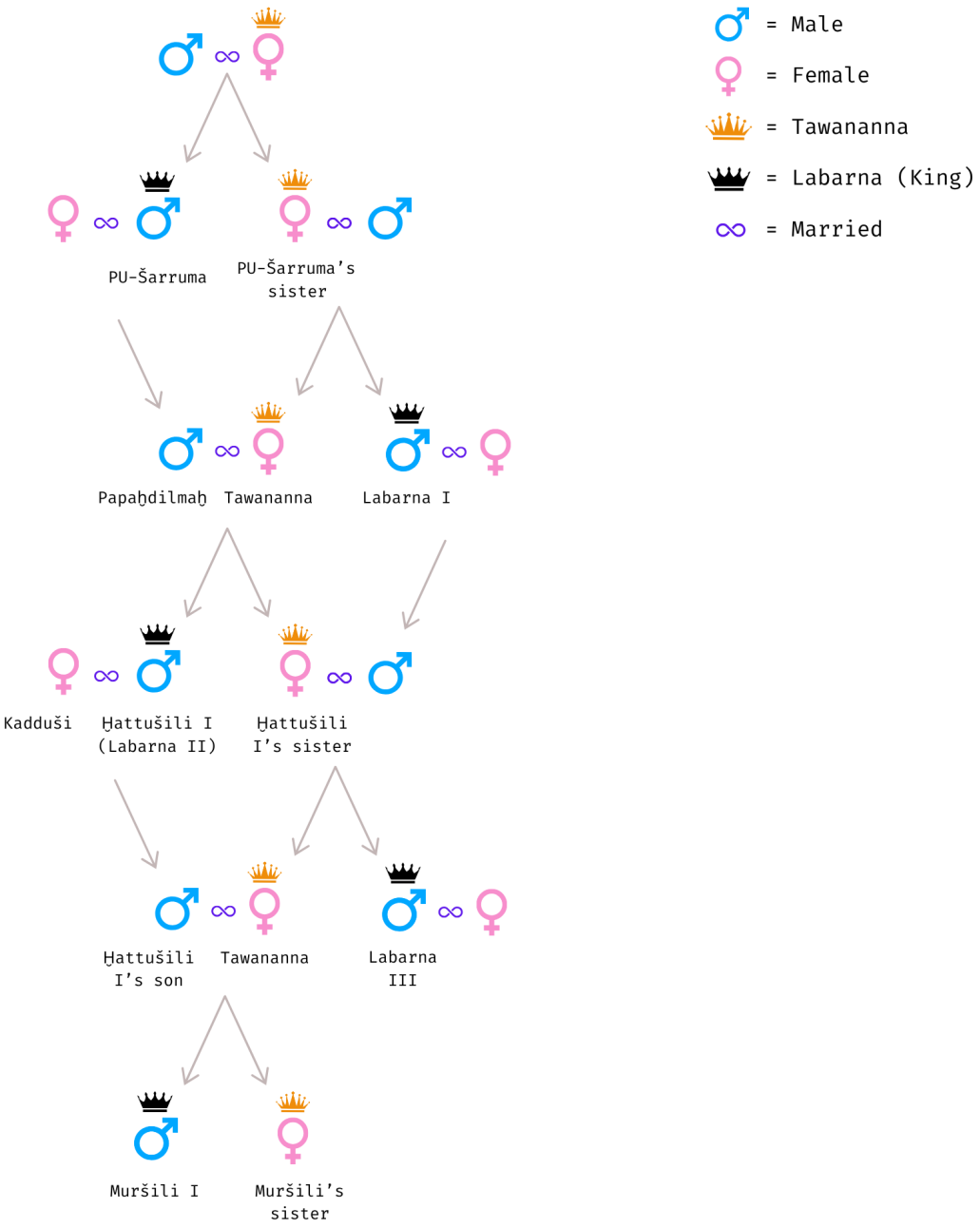
1. Ḫattušili was the son of Tawananna's brother.
2. Ḫattušili was the son of Tawananna, adopted by her brother.

First, let's take the meaning literal and assume that Ḫattušili was indeed the son of Tawananna's brother, who is often identified as Papaḫdilmaḫ. Papaḫdilmaḫ was a rebel and usurper; therefore, Ḫattušili could not legitimize himself through his father. Here, Ḫattušili's self-legitimization through Tawananna in his *Annals* could reflect only a political change, or imbalance rather than a systematic model. For the Elamite case, De Graef suggested a dynastic change during Attaḫušu's time, where he identified himself as "sister's son of Šilḫaḫa."[186] In comparison to the Hittite case where non-patronymic legitimization occurred only once, eleven other Elamite kings identified themselves as such, leading scholars to interpret the phrase as "legitimate descendant of Šilḫaḫa" (see also above, Ch. 4.3). The Hittite case would merely have been a result of Papaḫdilmaḫ's rebellion against Labarna's enthronement. Meaning, Labarna I, the son-in-law, still could have been chosen heir instead of a biological son. Also, the *Edict* (which will be discussed in the following chapter) indicates that in later periods having an *antiyant* as heir was neither unthinkable nor unacceptable, although it was not the

[186] De Graef 2012b: 541. Attaḫušu identifies himself as "son of Kindattu" in one attested case, in an administrative text belonging to a local context, while he uses "sister's son of Šilḫaḫa" in all other inscriptions belonging to a broader context.

first choice. Yet, in this scenario Ḫattušili is not legitimate within the avunculate.[187] Because Ḫattušili would be not the sister's son, but the brother's son. But still, it demonstrates another succession model that was not strictly father-to-son was in practice, as the biological son Papaḫdilmaḫ did not inherent the throne.

Fig. 5: *Ḫattušili's Family Tree in line with the Avunculate and the Testament*



[187] Goedegebuure 2004: 14–15.

The avunculate succession model suggests that Tawananna's son should inherit the throne (Fig. 3). Therefore, the second scenario necessitates Tawananna to be Ḫattušili's biological mother, not his aunt. Here, Tawananna's brother, Labarna I, adopted him among his sister's children. If Tawananna was Ḫattušili's mother and Papaḫdilmaḫ his father, they formed a married couple.[188] Fig. 5 above illustrates Ḫattušili's family tree in line with Sürenhagen's proposed model schematized previously in Fig. 3.

This reconstruction relies on Sürenhagen's claim that Tawananna was both the mother of a future Labarna and the sister of a ruling Labarna.[189] In this scenario, Labarna I would have been Tawananna's brother, and Papaḫdilmaḫ her husband. However, this contradicts the assumption, based on the Cruciform Seal (Tab. 1), that Tawananna and Labarna were a married couple. Tawananna and Labarna appear on the top wing of the reverse and it is unlikely that two siblings were written in the Cruciform Seal among royal couples. Alternatively, the restoration as [Tawana]nna may be incorrect, or, although unlikely, there may have been another Tawananna who was Labarna I's wife.

Moreover, according to the avunculate reconstruction outlined above, Muršili's father must have been Ḫattušili's son, and Muršili's mother must have been the daughter of Ḫattušili's sister (i.e., the sister of Labarna III who would held the title "Tawananna"). However, when Ḫattušili mentions the siblings of young Labarna, he shows no affection toward them. If Ḫaštayar was Muršili's mother, she would have been Ḫattušili's daughter-in-law, making it unusual for Ḫattušili to wish intimately for her to prepare his funeral (§23 iii 71–73). Therefore, it seems unlikely that Ḫaštayar was Muršili's mother within the avunculate model; she may instead have been Ḫattušili's biological daughter or another wife.

In a father-to-son succession model, Ḫaštayar could have plausibly been Muršili's mother. Alternatively, another possibility is the daughter disinherited by Ḫattušili. However, what would Muršili have thought about his mother's banishment? It seems more likely that Muršili's mother was either Ḫaštayar or another daughter of Ḫattušili that we are unaware of, if indeed Muršili was Ḫattušili's grandson, as suggested only in a much later source.

[188] Goedegebuure 2004: 15.
[189] Sürenhagen 1998: 87.

The reconstructed family tree of Ḫattušili in Fig. 5 above is heavily based on the presence of "Tawanannas," which would imply considerable authority for the king's sister. Nevertheless, there is no concrete evidence indicating that the sister's power equaled or exceeded the king's.[190] Notably, the *Testament* does not mention the "Tawananna" at all. The only identified Tawananna is the one referred to in the *Annals*, who is supposedly Ḫattušili's "mother" according to the avunculate model. The decree KBo 3.27 also mentions a Tawananna whose name was forbidden to be uttered, yet her exact identity remains unclear (see also above, Ch. 2.4).[191] Muršili's mother must also been a Tawananna, but it seems unlikely that she was the unwanted one mentioned in the decree. Furthermore, the decree also prohibits to utter the names of Tawananna's children. Possibly, she was Muršili's grandmother (i.e., Ḫattušili's sister, and Labarna III's mother). The fragment suggests an insecure status for this Tawananna. If her status was indeed precarious, how secure could her son's claim to the throne have been? Could this insecurity hint at power struggles underlying the complications during Ḫattušili's rule, as previously suggested?

Moreover, if young Labarna's mother was indeed a Tawananna, Ḫattušili, who meticulously justified his decisions throughout the text, surprisingly makes no reference to diminishing her position. If she held considerable power and privileges, such as producing the heir, wouldn't Ḫattušili explicitly address her status? Or did he choose to leave it out deliberately?

The avunculate succession model presupposes the king's sister occupied the Tawananna role. However, no evidence supports that any subsequent king's sister held this title. An additional complexity arises from the Offering Lists, where kings are recorded with patronyms. If legitimacy derived from the mother or the Tawananna, why does the phrase "son of the brother of Tawananna" appear only once? Why Hittite kings did not legitimize themselves via indicating "sister's son of PN" as in the Elamite case?

Nevertheless, if she was not his "mother," as the avunculate model proposes, the only known Tawananna is Ḫattušili's aunt.[192] Importantly, we remain uncertain about who held the title "Tawananna" during Ḫattušili's reign after his aunt, if not used as a personal name.

[190] Beal 1983: 126.
[191] Carruba (1992: 81) suggests that "Tawananna" was used as a proper name in the decree; de Martino and Imparati 1998: 394 follows this interpretation.
[192] See Beal 1983: 124–26.

Notably, the Cruciform Seal lists Labarna alongside Tawananna, potentially indicating that “Tawananna” was not a title but a queen’s personal name. While we attest "Labarna" multiple times in our sources, evidence from both the Cruciform Seal and the *Testament* strongly suggests that it was most likely used as a personal name by both Ḫattušili and young Labarna. It is striking that throughout the *Testament*, Muršili retains his original name and is never referred to as “Labarna.” If “Labarna” was indeed a title, why was Muršili never titled as such?

6.5. Conclusions

The *Testament of Ḫattušili* reflects the instable nature of royal succession during his reign, characterized by internal conflicts and disloyal family members. Rather than conclusively supporting a strictly avunculate or patrilineal system, the *Testament* demonstrates the fluidity of succession practices, with adoption playing a crucial role. While kinship terms such as “son,” “sister,” and “brother” appear frequently, their precise meanings remain contextually ambiguous, leaving open multiple interpretations for the identities of royal figures.

Ḫattušili’s reign was marked by betrayals, rebellions, and persistent instability. Neither family members nor servants could be fully trusted. Although Ḫattušili tried to secure Muršili and exempt him from his terrible faith to come, even the strength of the "lion king" was insufficient to prevent further violence. Perhaps Ḫattušili’s critical strategic error was banishing enemies rather than executing them—a practice which, as will become clear in the following chapter where the *Edict* is analyzed, resulted in prevalent bloodshed among the royals starting with Muršili’s death. Possibly considering Ḫattušili’s period as a remarkable example where mercy is bestowed, however, the *Edict* portrays Ḫattušili’s reign as peaceful and unified, omitting entirely the rebellions of Ḫuzziya and his daughter. This selective historical portrayal demonstrates the complexity of interpreting royal texts, reminding us of the ideological motivations behind their composition.

7. Analysis of Telipinu's Edict

Many years after Ḫattušili's *Testament*, Telipinu issued his *Edict*. The *Edict* is a relatively long text and in its first part, the royal succession of the Old Hittite Period, from the time of Labarna I to Telipinu, is presented. Its preservation in numerous later copies from the Empire Period suggests that it remained popular among later Hittite kings.[193] While in its beginning, the historical narrative is the main theme, Telipinu also addresses the future kings, the *panku*, and the royal servants throughout the *Edict*, a sign that he wanted this text to set an example and serve as a guidance for all.

