

# **Changing Mechanisms in the Transfer of Royal Power in Ancient Israel**

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The books of Kings have undergone multiple redactions and editions that have shaped not only the literary form of these books, but also their representation of the concept of kingship. This paper will investigate different models for the transfer of royal power applied in the united and divided monarchies. The starting point for this inquiry is David's oath that his son Solomon will inherit the throne, which establishes a new rule for hereditary succession (1 Kgs 1:29–30). Clearly, royal direct speeches, David's oath included, as presented in the books of Kings do not reflect what the kings indeed said, but rather promote the theological and political ideas of the scribal circles responsible for the Hebrew version of the books of Kings. When the scribes interrupted the biblical narrative and let the king offer a prayer or pronounce an oath, they wanted to underline certain ideas. In order to understand the meaning of David's oath, which introduces a new rule for appointing a successor to the throne, it will be necessary to examine earlier and later patterns in royal succession, understood broadly as the transfer of royal power from one person to another, in the Judahite and Israelite kingdoms. The hereditary and nonhereditary models of succession to the throne distilled from the biblical texts will be compared with models used elsewhere in the ancient Near East. The analysis of the various succession models and their use in ancient Israel will demonstrate not only the differences between the northern and southern traditions of the transfer of royal power, but also the different concepts of kingship reflected in the succession patterns themselves.

## **Accession to the Throne and David's New Succession Rule**

The inaugural discourse, whether of a king or of a president, always has a special value. It often echoes his vision of kingship, nation, and religion. David's oath concerning the succession is not the first royal discourse of his reign, nor is it the last, but it is the first royal discourse delivered in the books of Kings (1 Kgs 1:29–30).<sup>1</sup> By virtue of its literary position at the beginning of the last major narrative unit in the Deuteronomistic History, the oath inaugurates the biblical account of the reign of Solomon and the history of the divided kingdoms. This oath was

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<sup>1</sup> David's first utterance in 1 Kings is a question addressed to Bathsheba: "What do you wish?" (1 Kgs 1:16). English translations of biblical texts follow the NRSV.

	<i>Authenticating clause</i>	<i>Quotation of a previous oath</i>
1:13	Did you not, my lord the king, swear to your servant, saying:  הֲלֹא־אֶתָּה אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאֶמְתֶּךָ לֵאמֹר	Your son Solomon shall succeed me as king, and he shall sit on my throne?  כִּי־שָׁלְמָה בְּנֵךְ יִמְלֹךְ אַחֲרַי וְהוּא יֵשֵׁב עָלַי־ כִּסְאִי
1:17	My lord, you swore to your servant by the LORD your God, saying:  אֲדֹנָי אֶתָּה נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ בַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְאֶמְתֶּךָ לֵאמֹר	Your son Solomon shall succeed me as king, and he shall sit on my throne.  כִּי־שָׁלְמָה בְּנֵךְ יִמְלֹךְ אַחֲרַי וְהוּא יֵשֵׁב עָלַי־ כִּסְאִי
1:30	As I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel, saying:  כִּי כַאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְךָ בַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר	Your son Solomon shall succeed me as king, and he shall sit on my throne in my place.  כִּי־שָׁלְמָה בְּנֵךְ יִמְלֹךְ אַחֲרַי וְהוּא יֵשֵׁב עָלַי־ כִּסְאִי תַחְתִּי

Table 1. The triple repetition of David's oath in 1 Kgs 1.

sworn by a frail king who seemingly fell into a sophisticated trap of court intrigue. Nevertheless, David's oath set up a new succession rule. Before discussing the change in succession practice it introduced, however, it is necessary to explicate the rhetoric of David's oath (Ziegler 2008; Lehmann 1969, 74–92; Greenberg 1957, 34–39; Aitken 2007).

## Oath Language

B. Conklin's (2011) research on ancient Near Eastern oaths cast new light on the elliptic language they employ. The first part of his study treated the various authenticating elements in oaths. He argued that the biblical writers employed as many as five authenticating elements in an oath: raising of the hand, invocation of one or more witnesses, the use of the verb שָׁבַע ("to swear"), the phrase "thus will X do to Y," and the phrase "(By) the life of X." All of these elements served to guarantee the truthfulness of an oath.<sup>2</sup> Applying Conklin's results to our case, the verb שָׁבַע in 1 Kgs 1:29–30 is an authenticating element underlining the truthfulness of the oath that David swore earlier to Bathsheba concerning Solomon's right to the throne. Indeed, the biblical writers repeated the verb שָׁבַע twice in these verses in order to highlight the indisputable importance of David's oath. The truthfulness of David's oath is furthermore underscored by the triple repetition of the oath in this episode, which Nathan quotes to Bathsheba, Bathsheba quotes to David, and David himself

<sup>2</sup> According to Conklin (2011, 13) the biblical authors employed "various authenticating language and imagery that the oath-taker believes to be authoritative and, just, as importantly, language and imagery that the witnesses believe the oath-taker believes to authoritative."

restates (1 Kgs 1:13.17.30; see Table 1). In all three cases the oath is introduced by a clause containing the same authenticating element, the verb *שבַּע*.

Similar clusters of oaths occur, for example, in 1 Sam 20 and in 1 Kgs 17–19, in both cases marking a decisive element in the narrative (Ziegler 2008, 16). Likewise, the triple repetition of a prior oath (originally spoken by David) as well as the authenticating element (the verb *שבַּע*) in David's oath signals that 1 Kgs 1:29–30 plays a crucial role in the succession narrative in 1 Kgs 1–2.

The complex structure and syntax of David's oath, which combines old and new elements in an elliptic fashion, can be clarified by a diagrammatic presentation of 1 Kgs 1:29–30 and a translation that fills in the ellipses:

וַיִּשְׁבַּע הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר  
 חַי־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-פָּדָה אֶת-נַפְשִׁי מִכָּל-צָרָה  
 כִּי כְּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְךָ בַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר  
 כִּי-שְׁלֹמֹה בְנִי יִמְלֹךְ אַחֲרַי וְהוּא יֵשֵׁב עַל-כִּסֵּאֵי תַחְתָּי  
 כִּי בִן אֶעֱשֶׂה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה

The king swore and said:

[I swear] (by) the life of the LORD, who redeemed my life from all adversity, that (כי)

as I swore to you by the LORD, God of Israel, saying

“[I swear by the life of the LORD] that (כי) Solomon, your son, shall become the king after me and (that) he shall sit on my throne instead of me.”