The content of the *Edict* can be divided into three parts: the first part recounts the history of bloodshed that led ultimately to Telipinu's enthronement (§§1–22); the second is more autobiographical, offering insight into Telipinu's early reign (§§23–27); and the third part is where he sets some ground rules or reforms, for himself but also presumably for the kings to come (§§28–50).[194] Among these, §28 stands out as one of the most cited passages, as it appears to establish clear succession rules. Subsequently, scholars have often regarded the *Edict* as a reformative text for succession; as if Telipinu introduces the patrilineal succession to the Hittite monarchy for the first time.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the murders described in the *Edict* are often interpreted as the result of a clash between an avunculate system of succession and a patrilineal, father-to-son model. Yet, the text is difficult to follow and open to multiple interpretations as it features many characters whose kinship relations are often not mentioned.

7.1. Following Ḫattušili I's Reign: From Unity to Murder

The *Edict* begins with an idealized portrayal of unity, starting with Labarna's and subsequently Ḫattušili's reign (§5 Obv. i 13–16):

(13) EGIR-*pa≈ma* ^{m}*Ḫattušiliš ḫaššūēt n≈apa apell≈a* DUMU.MEŠ-*ŠU*

(14) ŠEŠ.MEŠ-*ŠU* $^{LÚ.MEŠ}$*gaenaš≈šeš* $^{LÚ.MEŠ}$*ḫaššanaš≈šiš≈a U* ERIM.MEŠ-*ŠU*

(15) *t*[*a*]*ruppanteš ešer kuwatta≈aš laḫḫa≈ma paizzi*

[193] Knapp 2015: 75.
[194] Following Knapp 2015: 76–77.

(16) *nu apāššš≈a* ^{LÚ}KÚR-*an utnē kuttanit taruḫḫan ḫarta*

But afterwards Ḫattušili was king; Also of him, his sons, his brothers, his in-laws, his relatives, and his troops were u[n]ited. Wherever he went on campaign, he too held the enemy land vanquished by force.

To emphasize this idealized unity during both Labarna's and Ḫattušili's reigns, Telipinu refers to different groups of people separately: sons, brothers, in-laws, relatives and also troops, all portrayed as united. While different kinship terminologies are expressed here, as observed in the previous chapter, terms like "sons" and "brothers" could indicate broader, possibly adopted or symbolic relationships, rather than strict biological ones.

In the passage above, Telipinu's careful differentiation of these kin groups notably excludes almost all reference to women. Clearly, men were considered the head of state, wielding power and fighting wars on behalf of their gods. The *Edict* provides no trace of queens or Tawanannas holding substantial power.

When the content is considered, the *Edict* is not completely trustworthy: neither Ḫattušili's nor Labarna's reigns were peaceful (see above, Ch. 6). As we learn from the *Testament*, family disloyalty deeply troubled Ḫattušili. Was it because Telipinu was unaware of the true events of his predecessors? Or does this perhaps hint at the not-so-hidden agenda of the *Edict*, which aims to create a contrast between the idealized vision of the Hittite state that lived in the past (when the guilty was banished instead of killed), and the terror that came afterwards with the first bloodshed, the death of Muršili (§§10–11 Obv. i 31b–34):

(31b) ^{m}*Ḫantil*[*iššš≈a*] ^{LÚ}SÌLA.ŠU.DUḪ.A-*aš ēšta nu≈za* ^{f}*Ḫa*[*rapši*]*lin*

(32a) NIN ^{m}*Muršīli* DAM-*anni ḫarta*

(32b) [*nu* ^{m}*Zi*]*danta*[*š A*]*NA* ^{m}*Ḫantili* [*katt*]*an*

(33) *šarā ulešta nu* ḪUL-*lu ut*[*tar iēr*] *nu≈ka*[*n* ^{m}]*Muršilin ku*[*en*]*ner*

(34) *nu ēšḫar iēr*

[And], Ḫantil[i] was (his) cupbearer. He had Ḫa[rapši]li, the sister of Muršili, as wife. [Zi]danta sneaked [in]to Ḫantili('s mind). [They performed] an evil de[ed]. They ki[ll]ed Muršili. They shed blood.

Muršili, coming back from his raids on Aleppo and Babylon, was murdered by his brother-in-law Ḫantili and Zidanta, a figure whose kinship remains uncertain.[195] Following Forrer's reconstruction of Exemplar B, that is "[Zidanta war …; er hatte die …], die Tochter Ḫantilis [zur Gattin];" it is widely accepted that Zidanta was the son-in-law of Ḫantili.[196] While this is possible, only the phrase "daughter of Ḫantili" is preserved in the passage. Because of the fragmentary nature of the text, it cannot be taken as a fact.

A woman, Muršili's own sister Ḫarapšili, appears in the passage above. In contrast to the male characters who are actively engaged in the conspiracy, she is described more passively in the story; only to provide Ḫantili's relation to Muršili, as if she was not involved in Muršili's murder. This exemplifies the *Edict*'s tendency to focus on male-centered narratives, presumably because men were the ones who ascended the throne.

Following Muršili's murder, the narrative becomes partially obscured (§§12–17). Nevertheless, it can be inferred that Ḫantili regretted his actions, he went to the city of Tagarama, Hurrian troops were involved in a chase, Queen Ḫarapšili became ill, and the queen of Šukziya (whose relationship to these events remains uncertain) died along with her children.[197] Some have suggested that the queen of Šukziya was in fact Queen Ḫarapšili herself.[198] Eventually, Ḫantili himself died, apparently of natural causes (§18 Obv. i 63–65):

(63) *mān* ^{m}*Ḫantīlišš≈a* ^{LÚ}ŠU.G[I *kišat*] *n≈aš* DINGIR-*L*[*IM-iš*] *kikkiššūwan*

(64) *dāiš nu≈kan* ^{m}*Zidanta*[*š* ^{m}*Pišenin*] DUMU ^{m}*Ḫantīli QADU* DUMU.MEŠ-*ŠU*

(65) *kuenta ḫantezz*[*iušš≈a*] ÌR.MEŠ-*ŠU kuenta*

When Ḫantili [became] an ol[d] man and he began to become a god, Zidanta killed [Pišeni], the son of Ḫantili, together with his sons. He killed his first-rank[ing] servants (as well).

[195] It is uncertain whether Muršili was murdered immediately after his campaigns against Aleppo and Babylon, or later (Goetze 1957b: 55).
[196] Riemschneider 1971: 89–90, see n.57 for further references; Bryce 2005: 100.
[197] Goetze (1957b: 56) observes that, based on what can be reconstructed, "the Hurrians captured the queen and her sons and brought them to Šug(az)ziya; Ḫarapšili fell ill there. In the sequel a certain Ilalium(m)aš plays an important part, but the mutilation of the text allows no more precise statement."
[198] Goetze 1957b: 56, n.34; Riemschneider 1971: 88.

After murdering Muršili, Zidanta did not stop; he went on to kill Pišeni—the son of his former co-conspirator, Ḫantili—and then Pišeni's sons. In this way, Zidanta emerges as the true antagonist of the story: not just as a usurper, but as someone who systematically eliminated a rival bloodline.

What is particularly striking is not just Zidanta's ruthless actions, but the deliberate choice of his victims. Zidanta targeted Pišeni, described explicitly as the son of Ḫantili, along with Pišeni's own sons. As already discussed in the *Testament* chapter, the term "son" can imply biological, adopted, or political status, and it remains uncertain which meaning applies here. However, Zidanta's murder of Pišeni's children strongly suggests that biological filiation was intended—especially since the killings focused on direct descendants, those most likely to inherit under a father-to-son succession model.

Nonetheless, one cannot disregard the broader or metaphorical usages of kinship terms. Could "sons" have also included adopted heirs or nephews, paralleling the potential avunculate scenario observed earlier? If succession operated strictly along avunculate lines—passing to nephews rather than sons—this targeted killing of Pišeni's offspring creates difficulties. Could Pišeni's murdered children have all been nephews and adopted heirs simultaneously, or is this scenario less plausible? In line with the avunculate succession, it is possible that the term "sons" here encompassed both biological and adopted descendants, aimed to eliminate all potential rivals and prevent them coming back for revenge.

Yet, revenge came to Zidanta from an unexpected place, as his own son Ammuna killed him (§§19–20 Obv. i 66–71):

(66) ^{m}*Zidantašš≈a* LUGAL-[*u*]*ēt n≈apa* DINGIR.MEŠ [^{m}*Piše*]*niyaš išḫar šanḫer*

(67) *nu≈šši* [^{m}]*Ammunan ḫaššandan* DINGIR.MEŠ ^{LÚ}KÚR-*ŠU iēr*

(68) *nu≈kan* ^{m}*Zidantan adda(n)≈šša*n *kuenta*

(69) ^{m}*Ammunašš≈a* LUGAL-*uēt n≈apa* DINGIR.MEŠ *attaš≈šaš* ^{m}*Zidantaš*

(70) *ēšḫar≈šet šanḫer n≈an kišša*[*r*]*i≈šši ḫalkiuš*

(71) GEŠTIN.Ḫ.A-*uš* GU_4.Ḫ.A-*uš* UDU.Ḫ.A-*uš U*[*L …*] *kiššari*

So, Zidanta [b]ecame king but the gods were searching for the blood of [Piše]ni. The gods made Ammuna, his own [so]n his enemy. He killed his father Zidanta. And so, Ammuna became king.

The gods were searching for the blood of his father Zidanta, and in his ha[n]d the grain, the wine, the oxen, the sheep no[t …] in his hand.

The *Edict* does not indicate how much time passed between Zidanta's ascension and his murder at the hands of his son Ammuna. Notably, the term *haššandan* is used here instead of the more general DUMU for "son," perhaps deliberately emphasizing that Ammuna was Zidanta's biological son.

Telipinu once again emphasizes the destructive repercussions of familial violence. Each murder begets another, reinforcing the cycle of vengeance. Telipinu notably frames these consequences as divine interventions, suggesting that murders within the royal family did not merely disrupt political stability but also disturbed the cosmic order. The gods punish such transgressions either by further bloodshed or by undermining the fertility and prosperity of the land.

Ammuna was not killed by his kin, however, his land suffered and lands revolted against his kingship (§21 Obv. ii 1–4). Without mentioning how long Ammuna ruled, we learn that he "became a god," meaning he most likely died by natural causes, and was acknowledged by Telipinu as a legitimate king as this way of death was solely an attribute of Hittite kings.

However, the chain of murders did not end with Ammuna (§21 Obv. ii 4–7):

(4) *mān* ^{m}*Ammunašš≈a* DINGIR-*LIM-iš kišat*
(5) ^{m}*Zurūšš≈a* GAL $^{LÚ.MEŠ}$*MEŠEDI duddumili apēdaš≈pat* UD.KAM.Ḫ̬I.A-*aš*
(6) *ḫaššannaš≈šaš* DUMU-*ŠU* ^{m}*Taḫ̬urwailin* LÚ ^{GIŠ}ŠUKUR GUŠKIN *pīēt*
(7) *nu≈za≈kan* ^{m}*Tittiyaš ḫaššatar QADU* DUMU.MEŠ-*ŠU kuenta*

When Ammuna died (lit. "became a god"), in those days, Zurū the chief of the guards secretly sent Taḫ̬urwaili, the son of his begetting, the man of the goldspear, and he killed the family of Tittiya together with his sons.

When Ammuna died, Zurū, the chief of the guards, secretly dispatched his own son Taḫ̬urwaili—"the man of the goldspear"—to murder Tittiya and Tittiya's sons. Similar to Pišeni's case, Tittiya's "sons" were killed together with him. Killing the sons would prevent any revenge or rebellion in the following years of the new king. The question remains the same: did the "sons"

of Tittiya include the adopted sons as well? It seems more plausible that those "sons" were the biological sons of Tittiya.

Unfortunately, the *Edict* remains silent on Zurū's motives and does not specify Tittiya's exact familial relationship to Ammuna. Given the recurrent pattern of targeting sons to secure power, it seems likely that Tittiya was either Ammuna's son or at least a significant rival claimant. On the other hand, it is hard to say anything about Zurū's gain in his act. Possibly, he acted in alliance with either Ḫantili or Ḫuzziya, the two figures appearing shortly afterward (§22 Obv. ii 8–12):

(8) ^{m}*Taruḫšunn≈a* ^{LÚ}KAŠ$_4$.E *pīēt nu≈kan* ^{m}*Ḫantilin QADU* DUMU.MEŠ-*ŠU*

(9) *ku*[*en*]*ta nu* ^{m}*Ḫuzziyaš* LUGAL-*uēt* ^{m}*Telipinušš≈a≈z*

(10) ^{f}*Iš*[*t*]*apariyan ḫantezziyan* DAM-*SU ḫarta*

(11) *mān≈uš≈kan* ^{m}*Ḫuzziyaš kuenta nu uttar išduwāti*

(12) *nu≈uš* ^{m}*Telipinuš arḫa paraḫta*

> And so, Taruḫšu sent (his) courier. They ki[ll]ed Ḫantili together with his sons. And Ḫuzziya became king. Telipinu had Iš[t]apariya, his sister of first rank, (as his wife).[199] Ḫuzziya would have killed them, (but) the word went out. Telipinu chased them away.

The exact dynamics remain uncertain: Did Zurū initially support Ḫantili, only to be later betrayed by Taruḫšu, who instead elevated Ḫuzziya? Or were Zurū and Taruḫšu acting together, each killing a son of Ammuna to clear the path for their preferred candidate? Given the recurring practice of sending royal sons to govern different cities, it is plausible that Ammuna's sons were geographically separated, facilitating their targeted murders by different conspirators.

While the *Edict* leaves ambiguity regarding the precise relationships among Ammuna, Tittiya, and Ḫantili, it is highly plausible that both Tittiya and Ḫantili were Ammuna's biological sons or at least closely related heirs. In a father-to-son succession, their elimination along with their own sons would strategically eliminate all legitimate claims to the throne. Conversely, in an (alternative) avunculate system,[200] these targeted individuals could theoretically have been

[199] For translation differences regarding the sign 'DAM,' see Appendix B §22 n.235.
[200] Details of the avunculate succession model proposed for the *Edict* will be presented in Ch. 7.3.

sister's sons who were adopted heirs, though this scenario seems less straightforward given the extensive violence against multiple direct male descendants.

7.2. Rising from Chaos: Telipinu Ascends the Throne

Ḫuzziya's enthronement was somewhat supported with the murders of Tittiya and Ḫantili, but we do not know what his relation was to Ammuna. Was he a third son, after Tittiya and Ḫantili—implying he had his own brothers killed? Or was he an *antiyant*, a sister's son, or perhaps a more distant relative of either the murdered Ḫantili or Zidanta? The *Edict* gives us no clarity.

Nor are we told why Ḫuzziya wanted to kill his own sister Ištapariya and her husband Telipinu. Was it because Telipinu had a legitimate claim to the throne? In the following section Telipinu states (§24 Obv. ii 16):

(16) *mān≈šan* ^{m}*Telipinuš INA* ^{GIŠ}GU.ZA *ABI≈YA ēšḫat*

When I, Telipinu, sat on the throne of my father.

This phrase raises further questions. Could Telipinu have been a son of Ammuna, making him a brother to Tittiya and Ḫantili?[201] If so, why does he never refer to them as his brothers—especially when doing so would emphasize his loss and help legitimize his right to the throne against Ḫuzziya? Alternatively, if Ištapariya was Ammuna's daughter, could Telipinu have been her husband, and therefore Ammuna's *antiyant*? In either case, as neither Telipinu's nor Tittiya and Ḫantili's precise positions within the royal line are spelled out, these remain only assumptions.

It could also be that Telipinu, rather than being a direct son of Ammuna, was a powerful palace figure whose royal credentials derived from an older line. He could have had personal or dynastic interest in preserving his predecessor's memory. Nevertheless, if it was not out of reverence for Ammuna, the fact that Telipinu named his son Ammuna (see below) strengthens the possibility that he was either Ammuna's biological son or son-in-law.

[201] Bryce (2005: 103) considers Telipinu to have been one of Ammuna's sons, along with Tittiya and Ḫantili, following Gurney and Blegen (1973: 663), who take the phrase "sat on the throne of my father" literally. On the other hand, Goetze (1957: 56) proposed that Ammuna was Telipinu's father-in-law.

Telipinu's first recorded act as king was to eliminate rival claims to the throne by removing Ḫuzziya's remaining brothers (§23 Obv. ii 13–15):

(13) 5 Š[E]Š.MEŠ-*ŠU nu≈šmaš* É.MEŠ *taggašta pāndu≈wa≈z ašandu*

(14) *nu≈wa≈*[*z*]*a azzikkandu akkuškandu idālu≈ma≈šmaš≈kan lē ku*[*itki*]

(15) *taggašši nu taršikemi apē≈wa≈mu idalu iēr ug≈a≈war≈uš* [ḪUL-*lu ŪL iyami*]

His five br[ot]hers; he put them together in houses. "Let them go and be, let them eat (and) drink!" You shall not do a[ny] evil to them. And I keep saying: "Those did evil to me, I [will not do evil] to them!"

Telipinu sends Ḫuzziya's five brothers away, he banishes them.[202] The fact that Ḫuzziya's five brothers were sent away weakens the probability that Ḫuzziya was Tittiya and Ḫantili's brother.[203] Because if Ḫuzziya had his two brothers killed along with their sons, why would he spare the other five? Of course, it is also possible that these brothers were much younger than Ḫuzziya or that they, at least initially, supported his claim to the throne.

A common motif of the *Edict* makes its first appearance here: retaliation is replaced with restraint. Even though they did evil to Telipinu, Telipinu did not do the same to them. A similar moment of forgiveness had earlier been expressed by Ḫattušili toward his daughter (§18 Obv. iii 23–25). Just like Ḫattušili was merciful to his daughter, Telipinu was the same with his opponents.

However, despite this public show of mercy, Ḫuzziya and his brothers were soon after killed (§26), under suspicious circumstances. The *Edict* carefully avoids stating who was responsible, and Telipinu distances himself from the act. His rhetorical emphasis on clemency may be a deliberate attempt to dissociate himself from the political necessity of removing rivals.

Further, Telipinu did not execute the murderers of Tittiya and Ḫantili—namely Taḫurwaili, Taruḫšu, and the unknown figure Tanuwa. Instead, he claims to have "concealed

[202] Even though Telipinu does not indicate whose five brothers they are in this section, from §26 it can be understood that they were Ḫuzziya's brothers: [LUGA]L[?]-*uš ŪL* [… [m]*Ḫuz*]*ziyan U* [Š]EŠ.MEŠ-*ŠU an*[*da kuenner*[?]], translating as "[I, the kin]g did not [… Ḫuz]ziya and his [br]others [they killed[?]]."

[203] Goedegebuure 2004: 18.

their eyes" and reduced them to simple plowmen (§26). This too is framed as an act of clemency, possibly to demonstrate his break from previous cycles of violence.

Nevertheless, Telipinu's gestures of mercy did not prevent the death of Queen Ištapariya or their son Ammuna (§27 Obv. ii 31–35):

(31) *nu* ^{f}*Ištapar*[*iy*]*aš*

(32) MUNUS.LUGAL BA.ÚŠ EGIR-*pa≈ma uet* ^{m}*Ammunaš* DUMU LUGAL BA.ÚŠ *nu šiunan antuḫšišš≈a*

(33) *taršikkanzi kāša≈wa* ^{URU}*ḫattuši ēšḫar pangariyattati*

(34) *nu* ^{m}*Telipinuš* ^{URU}*ḫattuši tuliyan ḫalziḫḫun kitpandalaz* ^{URU}*ḫattuši*

(35) *ḫaššannaš* DUMU-*an idalu lē kuiški iyazi nu≈šši≈šan* GÍR-*an takkešzi*

> Queen Ištapar[iy]a died. And afterward it came that Ammuna, son of the king, died. The men of gods are saying: "Bloodshed has now become prevalent in Ḫattuša." I, Telipinu, have called an assembly in Ḫattuša. From this time on, nobody will do evil to a son of the family in Ḫattuša and draw a dagger against him.

Telipinu does not detail the way his wife or his son died. But from what he says afterwards we might assume that they were murdered. The phrase "bloodshed has now become prevalent" uttered by the "men of the gods" (possibly priests or court officials) frames the situation not as an isolated tragedy but as a pervasive curse hanging over Ḫattuša. By this point, political violence had exhausted not only the royal house but likely the larger palace and population as well. Telipinu, now being the ultimate successor of this savage history, raises this issue in his *Edict* and wishes to end it. Next, Telipinu states the rules of succession (§28 Obv. ii 36–39):

(36) LUGAL-*uš≈šan ḫantezziyaš≈pat* DUMU LUGAL DUMU-*RU kikkištaru takku* DUMU$^{!}$ L[UGAL]

(37) *ḫantezziš* NU.GÁL *nu kuiš tān pēdaš* DUMU-*RU nu* LUGAL-*uš apāš*

(38) *kišaru mān* DUMU LUGAL≈*ma* IBILA NU.GÁL *nu kuiš* DUMU.MUNUS *ḫantezziš*

(39) *nu≈šši≈šša*n ^{LÚ}*antiyantan appāndu* LUGAL-*uš apāš kišaru*

> The king shall be a son of the king, a son of first-rank only. If there is no first-ranking son of the k[ing], whoever is the second-ranking son, he shall be king. When there is no son of the king, whoever is the first-ranking daughter, they shall take a son-in-law for her, he shall be king.

Telipinu's message is clear: royal succession must follow a fixed, orderly path. First a first-ranking son, then a second-ranking son, and only if no sons are available, a son-in-law selected through the king's daughter. Unlike Ḫattušili in the *Testament*, Telipinu does not name a specific successor. Instead, he introduces a systematic framework—intended to apply beyond his own reign. This paragraph has often been interpreted as a constitutional reform—a shift in succession structure. Many scholars read it as Telipinu formally abolishing an earlier avunculate model, replacing it with explicit patrilineal inheritance.

However, it is also possible that this was not a reform in the sense of changing an existing system, but rather a clarification. The political instability and repeated murders demanded a codification of succession. Telipinu's formulation could be seen not as innovation, but as a necessary stabilization effort: an attempt to formalize what may have already been practiced irregularly or contentiously (for further discussion, see below, Ch. 7.4).

Telipinu's political agenda is reflected in the following section where he calls for unity among the future king's "brothers, sons, in-laws, relatives and troops" (§29). He promotes the kind of unity once the first Hittite kings Labarna and Ḫattušili had: an aspirational future of harmony grounded in loyalty, order, and peace.

Telipinu tries to achieve this ideal by stopping bloodshed and he also assures everyone around him that he will halt the cycle. It is likely that he gained support by presenting himself as a stabilizing figure. To ensure that future kings would uphold this new order, Telipinu assigns the *panku* an important role as a guardian of justice and memory (§30 Obv. ii 46–49):

(46) *namma kuiš≈a* LUGAL-*uš kišari nu* ŠEŠ-*aš* NIN-*aš idālu šanaḫzi*

(47) *šumešš≈a pankuš≈ši<š> nu≈šši karši tetten kī≈wa ēšnaš uttar*

(48) *tuppiaz au karū≈wa ēšḫar* ^{URU}*ḫattuši makkešta*

(49) *nu≈war≈at≈apa* DINGIR.MEŠ-*iš šallai ḫaššannai dāer*

> In the future, whoever becomes king and plans evil (against his) brothers and sisters; you (pl.) are his *panku*. You shall speak to him straight: "This is a matter of blood! Look at the tablet (that

says): formerly bloodshed became prevalent in Ḫattuša! The gods took it out on the royal family."

The fact that the *Edict* was preserved in multiple later copies suggests that Telipinu's words were taken seriously by his successors. Whether the tablet was ritually read aloud or functioned more symbolically, its continued presence implies institutional memory and an attempt to commit to Telipinu's wisdom.

This is the first instance where a "sister" (NIN) appears as a potential victim. Although the *Edict* does not explicitly record the murder of a sister, the inclusion of the term implies that more royal family members may have died in the chaos than are listed. Here, "brothers and sisters" may function as shorthand for "kin," reinforcing Telipinu's aim of ending violence not just among princes but across the entire royal household. Even if read literally, the inclusion of "sister" does not necessarily support an avunculate reading; the warning is accounted for both—brother and sister—suggesting that all kin posed both political value and potential danger within the succession framework.