[I swear] that (כי) thus I will do this day.

The biblical author placed David's old oath (in italics) in the frame of a new oath (in roman type). This is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where the biblical authors have inserted one oath into another oath. On the one hand, the restatement of an old oath in a new oath validates David's previous oath;<sup>3</sup> on the other hand, this nesting of one oath within another has rendered the syntax of an already elliptic oath even more obscure. C. F. Keil already in 1876 noted the problems caused by the unclear syntax, specifically the particle *כי*, which occurs three times in the new oath.<sup>4</sup> In his study on this particle, Conklin (2011, 50–52) showed that in David's oath *כי* does not have an asseverative meaning, as is often assumed,<sup>5</sup> but in all

<sup>3</sup> To be sure, a critical reader can ask whether this rhetoric is but a literary device to justify Solomon's succession, since no such old oath appears in 1–2 Sam; see Fokkelman 1981, 353–355.

<sup>4</sup> According to Keil (1876, 21), the first and the third *כי* give special emphasis to the assertion, whereas the second is an introduction to the speech.

<sup>5</sup> Williams (2007, 158 §449) proposed that the *כי* particles in 1 Kgs 1:29–30 have asseverative meaning and that this use of the particle originated in oaths (1 Sam 20:3; 2 Sam 12:5; 1 Kgs 1:29–20; 18:15). A. Schoors (1941, 249), however, disagreed and suggested that the particle *כי* is “basically the same emphatic particle as that in the independent oath.”

three iterations of the oath in vv. 13, 17, and 29–30, it functions as the complementizer to the predicate שבע. Whereas the verb שבע accompanies the complementizer כִּי in Nathan’s and Bathsheba’s quotations of the oath in vv. 13 and 17, in David’s new oath שבע is elided before the first and the third כִּי but retained before the second כִּי (“as I swore”), which introduces a direct quote of the old oath (in italics)<sup>6</sup> within a new oath. A narrative introduction employing the verb שבע as an authenticating element—“The king swore and said”—prefaces the double oath.

Finally, the phrase “who redeemed my life from all adversity” (underlined) occurs elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only in David’s oath in 2 Sam 4:9. Most scholars consider this phrase to be a later addition to 1 Kgs 1:29 (Würthwein 1977, 4), whereby the final redactor sought to ensure that the style of David’s oath corresponded to his typical way of swearing an oath. Y. Ziegler (2008, 115–117) argued that as in 2 Sam 4, so too in 1 Kgs 1 the relative clauses emphasize the LORD’s control over the situation and constitute an indirect rebuke of others—Rahab and Baana in 2 Sam 4, and Bathsheba and Nathan in 1 Kgs 1. This literary link suggests that even though the new oath was extracted from David as a result of court intrigue, it nevertheless has the form of a solemn oath taken before God, who is above human schemes, as in the case of 2 Sam 4 (Noth 1968, 23).

The style of the oath, the triple repetition of an oath formula, and the direct quotation of an old oath within a new oath are literary markers signaling that David’s oath played the central role in the narrative of Solomon’s accession. Furthermore, if the oath was not observed, the oath-taker, David, would be cursed twice, by virtue of the old oath and the new oath.<sup>7</sup>

The features just listed indicate that for the biblical writers, David’s first solemn speech in 1–2 Kings was not only a *captatio benevolentiae* intended to legitimize Solomon’s reign but also a speech act that aimed to bring about an important change in kingship.<sup>8</sup> Speech acts are generally divided into three groups: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary.<sup>9</sup> Perlocutionary speech acts (sometimes called performative illocutionary speech acts), such as a police officer’s declaration that “You are under arrest!” or a judge’s statement that “I sentence you to five years of imprisonment,” do not only seek to inform or convince the listener, for in fact the very words themselves perform what they express.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Although the second כִּי is generally taken to be a marker of direct speech, the ellipsis of the verb שבע (“[I swear by the life of the LORD]”) is not recognized (Ziegler 2008, 115; Cogan 2001, 4).

<sup>7</sup> For discussions of the consequences of an unfulfilled oath, see Conklin 2011, 24–30; Ziegler 2008; Lehmann 1969, 74–92; Greenberg 1957, 34–39.

<sup>8</sup> On the impact of speech acts, see Searle 1999, 150.

<sup>9</sup> A fictitious example can illustrate the different types of speech acts. When Bill tells his friends, “I love Kathy and I am going to marry her,” he performs a locutionary speech act. However, when he proposes to Kathy his speech act becomes illocutionary: “Kathy, I love you, would you marry me?” Finally, when Bill marries Kathy, he solemnly recites his oath and his words become a perlocutionary speech act: “I, Bill, take you, Kathy, to be my wife, I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.”

<sup>10</sup> The most influential discussion is Austin 1975.

Speech act studies thus provide a valuable context for interpreting David's double oath. The importance of oaths in 1–2 Kings in general, and particularly in the Elijah cycle, indicates that the decision of the biblical authors to embed the new succession rule in the language of an oath invested it with power and authority: David's speech was perceived as a performative speech act.

## Succession to the Throne in the United Kingdom

The reflections presented above showed that for the biblical writers, David's double oath was not only a communication of David's will that played a crucial part in the narrative but also an utterance with a performative function. On the one hand, it was the decisive step in Solomon's accession to the throne.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, David's oath underscored the fact that the appointment of Solomon as heir to the throne was not the caprice of a senile king or a result of court intrigue but the fulfillment of an oath taken before the LORD. In effect, the biblical authors placed in David's mouth the succession rule that, as will be demonstrated below, became the standard rule for succession to the throne. David's succession rule, however, is in sharp contrast with the choice of Saul and David and their accession to the throne (Rost [1926] 1982, 63–114). In other words, David's succession rule is not the only one in the Bible (Morgenstern 1959, 322). In the following paragraphs I will explore different succession models used in Judah and Israel.