In the following paragraphs (§§31–32), Telipinu further instructs that only the guilty should be punished—not their households, not their wives, and not their sons. Furthermore, he also warns the palace personnel (§33) to obey his words and remain loyal. After generations of shifting power and conspiracies, even the king could no longer be sure whom to trust. Executions were dangerous, politically and practically; for it promoted betrayals. Therefore, he needed to be benevolent to his servants but secure their loyalty at the same time. Yet he also makes it clear that disloyalty would not be tolerated and he asks his *panku* to be his eyes and ears: *mān≈aš* EGIR-*ez*[*zi*]*š ḫantezziš šumašš≈a pankuš anda ē*[*p*]*ten nu≈šmaš≈an* ^{UZU}ZU$_9$-*it karipten* translating as "whether he is low-r[an]k or high; you, the *panku,* shall also s[e]ize (him). You shall destroy him with your teeth." (§33 Obv. ii 72–73).

After this, Telipinu transitions into other topics such as the protection of fortified cities, the regulation of storehouses, the marking of grain, procedures for handling murder, and laws concerning sorcery (§§33–50). Some of these sections are partially damaged. Nevertheless, it is clear that the *Edict* was not solely about succession. The Hittite lands were large and Telipinu's reign was just about to begin, consistency was needed for succession but he also needed to stabilize the broader administrative and legal structures of the kingdom.

Throughout his *Edict*, Telipinu tried to instruct the forthcoming kings to provide long-term continuity for himself, for his successors, and for the Hittite state. From the fact that his words were copied and preserved across generations, it can be understood that at least to some extent, his experiences and instructions were valued.

7.3. Tracing the Avunculate in the Edict

The murders and succession conflicts described in the *Edict* are analyzed in detail by Sürenhagen.[204] As a starting point, one must accept the avunculate assumptions established in the *Testament*, as discussed in Ch. 6. Central to Sürenhagen's reconstruction is the role of cross-cousin marriage, therefore, the idea behind the reconstructed kinship relations is aimed to establish cross-cousin marriages that would fit the avunculate succession model (see also above, Ch. 5).

As Goedegebuure states, in the Old Hittite case, the only clear example of such a marriage is Zidanta I's marriage with the daughter of Ḫantili (explained below).[205] This specific instance, where a male cousin marries his paternal aunt's daughter, serves as a building block for Sürenhagen's broader reconstruction. Therefore, this kind of marriages between cousins and the king's sister's daughters are sought in the reconstruction of the avunculate succession system.

According to Sürenhagen, Old Hittite kings differ in their legitimacy in three ways:[206]

1. Kings who are legitimate solely as king's sons.
2. Kings who succeed their fathers but are also legitimate as sister's sons.
3. Kings who are legitimate solely as sister's sons.

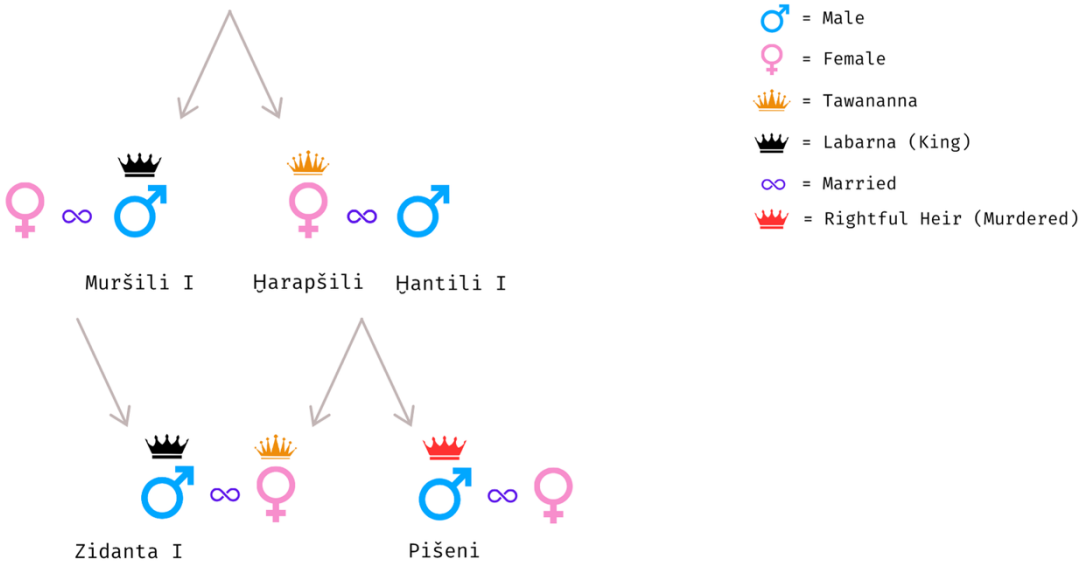
The first category "kings who are legitimate solely as king's sons" includes: Papaḫdilmaḫ, Zidanta I, and Telipinu. Sürenhagen proposes that Papaḫdilmaḫ, assumed to be Ḫattušili's father (see above, Ch. 6.3), tried to eliminate his father's sister's son, Labarna I (Fig. 5). However, this interpretation rests on two uncertainties: first, that Papaḫdilmaḫ was indeed Ḫattušili's

[204] Sürenhagen 1998.
[205] Goedegebuure 2004: 10.
[206] Sürenhagen 1998: 88–9.

father; and second, that Labarna I was his sister's son. The latter claim, in particular, lacks direct evidence.

The case of Zidanta is particularly crucial. Because if the reconstruction mentioned in Chapter 7.1 is accepted, Zidanta was the *antiyant* of Ḫantili, the man with whom he conspired against Muršili. As Sürenhagen reconstructs §19 Obv. i 66 as "the [gods] demanded the blood of his father"[207] instead of "the gods were searching for the blood of [Piše]ni." (see above, Ch.7.1), and from this, he concludes that Zidanta's biological father was Muršili (Fig. 6). In this scenario, Zidanta, the biological son of the previous king, later murdered Pišeni, the avuncular heir, and claimed the throne himself. If Zidanta's lineage was indeed as reconstructed, he would have killed not only his political rival, but also his own father, Muršili.

Fig. 6: *Zidanta's Lineage According to the Avunculate Model*



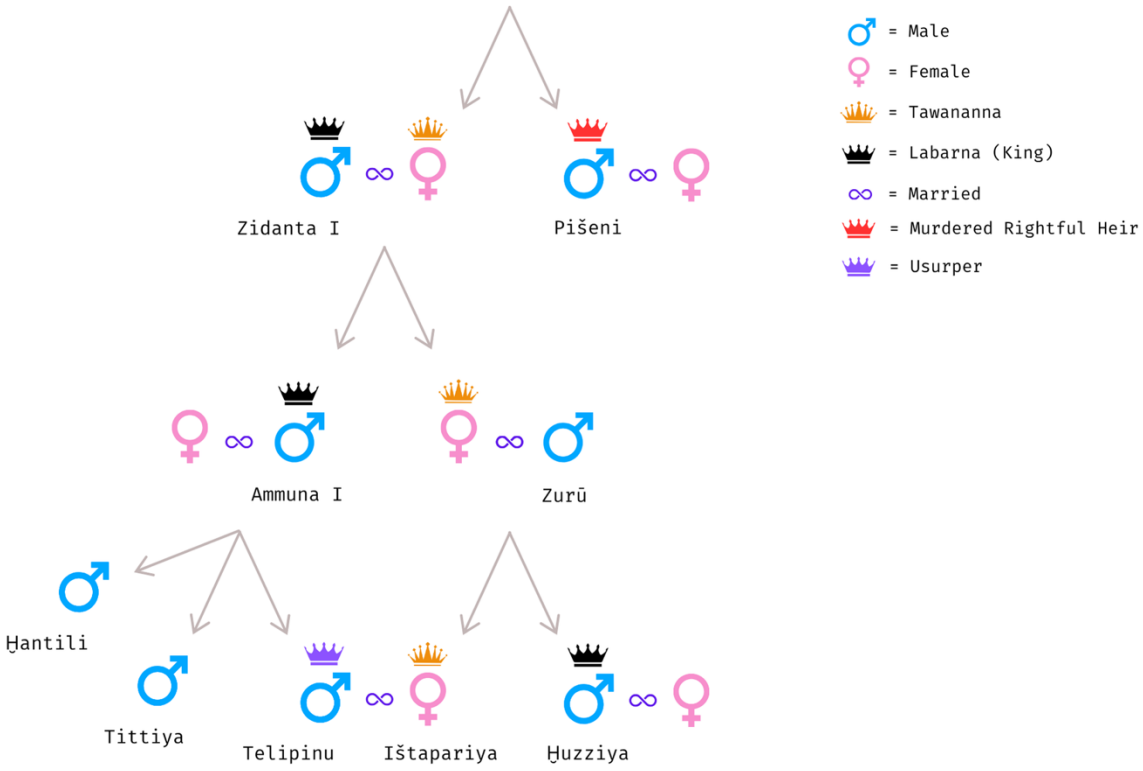
Moreover, Sürenhagen argues that Zidanta, as son-in-law to Ḫantili, was married to the daughter of Ḫantili and Ḫarapšili; that is, Zidanta's wife was the sister of Pišeni.[208] Ḫantili, having married Muršili's sister Ḫarapšili (who presumably held the title of Tawananna, because Ḫattušili was possibly her and Muršili's grandfather), fathered the legitimate heir, Pišeni. According to the avunculate model, Pišeni, Muršili's sister's son, would have been the rightful

[207] Sürenhagen (1998: 89) bases his reconstruction on Exemplar D of the *Edict* (KUB 11.5 Obv. 8). The Hittite line reads: [DIN]GIR.MEŠ-*IA addaš eshar=šet* [*šanhir*].
[208] Sürenhagen 1998: 89.

successor. In line with this interpretation, Ḫantili was both the husband of the Tawananna and the father of the future Labarna. This, Goedegebuure suggests, explains why it was Ḫantili (Muršili's brother-in-law) who became king after Muršili's assassination, rather than Zidanta (Muršili's son).[209] It could be also that, given the possibility of a cross-cousin marriage, Zidanta was also married to a Tawananna himself. However, there is no textual evidence to confirm that Ḫarapšili held the title of Tawananna.

According to the avunculate system, after Papaḫdilmaḫ and Zidanta, the third Old Hittite king to ascend the throne as the son of the king was Telipinu. Regarding Telipinu's genealogy, the only explicit detail is that he was married to Ištapariya, the sister of Ḫuzziya. It is generally presumed that Ammuna was Telipinu's father. Trying to find a pattern of cross-cousin marriages, Sürenhagen proposes that Telipinu was married to the daughter of Ammuna's sister (Fig. 7).[210]

Fig. 7: *Telipinu's Lineage According to the Avunculate Model*



[209] Goedegebuure 2004: 16.
[210] Sürenhagen 1998: 90–1.

Ištapariya is described in §22 Vs. ii 10 as "of first-rank" an attribute typically designated for the children of Hittite kings and queens. Goedegebuure suggests that this title could also apply to the children of the king's sister, particularly if she held the position of Tawananna.[211] Subsequently, this would also mean that Ḫuzziya, the king who from whom Telipinu took the throne, was Ammuna's sister's/Tawananna's son (Fig. 7).

Yet Ḫuzziya attempted to kill both his sister Ištapariya and Telipinu. Could it be that Ištapariya, as Ḫuzziya's sister, was also the Tawananna—the mother of the legitimate heir to the throne? Goedegebuure argues that Ḫuzziya would only have sought her death if she posed a threat to his reign, which would make sense if she were the Tawananna and thus the mother of a future rival king.[212] Under the avunculate model, as the king's sister's son, Ḫuzziya was the legitimate king. Yet, he saw his sister's sons as potential threats, leaving him to chase after Telipinu and his own sister. Nevertheless, it is important to note that there is no mentioning of a Tawananna in the *Edict,* and the narrative is presented entirely from Telipinu's perspective. Whether Ḫuzziya truly intended to kill Ištapariya and Telipinu remains uncertain; our understanding is shaped by the voice of the victor, who had every reason to justify his actions against Ḫuzziya.

If Ištapariya was indeed the Tawananna, this would strengthen the possibility that Telipinu was also a son of Ammuna. Because in the avunculate succession, the cross-cousin marriage necessitates the Tawananna to marry the son of the reigning king.[213] As discussed in Chapter 7.1, Tittiya and Ḫantili who were murdered along their sons were likely Ammuna's sons. Therefore, Tittiya and Ḫantili were the brothers of Telipinu (Fig. 7).

Zurū, the chief of the guards, was another crucial figure, for he had Tittiya killed through his own son Taḫurwaili. Zurū had a clear interest in securing Ḫuzziya's rise to the throne. Sürenhagen suggests that Zurū was not related to Ammuna by blood, but he may have been married to Ammuna's sister, thereby making him the father of both Ḫuzziya and Ištapariya (Fig. 7).[214] He further concludes that Telipinu was likely spared from murder because he was married to Zurū's daughter. This assumption, that Zurū was the father-in-law of Telipinu, is not supported by direct evidence, but is instead derived from logical reasoning. It presumes that

[211] Goedegebuure 2004: 17.
[212] Goedegebuure 2014: 17.
[213] Goedegebuure 2014: 18.
[214] Sürenhagen 1998: 91.

Zurū acted against Ammuna's sons in favor of his own son, Ḫuzziya, who would have been the legitimate heir under the avunculate model as Ammuna's sister's son.

According to the avunculate succession system, the second type of legitimate kings are those who "succeeded their fathers but were also legitimate as sister's sons." While Papaḫdilmaḫ, Zidanta I, and Telipinu ascended the throne as sons of Hittite kings, Ḫattušili I and Ammuna I, as Sürenhagen proposes, also succeeded their fathers but were legitimate as sister's sons as well.[215] As discussed in Chapter 6, the avunculate succession assumes that Ḫattušili's father was the rebel Papaḫdilmaḫ and his mother the Tawananna (Fig. 5). Since the Tawananna was supposedly Labarna I's sister, Ḫattušili succeeded his father but remained the rightful heir through his maternal line as Labarna I's sister's son. Similarly, Ammuna succeeded his father Zidanta. But if Zidanta was married to the sister of Pišeni (the rightful heir under the avunculate model), then Ammuna's legitimacy was ultimately secured through his mother (Fig. 7).

However, these reconstructions rely on a number of uncertainties. As previously stated, the precise relationship between Papaḫdilmaḫ and Ḫattušili remains unclear, as does the link between the Tawananna and Labarna I. Ammuna undoubtedly killed his father Zidanta and succeeded him, and it is possible that he was married to Pišeni's sister, but Pišeni may have been considered his heir simply because he was King Ḫantili's son, without requiring avunculate validation as Muršili's sister's son. If so, Ammuna's legitimization may not stem from his mother but only from his father being king as well.

Lastly, the third category under the avunculate model, kings who were legitimate solely as sister's sons, includes Muršili I and Ḫuzziya I. As discussed in Chapter 6.4, Muršili's legitimacy stemmed from both of his parents for a cross-cousin marriage must have taken place. While his mother was the daughter of Ḫattušili's sister (and perhaps the sister of Labarna III), his father was Ḫattušili's son (Fig. 5). Ḫuzziya I, too, would have been the rightful heir within the avunculate succession as Ammuna's sister's son, but was eventually overthrown by his brother-in-law, Telipinu (Fig. 7).

However, these cases remain speculative. For Muršili's parents remain unknown, and the assumption that Ḫuzziya was the legitimate heir is based solely on reconstructive reasoning

[215] Sürenhagen 1998: 92.

in favor of avunculate succession. These identifications remain hypothetical and are not supported by explicit textual evidence. Thus, the avunculate succession remains a possible, but far from conclusive, explanation for these succession patterns.

7.4. Reflections

The timespan of the events described in the *Edict* remains unknown. We only know that Ḫantili became an old man and likely died from natural causes, as did Ammuna. However, it is unclear how old they were upon ascending the throne, or how long they reigned. Ḫantili could have become king at forty and died at fifty, or ascended at fifty and died at ninety.[216] Similarly, the murder of Zidanta by Ammuna might have occurred immediately after his predecessor's death or years later. Thus, estimating how much time and how many generations passed until Telipinu's accession is uneasy.

Telipinu, trying to establish order in his kingdom, leaves many questions unanswered, notably regarding his own identity. He explicitly states he sat upon his father's throne, strongly suggesting he was indeed a king's son. The kings preceding him were Muršili, Ḫantili, Zidanta, Ammuna, and Ḫuzziya, the latter being his brother-in-law. Since Ḫantili presumably died from natural causes due to old age, he and Muršili are unlikely candidates to have been Telipinu's father. If Zidanta had been his father, Telipinu would logically have been Ammuna's brother, which is improbable given the succession dynamics. Therefore, many scholars consider him to be Ammuna's son.[217] However, as he could be an adopted son, it also has been suggested that he was an *antiyant* to Ammuna.[218] Another possibility is that he came from the line of a king but used the phrase "the throne of my father" as to refer to his late predecessors.

There is no information about Telipinu's genealogy in the *Edict* except from being the husband to Ištapariya, the sister of Ḫuzziya, a figure whose genealogy also remains unknown. For some scholars, the reason that Telipinu does not offer a clear genealogy is because Telipinu could be not a royal descend himself or not directly a king's son.[219] Nonetheless, since Telipinu

[216] Bryce (2005: 416, n.16) points out that the *Edict* contains no explicit statement declaring that Ḫantili became king. However, his wife is referred to as queen (MUNUS.LUGAL), and upon his death, he is said to have "become a god," a phrase used exclusively for Hittite kings.
[217] Riemschneider 1971: 94–97; Atkins 2000: 160; Forlanini 2010: 126.
[218] Beckman 1986a: 22.
[219] Van den Hout 2003: 194, n.1.

explicitly mentions sitting on his father's throne, his father/father-in-law was probably well-known to the Hittite audience, though ambiguous to modern readers. Telipinu must have had a strong presence in the palace, and people who were following him, otherwise he would not be able to ascend the throne while Ḫuzziya had already been raised as king.

When Telipinu outlines the succession order in §28, he simply sets out a hierarchy: first, the first-ranking son; if none exists, then the second-ranking son; and only then, the *antiyant*. For scholars in favor of an earlier avunculate system, this declaration becomes proof that Telipinu changed the rules to legitimize his own reign. As Goedegebuure indicates, Telipinu was not legitimate within avuncular succession and therefore had to secure both his own rule and the future of his sons.[220] Yet, this may be an overreading. Telipinu's *Edict* is not just a legal reform; it is a rhetorical act of closure—an attempt to put an end to dynastic instability and violence.

Moreover, the rules of succession as set out by Telipinu involves three distinct categories of heirs. This suggests that the succession struggles in Hittite history may have occurred within this internal hierarchy, rather than as a strict binary conflict between patrilineal and avunculate succession. While the text itself leaves unclear precisely what is meant by "first-ranking" and "second-ranking" sons, we know from later texts that these terms could in any case refer to the status of their mothers (e.g., sons of a principal wife versus sons of secondary wives; see also below), or even include adopted or non-biological sons. Could a sister's son be included among second-ranking sons? Perhaps—the lack of explicit clarity leaves room for interpretation.

The continued relevance of Telipinu's rules is also reflected in a later historical case. In the 13th century BCE: Urḫi-Tešḫup (also known as Muršili III) succeeded his father Muwatalli, the great victor of the battle of Qadesh. Urḫi-Tešḫup was explicitly referred to as a son "of second rank," indicating that his mother was likely a secondary wife or a concubine. Despite this secondary status, his uncle, Ḫattušili III, initially supported and confirmed his ascension. Only later did Ḫattušili III dethrone him.[221] Telipinu's hierarchical principles of succession remained influential and recognized many generations after the *Edict* was first issued.[222]

[220] Goedegebuure 2014: 19.
[221] For Urḫi-Tešḫup's ascension and dethronement by Ḫattušili III, see Bryce 2003.
[222] Klengel 1998: 226.

Compared to the *Testament*, the role of female figures in the *Edict* is limited. Only Queen Ḫarapšili, Queen Ištapariya, and a mysterious Queen of Šukziya are present. However, none of these females are represented as a threat to succession. Moreover, Telipinu deals with men and manly issues in the *Edict*, whereas Ḫattušili's main enemies were his sister and his daughter. The *Edict* reflects the patriarchal focus of the narrative, which emphasizes active male agency in succession conflicts. The absence of prominent female roles in Telipinu's *Edict* notably lacks evidence supporting avunculate succession practices.

In Ḫattušili's account, his adoption of his nephew, young Labarna, or his presumed status as the biological son of Tawananna has been used to support the idea of avunculate succession. Yet, in the *Edict* there is no mention of sister's children, aunts, or mothers. In fact, the only prominent figures are sons and *antiyant*s. When men are killed, such as Pišeni, Tittiya, and Ḫantili; they are killed with their sons. If the sister's son was the rightful heir in an avunculate model, why is there no trace of them in these passages? If Telipinu was indeed formalizing a new succession system, why does he not explicitly point to the previous system's failings? Why does he not call for unity with the sister's sons, when he so clearly calls for harmony among "sons, brothers, in-laws, relatives, and troops"?

Importantly, Telipinu's narrative is not "objective." He clearly favors certain characters over others. For instance, he portrays Zidanta as a manipulator who "sneaks into Ḫantili's mind." But was Ḫantili truly so weak? Did he not have his own agency? Whatever the answer, the portrayal reflects Telipinu's own judgment. As with the *Testament*, the *Edict* presents the view of the victor, the king who endured. Their rhetoric is shaped by power and legacy, not by historical reporting.

The *Edict* is widely considered a "reform," yet such a characterization is ultimately a modern projection rather than the explicit intention of the text. The text never declares a break from an earlier model, there is no indication that Telipinu saw himself as overturning a previous system. Instead, the *Edict* offers a long historical account of royal bloodshed and disorder. What Telipinu proposes is not a reversal but a rule. He refuses to continue the cycle of killing and expresses concern for the monarchy's future.

7.5. Conclusion

Telipinu's *Edict* has long been seen as a turning point in Old Hittite succession practices. Many scholars interpret it as a shift from an avunculate system toward a clearly defined patrilineal hierarchy. However, as discussed throughout this chapter, the *Edict* itself does not explicitly declare any such radical departure. Instead, Telipinu's aim seems to be achieving stability after prolonged periods of bloodshed and political uncertainty, rather than directly criticizing an earlier succession practice.

The chaotic history of Hittite royal succession might reflect competition among multiple categories of legitimate heirs rather than a clear conflict between two rigid systems, avunculate and patrilineal. Telipinu clearly defines the hierarchy between first-ranking sons, second-ranking sons, and *antiyant*s. He introduces order but does not explicitly exclude the legitimacy of other heirs, such as sister's sons or adopted sons. While for his audience the identities of the figures and the intention behind the *Edict*'s issuing must have been clear, the continued ambiguity surrounding these kinship terms leads us to multiple interpretations and underlines the difficulty of confirming a purely avunculate succession model.

Historical evidence from the later Hittite period, as the case of Urḫi-Tešḫup, shows that Telipinu's succession principles remained influential and valid long after his reign. However, interpreting it as conclusive proof of a transition from an avunculate to a patrilineal system lacks any concrete proof. Thus, the *Edict* is thus best understood as a pragmatic response to political crisis rather than as the revolutionary turning point as it is sometimes portrayed.

8. Concluding Remarks

Both the *Testament* and the *Edict* lie at the heart of the hypothesized avunculate succession. Our knowledge of the Old Hittite Period largely depends upon these two texts. Both documents are extensive and insightful but remain inherently biased since they were composed by victors of royal conflicts. The contrast between Telipinu's vision of Ḫattušili's "peaceful reign" and Ḫattušili's own account of rebellions in his lifetime demonstrates how our knowledge is limited to what the authors chose to tell. The partiality of the narratives not only weakens our "objective" knowledge of the past, but also creates an image that is open to interpretation.

In the *Testament*, the selection of a new heir is the main issue, and the events told by Ḫattušili reflect only his perspective. As he is the one to replace his nephew with Muršili, the stories he tells serve to justify his decision. Likewise, in the *Edict*, Telipinu appears as the ultimate victor and king. Therefore, his rhetoric is shaped not only by his personal interests but also by the urgency to stabilize and preserve the monarchy.