### Samuel's Prophetic Model

First Samuel 8–12 describes the election and anointing of the first Israelite king, Saul (Jobling 1998, 59–76; Dietrich and Naumann 1995, 380–395). God accepted the people's request for a king, although Samuel contested it in a speech filled with emotive arguments (1 Sam 8). The election of the new king unfolds in 1 Sam 9, which intertwines two seemingly independent stories. The first story describes Saul looking for lost she-asses. The second story describes Samuel's journey to a high place. Both stories converge when Saul's servant suggests that Saul should consult the man of God—Samuel—on the day after Samuel has unexpectedly heard the voice of the LORD informing him about God's election of a new king—Saul (1 Sam 9:14–16). The narrative thus insists that Saul was not intentionally seeking the kingship and that Samuel's proposal caught him by surprise (1 Sam 9:21). At the same time, it is clear that Samuel the prophet did not choose Saul. The LORD was the guiding power behind Saul's election. Only God had the authority to choose Saul as king and to command Samuel to anoint him. The carefully shaped narrative thus excludes the possibility that the people were manipulated by a prophet or by Saul's family. The election of Saul was exclusively in the hands of the LORD and was carried out of the prophet Samuel.

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<sup>11</sup> Obviously the enthronization itself was formalized in the ritual that followed (1 Kgs 1:32–40).

The rejection of Saul and the election of the second king, David, share several elements with Saul's accession to the throne (Jobling 1998, 77–104; Campbell 2003, 167–187).<sup>12</sup> According to 1 Sam 15:11, God regretted making Saul king. Despite Samuel's emotional reaction, God's decision was irrevocable (1 Sam 15:28–29; cf. 8:7–9). Both narratives insist that the LORD was the producer and director of Saul and David's accession to the throne. As in 1 Sam 9:16, so too in 16:1–3 God appeared to Samuel and informed him about his decision to appoint a new king. But in both cases God left Samuel in the dark about who the new king would be. As in 1 Sam 9:16, so too in 16:1 God entrusted Samuel with the execution of his will. In both cases the narratives intertwine two seemingly dissociated human stories that converge at the moment of a sacrifice (1 Sam 9:12; 16:2–5) (Michelson 2011, 115–116). Finally, both narratives use direct speech to indicate whom God had chosen to be his king (1 Sam 9:17; 16:12). By using similar narrative elements, the biblical authors insist that David's family did not scheme to make him king, nor was Samuel allowed to choose his candidate (1 Sam 16:6–7). Samuel's anointing of Saul marked the beginning of kingship in Israel, and the anointing of David marked the end of Saul's dynasty. God acted through Samuel to transfer kingship from the Saulide line to the Davidic line. In sum, both narratives underscore that the succession to the throne was not a hereditary matter, but that the election of the new king was fully in the hands of God, whose will was communicated and executed by his prophet Samuel. In other words, the choice of a new king was exclusively God's: "I [God] will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you" (1 Sam 16:3).

The prophetic model of accession to the throne follows a well-known theological pattern. As formulated by D. Launderville (2003, 25), "the king of the gods commissions the earthly king to rule over a people who belong to the king of the gods; the earthly king accepts and thereby takes responsibility for the well-being of the people. This pattern can be developed into a narrative or woven into another narrative as an element of its plot." A similar concept stands behind the divine election of charismatic leaders and judges. Charismatic leaders such as Abraham (Gen 12) or Moses (Exod 3) were directly chosen by God. Similarly, the office of judge did not pass from father to son, but was determined by divine intervention (cf., e.g., Judg 6; 1 Sam 1–3).

Thus, according to the prophetic model of succession God was the supreme king of Israel and had the exclusive right to choose his king, but David's double oath represents a different succession model. It was no longer God who directly appointed a king; rather, the incumbent king David felt authorized to appoint his successor. David's patrilineal model of succession (discussed in more detail below), however, left some questions unanswered: Does the throne pass directly to the king's oldest living son, or does the king have a right to choose another son as his successor? If the king was frail, could a legitimate candidate mount a campaign to make himself king?

<sup>12</sup> The narrative of David's accession to the throne went through a complicated process of redaction, resulting in a text that contains several apologetic elements (Knapp 2015, 161–242).

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### Adonijah's Campaign Model

The story of Adonijah answers the latter question and presents a different model of accession to the throne than the divine elections in 1–2 Samuel. It combines the hereditary model with a campaign model. Adonijah, being David's oldest living son, felt that it was his right to inherit the throne. Aware of the elderly David's deplorable situation, Adonijah opted for a political campaign to secure the kingship for himself. He succeeded in convincing the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah to crown him (1 Kgs 1:5–10). After a short moment of glory, Adonijah's faction dissolved and he and his supporters were executed (2:13–46).<sup>13</sup> Similar political campaigns are narrated on two other occasions in the Bible. First, Abimelech, son of Jerubbaal, ran a campaign in Shechem to become the first king to govern the Israelite tribes. After Abimelech eliminated his potential rivals, the lords of Shechem indeed made him king (Judg 9).<sup>14</sup> Second, Absalom, David's son, ran a successful campaign to replace his father David, who was forced to leave Jerusalem (2 Sam 15). Several details present in the narratives of Abimelech's and Absalom's usurpation of the throne reappear in 1 Kgs 1. Thus, all three pretenders to the throne belonged to the royal family (Abimelech was Jerubbaal's son and Absalom and Adonijah were David's sons). All three candidates had special prerequisites that appealed to the people (Judg 9:3 stresses kin relations; physical strength and beauty are emphasized in 2 Sam 14:15; 1 Kgs 1:6). All three men ran a campaign to conquer the hearts of the people. The campaign is described in detail in Judg 9:3 and 2 Sam 15:2–6, whereas 1 Kgs 1:5 refers to it indirectly: "Now Adonijah son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king."<sup>15</sup> Each of the three kings assembled a band of armed supporters. Abimelech hired a group of bandits (Judg 9:4), while Absalom and Adonijah formed regiments for themselves consisting of chariots, horses/horsemen, and fifty infantry soldiers called "runners" (2 Sam 15:1; 1 Kgs 1:5). The proclamation of all three kings occurred in a sacred setting (at the oak at Shechem, Judg 9:6; in the context of offering a sacrifice, 2 Sam 15:12; at the stone known as Zohelath, 1 Kgs 1:9). However, none of these campaigns met with success and all three contestants for the throne lost their lives. The literary links created between these three narratives underscore that the campaign-hereditary model was the least suitable model for resolving tensions around succession to the throne.

<sup>13</sup> E. Seibert (2006, 115–122) listed propagandistic elements that the "subversive" scribes used to undermine Adonijah's claim to the throne.

<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed study, see Jans 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also 1 Kgs 1:7.