The avunculate succession principle is based on the premise that "the sister's son should become king." Based on Ḫattušili's *Annals* and *Testament*, the Tawananna is hypothesized to be both the sister and mother of a Labarna. However, it is uncertain whether these terms were used as titles or personal names. Even if accepted as titles, evidence supporting a systematic avuncular succession practice remains insufficient. Telipinu says nothing to degrade the position of Tawananna or sisters. One also wonders: if the Tawananna held such a powerful role, why does she not appear at all as a strong figure in the *Edict*'s account of royal history? Or why do we not encounter any other king using the same form of legitimization as Ḫattušili did? The Elamite case shows a continuous use of the phrase "sister's son of PN" in a region and period close to that of the Hittites. However, Ḫattušili remains the only Hittite king known to have employed such a kinship claim.

Compared to the *Edict*, we see that in the *Testament* female characters were more involved in the inner dynamics of the palace, such as Ḫattušili's sister and daughter. These women could have held significant power as they were part of the royal family, whether Tawananna or not. The main antagonists in the narratives of the *Testament* and the *Edict* differ significantly: while Ḫattušili considers these female figures as his enemies, Telipinu focuses rather on male actors.

Moreover, even when the complex cases described in these texts are put aside; simply analyzing the kinship terms can become a tedious task, as kinship terms can be used beyond their descriptive meanings. As observed in the *Testament*, the word "son" can denote to three different meanings: biological son, heir, and adopted son. Therefore, determining the intended meaning of kinship terms in a dead language poses significant interpretative challenges. Nevertheless, even though our knowledge of Hittite kinship terms is not fully comprehensive, any reference to a "sister's son" is lacking in the *Edict*, a significant omission for the avunculate succession hypothesis.

To find a path of avunculate succession in the *Testament* and *Edict*, many gaps have to be filled and many assumptions have to be made. For avunculate succession to be in practice in the Old Hittite Period, the hypothesized arguments in Tab. 4 (for the *Testament*) and Tab. 5 (for the *Edict,* see below) have to be accepted as facts. Additionally, the *Testament*'s arguments (such as Labarna and Tawananna as royal titles, and Papaḫdilmaḫ as Ḫattušili's father, and Muršili as Ḫattušili's grandson) must be accepted as true to support the *Edict*'s claims.

Tab. 4: *Hypothesized Arguments for Avunculate Succession According to the Testament*

1.	"Labarna" was used as a royal title.
2.	"Tawananna" was used as a royal title.
3.	Ḫattušili was the adopted son of Labarna I and the biological son of Tawananna.
4.	As king, Ḫattušili could appoint his successor, and chose an heir among his sister's children.
5.	Muršili was Ḫattušili's grandson, so the crown passed to the line that would have inherited it regardless.
6.	The accusations by Ḫattušili's daughter about his lack of sons reflect a patrilineal view; she sees her own son as the rightful heir against the avunculate succession.
7.	The Papaḫdilmaḫ mentioned in §20 corresponds to Pawaḫdelmaḫ, son of PU-Šarruma, attested in the Offering Lists, and was Ḫattušili's biological father.
8.	Tawananna and Labarna I were siblings.
9.	If Ḫattušili's mother was Tawananna and his father was Papaḫdilmaḫ, then they formed a married couple.

10.	According to the premise "Every Tawananna is both a sister and a mother of Labarna," Muršili's mother was a Tawananna, and his father was Ḫattušili's son. Ḫaštayar was likely not Muršili's mother.

The premises presented here were discussed throughout Chapters 6 and 7 in detail. It was shown that some premises rely on partial evidence and cannot be treated as certain facts. Those assumptions are colored in pink; they are the possible ones. The green ones represent the premises that are highly likely to be true, while the blue ones are considered less likely. When looking overall at both tables, the green—the most likely premises—are fewer than the pink and blue.

Tab. 5: *Hypothesized Arguments for Avunculate Succession According to the Edict*

1.	If Muršili was Ḫattušili's grandson, Ḫarapšili was his granddaughter. Therefore, she possibly held the title Tawananna.
2.	Zidanta was the son-in-law of Ḫantili.
3.	Zidanta was the son of Muršili.
4.	Zidanta was married to a daughter of Ḫantili, whose mother was Ḫarapšili, the sister of Muršili. Therefore, Zidanta was married to his paternal cross-cousin.
5.	Pišeni was Zidanta's brother-in-law.
6.	Pišeni was the son of Ḫarapšili and Ḫantili, he was Muršili's sister's son. Therefore, he was the legitimate king.
7.	Ammuna was Telipinu's father.
8.	Ištapariya was the daughter of Ammuna's sister. As Telipinu was married to Ištapariya, he was married to his paternal cross-cousin.
9.	Ḫuzziya was Ammuna's sister's son.
10.	Zurū was the husband of Ammuna's sister, and thus the father of Ḫuzziya and Ištapariya.
11.	Tittiya and Ḫantili were Ammuna's sons and Telipinu's brothers.
12.	Telipinu was spared because he was married to Zurū's daughter.

13.	Only three Old Hittite kings legitimized themselves solely as the sons of their predecessors: Papaḫdilmaḫ, Zidanta I, and Telipinu. All had to eliminate their father's sister's son (who was also their brother-in-law) first: Labarna I, Pišeni, and Ḫuzziya I.
14.	Ḫattušili I and Ammuna I also succeeded their fathers, but they also could legitimize themselves as sister's sons.
15.	Muršili I and Ḫuzziya I held their positions solely by being sister's sons.

The main hypothesis derived from the *Edict* is that the murders it recounts result from a clash between the avunculate and father-to-son succession systems. As a result, the reconstructions in the *Edict* are based on the creation of a pattern of cross-cousin marriages. Yet, there is no concrete evidence for such a practice, and the designation of kinship relationships relies heavily on the desire to fit that pattern. Zidanta could have been the son of Muršili, but it remains uncertain whether he was the son-in-law of Ḫantili. Therefore, the only supposedly concrete example of cross-cousin marriage, as proposed by Sürenhagen, is ultimately an assumption. Even if it did take place, the other proposed cross-cousin marriages lack evidence and are all unlikely (Tab. 5). It is possible that such marriages occurred within the Hittite royal family, but the evidence is too scarce to confirm it with confidence.

It is also noteworthy to point out that Telipinu, nowhere in the *Edict,* criticizes the presupposed avunculate succession system from which he shifts the entire royal balance. The story he tells reflects an unbalanced monarchy, full of treachery and lacking stability. He does not mention the sister's sons, nor does he point to any failings of such a system. The bloody history he depicts only shows that there was no systematized succession, with men killing each other for their personal gain. Hidden agendas are not revealed, and the backgrounds of the characters are left unexplained.

Both the *Testament* and the *Edict* introduce us to characters that we would otherwise not be aware of. And we try to map the story based on the information we have. However, one should not forget that there may have been many more male and female figures in the palace connected to the royal family in one way or another. There could have been more brothers, sisters, cousins, and in-laws. The premises created above are limited to those characters we know. Ḫattušili suffered from the disloyalty of his own family, and the *Edict* demonstrates that he was not the only king to do so.

Reading these two Old Hittite texts provides us with insights that are challenging to interpret, and the avunculate succession remains one compelling and thought-provoking way to approach Old Hittite royal practices. Tracing connections between characters can feel like solving a puzzle, and it is admittedly not a straightforward task to reconstruct lineages; especially when other sources like the Offering Lists and the Cruciform Seal introduce additional names but offer no clear answers.

Ascending the throne required rising above one's rivals and remaining strong throughout one's reign, as enemies were found not only beyond the borders but also within the closest circles. Both Ḫattušili and Telipinu did arise among their rivals and their kin. Ḫattušili's case is definitely intriguing and he *did* ascend the throne as the Tawananna's brother's son, and therefore fueled avunculate succession theories. Perhaps this was merely an exception in Hittite royal history. From the evidence discussed above, there is not enough to conclude that avunculate succession was a practiced or institutionalized rule. There may have been instances when a sister's son became king, but the pattern does not form a consistent system.

What these texts do show, however, is that royal succession in the Old Hittite period was contested, flexible, and shaped by circumstance as much as by tradition. The ambiguity of the facts we can deduct from the sources is not a weakness, but an indicator of the complexity of the historical reality they reflect.

Abbreviations

CHD =	The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago
CTH =	Catalogue des textes hittites (Laroche 1971)
HAB =	Die Hethitisch-Akkadische Bilingue des Hattusili I (Sommer & Falkenstein 1938)
HW =	Hethitisches Wörterbuch (Friedrich & Kammenhuber 1975–)
KBo =	Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi
KUB =	Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi
RLA =	Reallexicon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie

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Appendix

A. Testament of Ḫattušili I

Translated by the author. For the transliteration, I primarily follow Gilan but I have also consulted the digital version of CTH 6.[223] Column and line numbers correspond to Gilan's enumeration. For the translation, I have referred to the works of Gilan, Klinger, and Goedegebuure.[224] As the text is a bilingual, the tablet is divided into two sections: Akkadian on the left and Hittite on the right. The colophon appears exclusively in Akkadian, on columns iii and iv. My use of brackets in the translation of the *Testament* strictly follows the Hittite version without incorporating the Akkadian, which might result in more brackets compared to translations by other scholars. The paragraphs were separated with horizontal ruling lines by the ancient scribe, thus the division mirrors the original.

Obv.

§1 (ii 1–7) [The great] k[ing] Tabarna spo[k]e to the *pa*[*nku* and to the elders]: I [have] just be[come sick]. I have named you the [young] Labarna. ["Let that one be seated (on the throne)."] I, [the king], named [him] my son. [I embraced him. I elevated him]. [I] have constantly back[ed] him up. [But he was a boy unfit to be seen]! He did not weep. [He did] n[ot have kindness]. He is coldhearted. He is not c[ompassionate].

§2 (ii 8–13) I, the king, selected him. [I brought] him [to my couch]. Why would anyone raise his sister's son again? He did not take [the advice of the king]. His serpent mother['s advice, that he took]. (His) brothers and sisters [have been placing cold] w[ords] in him. He has been listenin[g] to their words constantly. [However I, the king, have heard and I will fight a fight].

§3 (ii 14–19) Enough! He is not my son (anymore). [His mother (bellowed) like a cow]: "[They deployed] the c[alf], to me living, [from (my) lap]! [They ruined him]! "You will kill [him!"] [Did I], the king, [do anything] evil to him? [Didn't I make him a priest?] I [have always] si[ngled] him

[223] Gilan 2015: 67–83. The digital version is available via the *Thesaurus Linguarum Hethaeorum digitalis*, hethiter.net/: TLHdig KUB 40.65 (accessed 2025-06-05). See n.15 for fragments.
[224] Klinger 2005; Goedegebuure 2006 "The Bilingual Testament of Hattusili I;" Gilan 2015: 65–103.

[out]. [But] he was [not] gentle with the king's [soul]. H[ow can he, that soul], h[ave] fondness for the well-being of Ḫattuša?

§4 (ii 20–25) His [m]other is a snake. It will hap[pen and] [he will start to] listen to the [w]ords of [his mother, his brothers, and his sisters]. [He will come …] [He will begin] to be [ve]ngeful. [The troops, the elders, my servants], whom are se[t] to the k[in]g, [… They will keep dying for the king]. He will come and fin[ish them]. He will begin to shed [blood … He will not be afraid].

§5 (ii 26–29) It will happen. [And he will come to] those wh[o are] the people of Ḫattuša [… in the following way]: [He will] b[ring] cow and sheep of whoever […] I had them, my [bordering e]nemies, under control (lit. "on the hammer"). And] I [ha]d [my land in peace]. Let it not happen! He will [stir my land] in t[he en]d!

§6 (ii 30–36) And now, he must not [go down somehow] unquestioned. [Just now], I have giv[en] a [hous]e to my son Labarna. I have given (him) [ma]ny [fields], I have give[n] m[an]y cows, I have given [man]y [sheep]. He shall eat and [d]rin[k. As long as he behaves well]. He shall com[e] up. [But] i[f] he treats with [hat]e, either with any sla[nd]er or an[y agitati]on, he shall not co[me] up. He shall [remain in his house].

§7 (ii 37–41) [N]ow, Muršili is m[y] son. [You shall recognize] h[im]! You shall plac[e] him (on the throne)! […] precisely given. [The go]ds will [place] a li[on], in the place of a lion. [But to whom, at that t]ime, there go[e]s a matter of the army o[r the word of] some [revolt]; (when) it [b]ecomes [serious]; you, my servants and my elders, shall [hel]p [my son].