## David's Patrilineal Model

In light of the crises involving claimants to the throne before and during David's life, it is clear that David's establishment of a rule for appointing his successor was not merely a cosmetic change but a decision that profoundly influenced the nature of kingship. David's oath modified the previous succession models. First, David's oath bypassed the direct divine election of a new king. It was not God who through his prophet appointed a new king, but the incumbent king himself who appointed his own successor. Second, the narrative circumstances surrounding the oath implied that a campaign by a legitimate candidate leading to self-enthronement, as in the case of Adonijah, was not an acceptable way of resolving a succession crisis. David's double oath not only defused the escalating tension around the choice of a new king (1 Kgs 1), but also established precedents for the generations to come. Let us explore David's new succession rule.

### *Patrilineal Succession*

David appointed his son Solomon as the new king and thus, in keeping with David's oath, the accession to the throne was governed by patrilineal succession. I have argued above that David's new succession rule was not the caprice of a senile king but was in accordance with promises given to David attested in other biblical stories. The shift from a prophetic to patrilineal succession model is first expressed in Nathan's prophecy (2 Sam 7). Nathan recapitulates the divine prerogative to appoint judges and kings (2 Sam 7:11a). But 2 Sam 7:11b–12 signals the passage from direct divine election to the hereditary model. God promises that David's offspring will inherit his throne: "I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom."<sup>16</sup> Historical-critical analysis has shown that the pre-Deuteronomistic layer in 2 Sam 7 linked this promise with the foundation of the Davidic dynasty and its continuation. Later Deuteronomistic and post-Deuteronomistic revisions associated the promise with the temple as well.<sup>17</sup> The unconditional promise of an eternal dynasty is reiterated in Solomon's prayer at the inauguration of the temple, which links God's presence in the temple with the dynastic succession to the throne: "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to my father David" (1 Kgs 8:15). The reiteration of the promise forms the central part of two of Solomon's prayers (1 Kgs 8:19.26).<sup>18</sup> Thus, when David's oath is considered in the light of 1–2 Samuel, it does not constitute an abrupt departure from divine rules, but in fact marks the fulfillment of Nathan's prophecy. Moreover, patrilineal succession to the throne mirrors the patrilineal model of succession used to link Abraham's family with Adam and Eve and to

<sup>16</sup> A discussion of 2 Sam 7 is beyond the scope of this paper. In addition to the commentaries, see, for example, Eslinger 1994.

<sup>17</sup> For similar though different results achieved through historical-critical analysis, see Rudnig 2011; Sergi 2010.

<sup>18</sup> A. Knapp (2015, 47–48) argued that the motif of divine election is one the most important motifs in the royal apologies.



validate the transmission of the divine promises from Abraham to his offspring, as documented in genealogies (Gen 4:18–26; 5; 10; 11:10–32) (Dubovský 2008, 284–299, 317–319).

Without entering into the complications of 2 Sam 7 and 1 Kgs 8, I believe these quotations suffice to demonstrate that the biblical authors made clear that the patrilineal succession rule put into David's mouth was in fact the fulfillment of divine promises given to David and in full accordance with the patriarchal tradition. In sum, David's oath transformed the prophetic model of succession into a patrilineal model. From that moment onward the Israelite kingship conformed to a patrilineal biblical tradition in which kingship, like the promises made to Abraham, passed from father to son.

### *But Which Son?*

The incumbent king David reserved to himself the right to choose a new king from among his sons. First Kings 1 addressed the question, Which of David's sons should become the new king: Adonijah, the oldest son, or his younger brother Solomon, chosen by David? Several exegetes, basing their opinions on Adonijah's campaign and his conversation with Bathsheba (1 Kgs 1:5–9; 2:15), concluded with varying levels of certainty that the principle of primogeniture was a general rule governing succession to the throne in Israel.<sup>19</sup> Consequently David's appointment of Solomon was an exception. However, R. Burling (1974, 51–90) gathered evidence proving that in tribal societies the throne did not pass automatically to the firstborn son, and that dynastic election was in fact far more widespread than the automatic succession of a father by his eldest son. A. Knapp showed that this was also the case in the ancient Near East in the second and first millennium BCE.<sup>20</sup> The best piece of evidence comes from the Neo-Assyrian period, when two of the most important kings, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, were appointed by their fathers despite being younger sons. The appointment of Esarhaddon took place before Sennacherib's assassination and was solemnly proclaimed to the whole kingdom.<sup>21</sup> This evidence suggests that even though the eldest son often succeeded his father to the throne, it was not a rule written in stone.<sup>22</sup> The incumbent king could appoint his successor from among his sons at his own discretion. Thus, the ancient Near Eastern societies differed from, for example, Spartan society, in which the transfer of kingship strictly followed the principle of male primogeniture (Griffith-Williams 2011). In ancient Near Eastern societies the principle of male primogeniture was subordinated to the king's right to appoint his successor. Nevertheless, in most cases the chosen son was the eldest son; as T. Ishida

<sup>19</sup> See Wray Beal 2014, 69–70; Leithart 2006, 30; Cogan 2001, 167–168; Brueggemann 2000, 12–13; Šanda 1911, 38; Walsh and Cotter 1996, 7–9.

<sup>20</sup> Knapp presented this research at the IOSOT meeting in Stellenbosch in September 2016 and kindly shared his paper with me prior to publication.

<sup>21</sup> *PNAE* 3/I 1121; *SAA* II 6.

<sup>22</sup> The apologetic discourses issued by new kings points to the fact that the appointment of a new king was often put in question (Knapp 2015, 49–50).

(1977, 155) stated, “it becomes clear that the principle of primogeniture was not decisive, even if it was fundamental.” Applying Knapp’s study to the succession David → Solomon leads to the conclusion that David’s oath decreed for Israel a succession model that was already widespread in the ancient Near East. According to this model, it was the right of the incumbent king to appoint his son as his successor. The story of Bathsheba indicates that the queen mother could influence the choice of the candidate.<sup>23</sup>

Polygamy was a normal practice among kings in the ancient Near East, and thus the second question to be addressed concerns the eligibility for kingship of sons born to royal concubines or as the result of political marriages.<sup>24</sup> Solomon was not just the son of David, he was also the son of Bathsheba, the first-ranking wife. This suggests that a royal successor had to be one of the first-ranking sons, but not necessarily the eldest son. A similar tradition was in practice in the ancient Near East, as reflected in Hittite society, for example: “A son of the first rank only—let (that) son become king. If there is no first-rank son of the k[ing], then a son who is of the second tier—let that one become king. When there is no male child of the king, then she who is a first-rank daughter—let them take a bridegroom for her (and) let that one become king.”<sup>25</sup>

## Summary

Taking into consideration the rhetoric in which the new succession rule is embedded, David’s decision was not an arbitrary verdict but the subject of an oath sworn to God. On the one hand, David thereby bound the succession to the throne with the promise and oath theology, in which prophets played a different role than Samuel had played in the election of Saul and David. On the other hand, the succession rule put into the mouth of David made Israelite and Judean kingship conform to the patrilineal tradition widespread in the ancient Near East during the second and first millennium, in which the king appointed one of his sons to become his successor. However, the successor had to be a son of the first rank, that is, a son of one of the king’s primary wives and not the offspring of a concubine or a political marriage.

## Succession to the Throne in Judah

In the MT, the story of David’s death and Solomon’s succession to the throne opens the books of Kings instead of closing the books of Samuel. The final redactors placed David’s oath, which set up the new succession rule, in the opening

<sup>23</sup> For other examples, see Ishida 1977, 155–157.

<sup>24</sup> Even though the number of Solomon’s wives is wildly exaggerated (1 Kgs 11:3), it still reflects that kings married princesses who never became main wives. Both textual data and archaeological evidence corroborate this practice; see for example Grajetzki 2014, 180–188; Niemann 2006; Schulman 1979.

<sup>25</sup> The Proclamation of Telipinu. For the text and a discussion of succession, see Knapp 2015, 73–117; Beckman 1986, 13–26.

<i>Hereditary succession</i>	<i>Mechanism of succession</i>
Solomon ⇒ <sup>a</sup> Rehoboam	patrilineal
Rehoboam ⇒ Abijah	patrilineal
Abijah ⇒ Asa	patrilineal
Asa ⇒ Jehoshaphat	patrilineal
Jehoshaphat ⇒ Jehoram	patrilineal
Jehoram ⇒ Ahaziah	patrilineal
Ahaziah → <sup>b</sup> Joash	patrilineal
Joash ⇒ Amaziah	patrilineal
Amaziah → Azariah	elective patrilineal
Azariah ⇒ Jotham	patrilineal
Jotham ⇒ Ahaz	patrilineal
Ahaz ⇒ Hezekiah <sup>c</sup>	patrilineal
Hezekiah ⇒ Manasseh <sup>d</sup>	patrilineal
Manasseh ⇒ Amon	patrilineal
Amon ⇒ Josiah	elective patrilineal
Josiah → Jehoahaz	elective patrilineal
Jehoahaz → Jehoiakim <sup>e</sup>	lateral
Jehoiakim ⇒ Jehoiachin	patrilineal
Jehoiachin → Zedekiah	lateral

*Notes*

- a The siglum ⇒ indicates the presence of the formula בְּנֵי תַחֲתָיו PN וַיִּמְלֹךְ.
- b The siglum → indicates that the formula בְּנֵי תַחֲתָיו PN וַיִּמְלֹךְ is not used.
- c The standard note on the burial of the king is omitted.
- d He was buried in “the garden of his house, in the garden of Uzza” (2 Kgs 21:18).
- e The note on the burial of the king is omitted.

Table 2. Royal succession in the kingdom of Judah.

episode of this narrative. Thus, the later editors suggested that by appointing Solomon to the throne, David opened a new chapter in Israelite kingship that would end with the deportation of the last legitimate king, Zedekiah, to Babylonia (2 Kgs 25:7; Garbini 2008, 126–167). Let us investigate whether David’s new succession rule continued to be observed after his death.

Comparing the succession models in 1–2 Kings, one can easily notice a difference between succession to the throne in Judah and Israel. The model whereby God directly chose his king and revealed his choice to a prophet stopped in the South after David’s death. Indeed, David was the last king directly chosen by God, who acted through the last judge-prophet, Samuel. The fact that all nineteen kings following Solomon were from the Davidic dynasty proves that the hereditary model governed the succession to the throne in Judah. As Table 2 illustrates,

<i>Solomon's enthronement (1 Kgs 1:39)</i>	<i>Joash's enthronement (2 Kgs 11:12)</i>
There <b>the priest Zadok</b> took the horn of oil from the tent and <b>anointed</b> Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, " <b>Long live King Solomon!</b> "	Then <b>he [the priest Jehoiada]</b> brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, and gave him the covenant; they proclaimed him king, and <b>anointed</b> him; they clapped their hands and shouted, " <b>Long live the king!</b> "

Table 3. Comparison of the accounts of anointing rituals in 1 Kgs 1 and 2 Kgs 11.

three types of hereditary succession can be distinguished: patrilineal, elective patrilineal, and lateral, with the last of these types being the result of interference by a foreign power.

### Patrilineal Model

The most frequent implementation of the hereditary model in Judah was patrilineal. Patrilineal succession to the throne is normally described with the formula "PN his son succeeded him as king"  $\text{PN בְּנוֹ תַחֲתָיו וַיִּמְלֹךְ}$ , indicating that the son succeeded his father to the throne. The exception to this rule is the queen Athaliah. When Jehu killed King Ahaziah, his wife Athaliah seized power and eliminated royal descendants. By ascending the throne, she interrupted the Davidic dynasty and thus became the first and last reigning queen in Judah (Robker 2012, 285–302; Dutcher-Walls 1996, 23–179; Levin 1982, 83–90). Even though her rule lasted for six years, the biblical authors never considered her a real successor to the throne, since Athaliah's story neither starts nor finishes with the typical regnal résumés. This indicates that, according to the biblical authors, Athaliah was not a successor to the throne and that her reign in fact was viewed as an interregnum. First, the account of Ahaziah's reign does not conclude with a typical regnal résumé, and the formula  $\text{PN בְּנוֹ תַחֲתָיו וַיִּמְלֹךְ}$  is missing. Thus, the succession Ahaziah → (Athaliah) → Joash did not follow normal procedure and may be described as a case of interrupted or delayed patrilineal succession. Second, the biblical text creates a link between the enthronement of Joash and that of Solomon. The repetition of an anointing ritual indicates that the Davidic dynasty had to be formally re-established after Athaliah's interregnum (Table 3).

### Elective Patrilineal Model

Deviations from the ideal patrilineal model are marked by the intervention of the people of Judah in the procession of electing a new king.<sup>26</sup> The people's election and confirmation of the king had precedents in the coronation of Saul and David, but it departed from David's rule for succession. Nevertheless, because each of

<sup>26</sup> In Mesopotamia, we have a different dynamic. The incumbent king made the people swear loyalty to the king he had appointed (SAA II 6); see also Lauinger 2012.

the royal candidates elected by the people of Judah was the son of the previous king, the successions determined by election conform to the general principle of patrilineal succession.