§8 (ii 42–47) [When] it is the third [ye]ar, he shall go to a campaign. (Already) n[ow], I will [m]ake him [a heroic king]. Now, if not yet […] (He is) the offspring of your majesty! You shall [r]aise him as an hero[ic king]! [I]f you make [(my) son] go t[o] a campaign, you shall bring [him] back [well]. You[r] clan shall be [one] like (that) of the *wetna*-animal. "[…] let him be." His servants are one, begotten [of one moth]er.

§9 (ii 48–52) One liver, one lung, and one [ear] are entrusted [to you (pl.)]. [Do not] be dismissive of one another, and let no o[n]e be [ho]stile, let [no o]ne transgress (his) words. Do [n]ot do the [deeds] of those of the cities Šina[ḫu]wa and Ubarriya. That defamation shall never ever persist. […] My son will do (what is) mine.

§10 (ii 53–57) [No one] will say: The king [does] his heart's desire in secret. I will justify it, "whether it is (true), or not." [That d]efamation shall never ever persist. [A]nd now, [you] [who ac]knowledge my words and my wisdom shall instruct my son!

§11 (ii 58–62) One shall [not] beset the other from behind, one shall not [bes]et the other from [front]. Let the elders not speak (these words): "You summoned [u]s." The elders of Ḫattuša shall not speak to you (my son). Not [the man of Ḫatrā], not the man of Ḫemmuwa, not the man of Tamalkia, not [the man of Zalpa]; let no one from the land speak to you.

§12 (ii 63–67) [Consider (pl.)] my [son] Ḫuzziya. I, the king, [mad]e him the [lord] to the city of Tappaššanda. However, they seized him and they kept spreading slanders to him. They [be]came [hostile towards me]. "Rebel against your father (lit. "his head"). [In the city of Tuppaššanda], the [pa]laces that (are there) are not [purified]. But you must perform the purification."

§13 (ii 68–74) I, [the king], did [no]t take hold of [Ḫuzziya]. The people of Ḫatti [kill]ed [Ḫuzziya]. Then they seized (my) daughter. [Because] she [had male] offspring. They became hostile towards [me]. "[Because] your father [has no son to (sit on) the throne, a s]ervant will sit (on it) and a servant [will become king". And th]en, [she] [turned] Ḫattuša and the pal[ace] (against me). [My servants] and my sons of the palace (i.e., palace attendants) became hostile towards me. [And] she [inci]ted [the whole country].

§14 (ii 75–81) [225] The people of […] killed […] in war. […kill]ed these [...] (As for) the people of Ḫatti: one person's [cattle were taken], and [a]nother's sheep were taken, another[r's viney]ards and fields were taken. […] an[d] yoked the cattle […] and that one; his [c]attle were sla[ught]ered.

Rev.

§15 (iii 1–5) […but] these […] these […] servants of the king […] They, the plowme[n …], the men of weapons, […] (and) their fields were ta[ken … t]hat and those […] But I, the king, [do] I not [kn]ow an[y of] this?

§16 (iii 6–12a) When [I] he[ard] (this), [I] lo[oked at] the [peopl]e of Ḫatti. I [av]enged the[ir] tears. But if I did not aveng[ed] it, you would have slandered me with the tongue: "He let the b[lood ou]t." The king has in no wa[y (done anything of the sort)! She said as follows: Wh]y did you give me so little? If [I gave] (you) littl[e, if] I [would] have given you many cows, sheep and [many fields]; would [you] not [drink] the blood (of the country)?

§17 (iii 13–22) [My daughter insulted my person] and my name. [So that I, the king, to]ok [(my) daughter] and [I took her down] from Ḫattuša with this. I laid lands over lands [and I lai]d [cattle over cattle]. She dismissed (her) father's words. She drank their [bloo]d [of the people of Ḫatti]. Now, she [is banished from the land. I]f she comes to my house, [she will turn] my house. [And if she] comes to Ḫattuša, she will turn [it for the second time asi]de: [a house] of the land is [allocat]ed to her. Let her eat and [drin]k!

§18 (iii 23–25) You [may n]ot do [evil] (to her). She has done evil. (But) I will not do [evil bac]k. She [did not call] me father, and I will not call her my daughter.

§19 (iii 26–32) (Until) now, nobody has taken my will [in Ḫattuša. And you], Muršili are [m]y [son], you shall take it (for yourself). You will obey [(your) father's wor]ds. If you have obeyed the words of (your) father, you will [ea]t [bread] and you will drink water. When adul[th]ood is in your

[225] Although I translated these two paragraphs in line with Gilan's (2015: 75–6) transliteration, §14 and §15 are rarely translated due to heavy damage. However, based on what remains, Goedegebuure (2006: 226) notes: "What is left of the text makes clear that the daughter caused the death of many inhabitants of Hatti, and that their possessions, such as servants, cattle, fields, gold, and silver, were confiscated."

[hear]t, eat twice or thrice a day, and t[ake] care of yourself. [But when] old age is in your heart, dri[nk] until satisfaction. [But do not] discard [(your) father's] words!

§20 (iii 33–45) You (who are) my [first-r]anking servants: you [m]ust [obey] my, the king's, wo[r]ds. (Then) you will eat bread and drink water. And, [Ḫatt]uša will stand upright and your land will be in [peac]e. But if you do not obey the king's words; you will not remain alive in [Ḫattuša], you will perish. [And whoever] subverts the king's words, now [let] him [die]. He shall [not] be my [rep]resentative -that one- and he shall not be a first-ranking servant! They shall pierce [his …][226] As for that, did not (his) sons disregard my grandfather [PU-Šarruma's(?) wo]rds? Did not my grandfather appoint his son [Laba]rna to the city of Šanaḫuitta? [But afterwards] his servants and elders subverted his words. They placed Papaḫdilmaḫ. How many years have gone by? [How many] have escaped? Where are the houses of the elders? Did they not perish?

§21 (iii 46–54) You (pl.) shall obey my, the great king Labarna's, words. [As long as] you obey [th]em, Ḫattuša will stand upright and your land will be [peac]eful. You will eat bread and drink water. [B]ut if you do [not] obey, your land will become another's. And you must be reverent to the [w]ords [of the gods]. Let their breads, thei[r] libations, their [ste]w, and their groats be provided. Do [not] postpone and do not fall behind! If you [post]pone, evil could (happen), as in the past. Let [i]t be just so!

§22 (iii 55–63) [The grea]t [king] Labarna began to [talk] to Muršili, his son: I have given you my words. Let them read this [table]t in front of you, month by month. (So that) you imprint my [wor]ds and my wisdom in your heart. You will look over my [servant]s and the elders. (If) you [se]e someone's sin, either someone sinning in front of a deity or [so]meone speaking [so]me w[ords]; each time consult the assembly (*panku*)! [And], let s[lander] be turned over to the assembly. My son, do which is in [your] heart.

§23 (iii 64–73) The great king Labarna spe[a]ks (now) to Ḫaštayar: Do not forsake me! May the [kin]g not speak to her in this way. The sons of the palace (i.e., palace attendants), are going to say:

[226] As it is damaged, I left the object unspecified here but interpretations include 'throat' (Goedegebuure 2006: 226) and 'penis' (Haas 2006: 64; Gilan 2015: 80).

“[Loo]k, she keeps consulting the old women.” The king will speak to t[hem as follow]s: “[No]w, she [still consult]s the old women.” Do I not know? Do [not] forsak[e] me again. Do [no]t! Always consult me [only]. I will always [revea]l m[y] words [to you. Wash me] well, [hold] me in your [breas]t, save me from earth [in your] brea[st].

Colophon (1–3) Tablet of the great king Tabarna; when the great king fell ill in Kuššar, and he appointed young Mu[ršili] to kingship.

B. Edict of Telipinu

Translated by the author. For the transliteration, I primarily follow Knapp,[227] but I have also consulted Hoffmann and the digital version of CTH 19.[228] I replicate Knapp’s column and line numbers, as he follows Hoffmann in merging the Hittite and Akkadian versions wherever the Hittite text is missing.[229] The line numbers are one off, as the top line of the first column of KBo 3.1 is entirely missing. Some paragraphs of the text are preserved only in the Akkadian version and some paragraphs of the *Edict* are almost completely missing. Wherever the exemplar is missing, Knapp follows Hoffmann’s enumeration. The text was divided by the ancient scribes into fifty paragraphs, separated by horizontal ruling lines.[230] Along with Knapp’s and Hoffmann’s translations, Gilan’s and van den Hout’s work have also been helpful in interpreting the text.[231]

Obv.

§1 (i 1–4) [Thus] (says) Tabarna Telip[i]nu, the great king:

[Former]ly, Labarna was the great king: his [son]s, his [brother]s, and his in-laws, his relatives, and his troops were uni[t]ed.

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[227] However, Knapp (2015: 76) prefers to call the text a “proclamation,” and suggests that only the final section of the text is an “edict.”

[228] Hoffmann 1984: 12–55 and Knapp 2015: 79–94. The digital version is available via the *Thesaurus Linguarum Hethaeorum digitalis*, hethiter.net/: TLHdig KBo 12.7 (accessed 2025-06-05).

[229] See n.19 for the list of all fragments.

[230] Knapp (2015: 75, n.9) notes that slight variations in the placement of the horizontal ruling lines appear among different exemplars.

[231] Van den Hout 2003; Gilan 2015: 137–77.

§2 (i 5–6) The land was small. But wherever he went on campaign, he held the enemy land vanquished by force.

§3 (i 7–9) He kept destroying the lands, he made the lands powerless. He made them borders of the sea. And, when he comes back from campaign, each of his sons goes to some country.

§4 (i 10–12) They each governed the cities of Ḫūpišna, Tūwanuwa, Nenašša, Lānda, Zallara, Paršuḫanta, (and) Lūšna. The great cities were taken care of.

§5 (i 13–16) But afterwards Ḫattušili was king; Also of him, his sons, his brothers, his in-laws, his relatives, and his troops were u[n]ited. Wherever he went on campaign, he too held the enemy land vanquished by force.

§6 (i 17–20) He destroyed the lands one by one, he made the lands powerless. He made them borders of the sea. And, when he comes back from [c]ampaign, each of his sons goes to some count[r]y. And of that, in (his) hand, the great cities were taken care of.

§7 (i 21–23) But when the servants of the king's sons later became [d]isloyal, they began to consume their houses. They began to conspire against their lord[s]. They began to shed our blood.

§8 (i 24–27) When Muršili became k[ing] in Ḫattuša; also of him, his sons, his brothers, his in-laws, his re[la]tives, and his troops were gathered. He had the enemy land vanquished by force. He made the lands powerless. He made them borders of the [se]a.

§9 (i 28–31a) [H]e went to the city of Ḫalpa (Aleppo), he destroyed Ḫalpa. He brought the deportees of Ḫalpa (and) its goods to Ḫattuša. And afterwards, he went to the city of Babylon. He [d]estroyed Babylon. He fought the [H]urrian [troops]. He kept the deport[ee]s of Babylon and his goods in [Ḫ]a[ttuša].

§10 (i 31b–32a) [And], Ḫantil[i] was (his) cupbearer. He had Ḫa[rapši]li, the sister of Muršili, as wife.

§11 (i 32a–34) [Zi]danta sneaked [in]to Ḫantili('s mind). [They performed] an evil de[ed]. They ki[ll]ed Muršili. They shed blood.

§12 (i 35–38) [Ḫan]tili became afraid. […]s pro[tect]ed him. […] wherever he went, the land […] the cities […]ta, […]ya, Ḫurpana, Kargam[iš …] They began […] … the troops.

§13 (i 39–42) And [when Ḫa]ntili ar[rived] at the city of Tagarama, [he began to ta]lk: "[Wh]at is this, (that) I have done? I have [liste]ned to Zidan[ta …] … The gods have been search[ing] for […] of Muršili's blood.

§14 (i 43–46) [… the H]urrian [troops], foxes [c]hased [into] the b[ushes]. They [cal]led. He came [… t]o [the land] of Ḫatti … [… He] turn[ed] the [la]nd. […] They came […] …

§15 (i 47–52) They drove out [… the] Hurrians from my land. […] with his sons in the city Šugazziya [… Ḫarap]šili, the queen, beca[me] ill, and […] Ilaliūmma, son of the pa[lace] (i.e., palace attendant), [t]o after him […] the men of the house of the city [Šugaz]ziya […] cul[t]ivate[d …]

§16 (i 53–57) […] the queen of the city of [Šukziy]a [… w]as dy[in]g [… Ilal]iū[m]a se[nt] in [s]ecret the sons of the palace (i.e., palace attendants) […] "The queen of the city of Šukziya must die!" [They seized] her (and) kill[ed] her [together with her children].