The people of Judah intervened in the succession process for the first time shortly after the elimination of the queen Athaliah. The Judean king Amaziah attempted to invade Israel, but the Israelite king Joash defeated him and looted Jerusalem. Amaziah's absurd aspirations and the destruction of Jerusalem sparked off a rebellion in the city. Amaziah had to escape to Lachish, where he was assassinated. The account of his reign closes with an unusual formula: "All the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king to succeed his father" (2 Kgs 14:21) (Sweeney 2007, 366–377). A similar intervention occurred after the conspiracy against Amon. After he was assassinated, the people of the land made Josiah king (2 Kgs 21:23–24). Lastly the people of the land intervened after Josiah had died on the battlefield. They anointed Jehoahaz king in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 23:30).<sup>27</sup>

Despite these interventions in the succession process we can still classify them as examples of the patrilineal model, since Azariah was the son of Amaziah, Josiah was the son of Amon, and Jehoahaz was the son of Josiah. In all these cases the stereotyped formula  $\text{בְּנוּ תַחֲתָיו PN וַיִּמְלֹךְ}$  was replaced by a *hiphil* form of the verb  $\text{מִלַּךְ}$ .<sup>28</sup>

### Imposition and Lateral Hereditary Model

The patrilineal succession was disrupted after Josiah's death. The people of the land placed Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah and his wife Hamutal, on the throne, but Pharaoh Neco removed him after three months. Neco appointed Eliakim, a step-brother of Jehoahaz, as the new king and changed his name to Jehoiakim. The formula of transition was altered to reflect these circumstances: "Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah"  $\text{וַיִּמְלֹךְ פְּרָעָה נְכוּהַ אֶת־אֱלִיאִקִּים בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ תַחַת יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ אָבִיו}$  (2 Kgs 23:34). The fact that Neco appointed Jehoiakim to succeed Josiah indicates that the pharaoh did not recognize the choice of the people of the land. Therefore, from Neco's perspective, the dynastic line was Josiah → Jehoiakim, and not Josiah → Jehoahaz → Jehoiakim. Once the Babylonians started controlling Judah, Jehoiakim changed allegiance a few times. Despite the difficult political situation, Jehoiakim remained in power for eleven years. His son Jehoiachin succeeded him according to the patrilineal model.

When the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, Jehoiachin surrendered and was deported to Babylonia. Nebuchadnezzar installed Josiah's

<sup>27</sup> For possible meanings of the phrases "all Israel/Judah" and "the people of the land" see Ishida 1988, 98–101; Cogan and Tadmor 1988, 129; Hobbs 1985, 182.

<sup>28</sup> Ishida (1988, 97) calls these cases of succession to the throne "*wayyamlikû*-type foundations." A *hiphil* form of the verb  $\text{מִלַּךְ}$  also appears in the narrative of Joash's coronation (2 Kgs 11:12), but the succession Ahaziah → Joash, despite its interruption by the reign of Athaliah, follows the ideal patrilineal succession model and not the elective patrilineal model.

son Mattaniah on the throne and changed his name to Zedekiah. Since Zedekiah was a blood brother of Jehoahaz, Nebuchadnezzar indirectly restored the Josiah-Hamutal lineage that pharaoh Neco had rejected. The kingship in Judah virtually ceased with the deportation of Zedekiah. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah to rule over Judah. Describing this event, the biblical author avoided the *hiphil* form of מלך, “to make [someone] king,” and used the *hiphil* form of פקד, “to appoint,” to indicate that Gedaliah was not a king.

## Summary

The biblical narratives suggest that the patrilineal model introduced in David’s oath became a normal practice in the South. In this model the successor to the throne was from the royal family, and it makes sense to conclude that the incumbent king appointed and confirmed his son as the new king. In cases when the incumbent king was killed or exiled and could not appoint a new king, the people were authorized to appoint a new king from among the sons of the previous king. In such cases the succession to the throne combined a patrilineal model with a lateral hereditary model, as the kingship was transferred from one brother to another of the same generation. However, invaders such as the Egyptian pharaoh Neco or the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar could usurp the privilege to appoint a new king.

## Succession to the Throne in Israel

Given the long-lasting and stable Davidic dynasty that occupied the throne in Jerusalem, one can rightly raise a question concerning the legitimacy of kingship in Israel, where a series of dynasties ruled. On the one hand, later biblical authors considered the foundation of the Northern Kingdom a split caused by the foolishness and arrogant behavior of Solomon’s son Rehoboam (1 Kgs 11–12); on the other hand they branded Jeroboam, the founder of a new dynasty, as an idolatrous king who led Israel astray (1 Kgs 13–14).<sup>29</sup>

### Legitimization of Jeroboam’s Dynasty

Despite this negative evaluation of the Northern Kingdom and its founder Jeroboam, there are important linguistic and thematic elements proving that the succession David → Solomon → Jeroboam was in accordance with the accession and succession rules applied to Saul and David in the books of Samuel.

First, the transfer of the kingship to Jeroboam and the foundation of a new dynasty in the North (1 Kgs 11–12) displays several thematic similarities with the transfer of kingship from Saul to David (1 Sam 15–16) (Moore and Kelle 2011, 291–333). In both cases prophets—Samuel and Ahijah, respectively—played a decisive role in the transfer of kingship. In both cases the decision to transfer the

<sup>29</sup> For the historical background and a discussion of the sources, see Finkelstein 2013.

kingship was made by God, who was motivated by the misbehavior of Saul and Rehoboam, respectively. The prophet Ahijah, furthermore, assured Jeroboam that God would build him a dynasty as he did for David (the house of Jeroboam; cf. 1 Kgs 11:38). So Ahijah transferred to Jeroboam not only the kingship but also the promises given to David. These motifs prove that the transfer of kingship from Solomon to Jeroboam followed a succession pattern attested in 1–2 Samuel. In other words, if the legitimacy of Jeroboam's claim to kingship is questioned, then the legitimacy of David's accession to the throne after Saul must also be questioned.

Moreover, the biblical authors used the verb סָבַב, "to turn," and the derived noun סִבָּה, "turning," to describe the transfer of the kingship from Solomon to Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:15). P. Machinist's (1995) study on the vocabulary employed for describing the transfer of kingship in 1 Kgs 2:15, 12:15, and 1 Chr 12:24 shows that the verb סָבַב and the noun סִבָּה indicate a "turning" of something from one situation or owner to another.<sup>30</sup> Citing words in Sumerian (*BALA*), Akkadian (*palū*), and Arabic (*dawla*) that have a similar meaning, Machinist (1995, 108) concluded that the verb סָבַב and the noun סִבָּה are used

for unexpected occurrences, breaks in the normal order of events as regulated by human social practice or reason, which involve thus some kind of violent social disruption: Saul not succeeded by his son, Jonathan, but by David; David not succeeded by his older son, Adonijah, but by his younger, Solomon; and Rehoboam not easing the burdens on Israel, but increasing them and so losing half his kingdom and more.

Even though the foundation of the northern dynasty was contested in 1 Kgs 13–14, the employment of a generally known concept of "transfer" to explain the event points to the intervention of God in kingship, a way of accounting for "something not normally expected to be done following human convention" (119). In sum, the choice of the technical terms סָבַב and סִבָּה is another element proving that some biblical authors considered the succession David → Solomon → Jeroboam legitimate.

Finally, the Deuteronomistic language employed in 1 Kgs 1–11 further confirms the legitimacy of the succession of David → Solomon → Jeroboam (Tables 4, 5). A Deuteronomistic insertion in the form of David's last will (1 Kgs 2:2–4<sup>31</sup>) instituted standards and limits for David's successors. These rules were confirmed on a few later occasions (1 Kgs 3:14; 6:12–13; 8:25.58; 9:4–9). When Solomon deviated from the way of God's commandments, God announced the consequences of his unfaithfulness in language that recalled David's testament (1 Kgs 11:11–13). Likewise, when the prophet Ahijah transferred the kingship from Solomon to Jeroboam, the biblical authors let him use Deuteronomistic language similar to that of David's testament. In sum, the key question concerning royal succession in Israel—Was Jeroboam's ascent to the throne legitimate?—can

<sup>30</sup> See Num 36:6–7; 2 Sam 3:12; 14:20; Jer 6:12; Hab 2:16.

<sup>31</sup> On the propagandistic goal of this speech, see Seibert 2006, 132–135.

David → Solomon	
<i>David's testament</i> (1 Kgs 2:3–4)	<i>God's speech to Solomon</i> (1 Kgs 11:11–13)
<p>... וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת־מִשְׁמַרְתּוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכְתּוֹ בְּדַרְכָּיו לְשֹׁמֵר וְחֻקָּתָיו מִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְעֵדוּתָיו כְּכַתּוּב בַּתּוֹרָה מִשֶּׁה לִּמְעַן תִּשְׁכַּל אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה וְאֵת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תִּפְנֶה שָׁם: לִמְעַן יִקָּים יְהוָה אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עָלֶיךָ לֵאמֹר אִם־יִשְׁמְרוּ בְּנֵיךָ אֶת־דְּרֹכֶיךָ לְלַכְתּוֹ לִפְנֵי בָּאֵמֶת בְּכָל־לִבָּבְכֶם וּבְכָל־נַפְשׁוֹם לֵאמֹר לֹא־יִכָּרֵת לְךָ אִישׁ מֵעַל כִּסֵּא יִשְׂרָאֵל</p>	<p>יַעַן אֲשֶׁר הִיְתָה־זֹאת עִמָּךְ וְלֹא שָׁמַרְתָּ בְּרִיתִי וְחֻקָּתִי אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי עָלֶיךָ קִרְעַתְּ אֶקְרַע אֶת־הַמַּמְלָכָה מֵעָלֶיךָ וְנָתַתִּיהָ לְעַבְדֶּךָ: אֵדִי־בִימֶיךָ לֹא אֶעֱשֶׂנָה לְמַעַן דָּוִד אָבִיךָ מִיַּד בְּנֶךָ אֶקְרַעְנָה: רַק אֶת־כָּל־הַמַּמְלָכָה לֹא אֶקְרַע שְׁבֵט אֶחָד אֵתְּנוּ לְבְנֶךָ לְמַעַן דָּוִד עַבְדִּי וְלִמְעַן יְרוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר בְּחַרְתִּי</p>
<p>... and keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn. Then the LORD will establish his word that he spoke concerning me: "If your heirs take heed to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail you a successor on the throne of Israel."</p>	<p>Since this has been your mind and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and give it to your servant. Yet for the sake of your father David I will not do it in your lifetime; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. I will not, however, tear away the entire kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.</p>

Table 4. Comparison of Deuteronomistic passages in the account of the succession of Solomon.

be answered positively. The partial transfer of kingship from the south to the north was in accordance with the succession rules applied in the books of Samuel and with David's last will.

Since the transfer of kingship from Solomon to Jeroboam followed the pattern that the prophet Samuel used for transferring kingship from Saul to David and partially followed the pattern of the succession from David to Solomon, the next question concerning kingship in Israel regards the succession to the throne after Jeroboam. Did Israel follow a pattern similar to Judah?<sup>32</sup>

## Hereditary Models

Despite the numerous twists that kingship in Israel underwent, the patrilineal model was the basic model of succession to the throne in Israel as well. In Israel

<sup>32</sup> See also Bodner 2012; Haran 1967.



Solomon → Jeroboam (Ahijah's prophecy)		
<i>Negative evaluation of Rehoboam</i> (1 Kgs 11:33)	<i>Rules for Jeroboam</i> (1 Kgs 11:38)	
<p>יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָזַבֹנִי וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לַעֲשֵׂתֵרֶת אֱלֹהֵי צִדְיָן לַכְּמוֹשׁ אֱלֹהֵי מוֹאָב וּלְמַלְכָם אֱלֹהֵי בְנֵי-עַמּוֹן וּלְאֵי-הַלְכוּ בְּדַרְכֵי לַעֲשׂוֹת הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי וְחֻקֹּתַי וּמִשְׁפָּטַי כְּדָוִד אָבִיו:</p>	<p>וְהָיָה אִם-תִּשְׁמַע אֶת- כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶה וְהִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכֵי וְעָשִׂיתָ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי לְשִׁמּוֹר חֻקֹּתַי וּמִצְוֹתַי כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה דָּוִד עַבְדִּי וְהָיִיתִי עִמָּךְ וּבְנִיתִי לְךָ בַּיִת-נִצָּאֵן כְּאֲשֶׁר בְּנִיתִי לְדָוִד וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל</p>	<p>If you will listen to all that I command you, walk in my ways, and do what is right in my sight by keeping my statutes and my command- ments, as David my servant did, I will be with you, and will build you an endur- ing house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you.</p>