§17 (i 58–63) As Ḫantili asked of the queen of Šuk[ziya and her sons], (saying), "Who ki[lled …] them?" The chief of the sons of the palace (i.e., palace attendants) brought a message. They gathered the [fam]ily […] … them in the city of Taga[rama]. They chased them in the bushes and they […]

§18 (i 63–65) When Ḫantili [became] an ol[d] man and he began to become a god, Zidanta killed [Pišeni], the son of Ḫantili, together with his sons. He killed his first-rank[ing] servants (as well).

§19 (i 66–68) So, Zidanta [b]ecame king but the gods were searching for the blood of [Piše]ni. The gods made Ammuna, his own [so]n his enemy. He killed his father Zidanta.

§20 (i 69–71) And so, Ammuna became king. The gods were searching for the blood of his father Zidanta, and in his ha[n]d the grain, the wine, the oxen, the sheep no[t …] in his hand.

§21 (ii 1–7) The land became hostile to him: the cities of […]ag[g]a, […]la, Galmiya, Adaniy[a], Arzamiya, Šallapa, Parduwata, and Aḫḫula. Wherever he went (with his) troops on campaign, they would not came back successfully. When Ammuna died (lit. "became a god"), in those days, Zurū the chief of the guards secretly sent Taḫurwaili, the son of his begetting, the man of the goldspear, and he killed the family of Tittiya together with his sons.

§22 (ii 8–12) And so, Taruḫšu sent (his) courier. They ki[ll]ed Ḫantili together with his sons. And Ḫuzziya became king. Telipinu had Iš[t]apariya, his sister of first rank, (as his wife).[232] Ḫuzziya would have killed them, (but) the word went out. Telipinu chased them away.

§23 (ii 13–15) His five br[ot]hers; he put them together in houses. "Let them go and be, let them eat (and) drink!" You shall not do a[ny] evil to them. And I keep saying: "Those did evil to me, I [will not do evil] to them!"

§24 (ii 16–19) When I, Telipinu, sat on the throne of my father, I went on a campaign to the city of Ḫaššuwa and I destroyed Ḫaššuwa. My army was in the city of Zizzilippa and a batt[l]e broke out in Zizzilippa.

§25 (ii 20–25) [W]hen I, the king, came to the city of Lawazantiya, Laḫḫa was [hostile? to me?]. He instigated Lawazantiya. [The gods] gave him to my hand. And of the first rank: […], (namely) the

[232] I follow van den Hout (2003: 196) here. However, Beckman (1986b: 571) points out that the signs for 'NIN' and 'DAM' are often indistinguishable in Boğazköy texts; thus, he translates the passage as "Telipinu had Ištapariya, the one of first rank, as his wife." These translation differences are significant, as they determine whether Telipinu was Ḫuzziya's brother-in-law or not. If Beckman's reading is accepted, Ḫuzziya may not have been Telipinu's brother-in-law at all. However, due to space limitations, I do not pursue this line of argument further and accept the more commonly held interpretation.

commander of one thousand; […, the overseer of …]; Karruwa, the overseer of the stewards; Inara, the overseer of the cupbearers; Kil[la…, the overseer of …]; Tarḫumimma, the overseer of the heralds; Zinwašeli and Lelli[…]; (there were) many. [They] secretly sen[t] Tanuwa, the herald.

§26 (ii 26–30) [I, the kin]g did not [… Ḫuz]ziya and his [br]others [they killed?. W]hen I, the k[i]ng, heard, they [b]rought Tanuwa, Taḫurwaili and Taḫur[šu]. The *panku* had them (send) to death. And I, the king, said: "[Wh]y are they being killed? They will con[ceal] their eyes." I, the king, made them pl[ain?] plowmen. I took their weapons from (their) shoulders and I gave them [yokes].

§27 (ii 31–35) Bloodshed of the royal (lit. "great") family became prevalent. Queen Ištapar[iy]a died. And afterward it came that Ammuna, son of the king, died. The men of gods are saying: "Bloodshed has now become prevalent in Ḫattuša." I, Telipinu, have called an assembly in Ḫattuša. From this time on, nobody will do evil to a son of the family in Ḫattuša and draw a dagger against him.

§28 (ii 36–39) The king shall be a son of the king, a son of first-rank only. If there is no first-ranking son of the k[ing], whoever is the second-ranking son, he shall be king. When there is no son of the king, whoever is the first-ranking daughter, they shall take a son-in-law for her, he shall be king.

§29 (ii 40–45) In the future, whoever becomes king after me; his brothers, his sons, his in-laws, his relatives and his troops shall be un[i]ted. You will come and hold the enemy land b[y] force. But you shall not speak in the following way: "I will purge (them) away!" You will purge nobody. You will get involved yourself. Do not kill any of your (lit. "his") family (members)! It is not good.

§30 (ii 46–49) In the future, whoever becomes king and plans evil (against his) brothers and sisters; you (pl.) are his *panku*. You shall speak to him straight: "This is a matter of blood! Look at the tablet (that says): formerly bloodshed became prevalent in Ḫattuša! The gods took it out on the royal family."

§31 (ii 50–58) Whoever does evil among (his) brothers and sisters, and sets his sight on the king's head, you shall call the assembly. When h[is] word goes (i.e., found guilty), he shall pay with (his) head. They should not [ki]ll in secret like in the cases of Zuruwa, Dānuwa, Taḫurwaili, and Taḫuršu. They shall not let evil befall to his household, to his wife, and his sons. However, if a son of the king sins, he shall pay with (his) own head only, but they shall not let evil befall to his household and to his sons. For whichever reason the sons of the king will perish, (it does) not (affect) their households, their f[i]elds, their vineyards, their male servants, their female servants, their oxen, and their sheep.

§32 (ii 59–65) And now, when some son of the king sins, he shall pa[y] with (his) own head only, you will not let evil befall to his household and his sons. The giving of his (the king's) goods(?) is not acceptable.[233] And these are evil deeds, those who (do them) – the [chief]s, the father[s] of the house, the chief of the sons of the palace (i.e., palace attendants), the chief of the guards, and the chief of wine, […] who(ever)– they desire to take the house of the king. (If) the[y sa]y in the following way: "I want that city to be [m]ine" - He does evil against the lord of the city.

§33 (ii 66–73) Now, from this day on, in Ḫattuša you (pl.); the palace attendants the guards, the [g]old miners , the cupbearers, [butler]s, cooks, heralds, stablemen, and the chief of "thou[sand of the battlefield]," remember this matter. Let Tanuwa, Taḫurwaili, and Taruḫšu b[e] an example before you. [I]f s[o]meone does evil, either the father of the house or the chief of the sons of the [pal]ace (i.e., palace attendants), the chief of the guards, or the chief of "thousand of the battlefield" -whether he is low-r[an]k or high; you, the *panku,* shall also s[e]ize (him). You shall destroy him with your teeth.

Rev.

§34 (iii 1–3) In Ḫattuša, let them take the chiefs: the fathers of the house, the chief of the sons of the palace (i.e., palace attendants), the chief of wine, [the chief] of the g[uards], the chief of the

[233] The object here is *ezzan* GIŠ-*ru,* whose meaning is debated. I simply kept it here as 'goods,' however, both van den Hout and Knapp translate it as 'blade of straw (or) a chip of wood' and 'straw (or) splinter' respectively.

chariot fighters, the overseer of heralds of the arm[y …] those who are chie[fs] in [the (King's) hou]se […] let them each accept their subordinates.

§35 (iii 4–6) […] let] the fortified cities remain protected in [Ḫat]tuša. Do not leave them! The fortified cities … […] w]ater but for the grain you shall dive[rt] it ten (to) twenty times […]

§36 (iii 7–16) [234][… Te]lipinu […] great king in […] … […] … […] … […] … […] … and them […]

§37 (iii 17–33) […] cit]ies of the sto[re]houses […] the cities […]muḫa, Ḫarkiya, […] Zelmutta, Tappašpa, […]ukziya, Ašurna, Ānzara[…], Šamuḫa, Marišta, Ku[…, Ḫ]urma, Wargašša, […], […]aššašš[a], Šalitta, […], Šamlušša, Gulpina, Š[ar…, …m]a, Pīša, Pawazziya, […, …]riya, Šīenzana, Waštiš[…]nuanda, […i]šša, Kuwašariya, Uīn[…]a, […]a, Ikkuwaniya, Ḫurniya, […], Ḫadawa[…]a, Ḫurutta, Terumna, N[a…], Ulašš[a], Parminiya, Paršuḫanda, the mountain […], the cities Walin[ašš]a, Iyamma, Wašuwatta, […] Šuplanda, and the river Ḫūlaya. In total: 60[+? …] store[houses].

§38 (iii 34–42) (The cities) […]ḫašš[a], […]anta[…], […]ya, Kuwanna, […], Laḫūrama, Ḫa[…], Ḫaraḫara, Mallita[…], Ḫaršuwa, Tipala, Kurša[n…], Šuwanzuwanna, Tamluta, Pikumi[…], […]mašḫuna, Šiḫarna, Ḫalippaššuwa, Kalašummiya, Ḫūlan[ta]. In total: 34 cities of the storehouse, [of] mixture.

§39 (iii 43–48) After I multiplied the grain again, […] the farmers, also those fields […] let them [s]eal. Only those the population […] They will commit fraud. They kept binding either one or two cubits beyond their ration(?). They drank the blood of the land. Let them not do (that) now. Whoever does those, [let them give] him an evil de[ath].

[234] I follow the interpretations of Knapp (2015) and Gilan (2015: 137-77) for this and the following fragmentarily preserved paragraphs (§36, §37, §38, §42, §43, §45, §46, and §47). However, scholars often leave these sections untranslated in their editions.

§40 (iii 49–54) In the future, whoever beco[me]s king after me, you must impress the gra[in] with your name. Behold, the administrators of the storehouses will [n]eglect you. They will speak to you as follows: "[…] And do not imp[ress] it." […] Behold, th[ey will] subdue you […] not […]

§41 (iii 55–60) […] your […] house … […] store[house]. The administrators[…] grain. One-half … of grain … […] … […] … […] … they will [mul]tiply, an[d …] … […]

§42 (iii 61–63) […] … […]

§43 (iii 64–68) […] … […] … […] they [arr]ived(?) […]

§44 (iii 69–75) [Whoever fr]om now on [becomes king after] m[e], […] … and he will say as follows: "[…]" But you do not listen! […] If [you] harn[ess] the captives, you should compensate the equipment, […] the troop[s]. […] him either to your wif[e] o[r …]

§45 (iv 1–8) […]

§46 (iv 9–14) […] … they do […] *ḫāli*-bread no[t …] … But those, beer (and) wine … him […] they make […] And, […] … Now, from now on […] … behind the dagger in h[is] neck.

§47 (iv 15–20) […] they were frightened by the pain (and) danger. When the father […], the [so]ul that […] from the mouth. [When] the father (and) mother die, […] the brothers [perform] a festival […] from the curse with fight […] were not [… s]oothed. Whatever they will do, […] will happen.

§48 (iv 21–26) [W]hen [after]wards the *karpinattiš* of the mortals […] … began to div[id]e in [the hous]e. They [were] not [frightened] by the pain (and) danger. Therefo[re], they were struck by the god(s). Now, from this ti[me on, …] if he [som]ehow calls on them, (his) living parents, regarding (his) sha[re], because he calls on them with (his) [m]outh to share, they shall abolish (him) from the house and he shall waive his own share.

§49 (iv 27–29) And the matter of blood is as follows: who sheds blood, only (that) which the owner of blood (i.e., the party of the victim) says (will happen): if he says “Let him die,” let him die; but if he says “Let him compensate,” let him compensate. But for the king (there is) nothing.

§50 (iv 30–34) The (affair of) sorcery in Ḫattuša (is as follows): you will purify the matters (hereof). Whoever within the family knows sorcery, you (pl.) must take him out of the [f]amily! You shall bring him to the gates of the palace. Whoever does not bring him, for that man a bad end will come —even in his very own house.

Colophon (iv 35–36) First tablet of Telipinu. Finished.