Table 5. Comparison of Deuteronomistic passages in the account of the succession of Jeroboam.

as in Judah the stereotyped formula  $PN$  בְּנוֹ תַחֲתָיו וַיִּמְלֹךְ describes the succession to the throne within a given dynasty.<sup>33</sup> There is one exception. Ahaziah died because he consulted Baal-zebul. His closing regnal résumé is slightly different: “Jehoram succeeded him as king” יהוֹרָם תַּחֲתָיו (2 Kgs 1:17). The MT omits the word “his son” and LXX adds “son of Ahab” as in 2 Kgs 8:16, since Ahaziah’s successor Jehoram was not Ahaziah’s son but his brother (Stade and Schwally 1904, 181). So the modified formula describes a hereditary succession that was not lineal but lateral. The same formula is applied also to the succession of the Aramean kings Ben-Hadad → Hazael in 2 Kgs 8:15. Hazael was not a son of Ben-Hadad; on the contrary, he killed Ben-Hadad and usurped the throne (Hasegawa 2012, 76–77).

The total number of kings in each of the two kingdoms, beginning with Rehoboam and Jeroboam, amounted to nineteen. While in Judah the stereotyped formula  $PN$  בְּנוֹ תַחֲתָיו describing the patrilineal succession is applied to sixteen kings, in Israel it is applied to only eight kings. Comparing the occurrences of this formula in the north and in the south, we can conclude that both in the north and in the south, the formula designates patrilineal succession. Let us explore the details of this model by exploring the background of the formula.

In all sixteen cases in Judah, the successor to the throne was a son of the incumbent king. The concluding formula “ $PN_1$  slept with his ancestors (and they buried him in the city of David). Then his son  $PN_2$  succeeded him” shows that the previous king died naturally and his son succeeded him on the throne. The same is true for all cases where the formula  $PN$  בְּנוֹ תַחֲתָיו וַיִּמְלֹךְ is applied to northern

<sup>33</sup> A similar structure occurs in the Mesha stele, KAI 181:2–3.

kings. Since the formula is usually linked with the natural death of the previous king, the incumbent king would have had the opportunity to appoint and confirm his son as his successor, as David did. Therefore, the formula indicates the classic model of patrilineal succession to the throne, in which the incumbent king appointed and confirmed one of his sons as his successor before dying of natural causes.

In 1–2 Kings, as discussed above, when a king died prematurely or was removed, the biblical authors always mentioned who appointed a new king. Thus, for example, when Amon fell victim to a conspiracy, the people of the land intervened, eliminated the conspirators, and appointed a new king, Josiah (2 Kgs 21:24). In sum, in three cases the people intervened and appointed a new king, and in two cases a foreign king deposed a Judean king and appointed a new king willing to comply with the invaders' policy. But in all these instances the formula *בְּנוֹ תַחֲתָיו* PN *וַיִּמְלֹךְ* is missing. Because in each of these cases a king died suddenly or was exiled, he obviously could not appoint his successor as David did, and the biblical authors thus indicated who appointed the new king. Accordingly, the Bible mentions two “institutions” in addition to the incumbent king that could appoint and confirm a new king: the people (three times) and a foreign king (twice).<sup>34</sup>

There are, however, two exceptions to this rule, one in the South and one in the North. The first exception is the case of the succession Joash → Amaziah in Judah: “he died and he was buried with his ancestors in the city of David; then his son Amaziah succeeded him” *וַיָּמָת וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ עִם־אֲבוֹתָיו בְּעִיר דָּוִד וַיִּמְלֹךְ אֲמַצְיָה בְּנוֹ תַחֲתָיו* (2 Kgs 12:22). Yet according to 2 Kgs 12:21, the Judean king, Joash, was killed in a conspiracy organized by his servants Jozacar and Jehozabad. So why did the biblical authors employ the fixed formula? A similar problem is represented by the succession Ahab → Ahaziah in Israel. Ahab, as reported by the biblical authors, died in battle. But the Bible used a traditional formula: “So Ahab slept with his ancestors; and his son Ahaziah succeeded him” *וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֲחָאָב עִם־אֲבוֹתָיו וַיִּמְלֹךְ אַחַזְיָהוּ* (1 Kgs 22:40), as if he had died a natural death and his son Ahaziah succeeded him. Therefore, in the cases of Joash → Amaziah and Ahab → Ahaziah, the people of the land did not intervene, nor did any of the usurpers become a new king. What, then, is the meaning of the formula *בְּנוֹ תַחֲתָיו* PN *וַיִּמְלֹךְ*?

The formula is not only applied to kings of Israel and Judah. The biblical authors also employed it to describe the succession to the throne among the Ammonites (2 Sam 10:1), the Arameans (2 Kgs 13:24), and the Assyrians (2 Kgs 19:37). In the first two cases the formula is preceded by a note about the death of the previous king. The Bible, however, also uses the stereotypical phrase “his son Esarhaddon succeeded him” *וַיִּמְלֹךְ אֶסְרַחְדָּן בְּנוֹ תַחֲתָיו* to describe the succession Sennacherib → Esarhaddon (2 Kgs 19:37). But Sennacherib was assassinated and did not die a natural death (Frahm 2014, 218–220; Parpola 1980). In 1–2 Kings, when an old king died prematurely, it was because he was either assassinated or removed, and the biblical authors either avoided the stereotypical phrase *בְּנוֹ תַחֲתָיו* PN *וַיִּמְלֹךְ*

<sup>34</sup> Other potential kingmakers include the commander of an army, high officials, leading men of the capital city, a foreign conqueror, or the people of the land (Ishida 1988, 105).

or indicated who appointed a new king. So why was this formula applied to Sennacherib → Esarhaddon? According to Assyrian royal annals, before his death Sennacherib had appointed Esarhaddon as his successor, even though he was not Sennacherib's oldest son. Esarhaddon had to fight his brothers to ensure that the kingdom remained in his hands (RIMA 4 1 i 8–ii 11). Consequently, the use of the formula in this case did not mean that the oldest son had automatically become the new king, nor that the incumbent king appointed his successor on his deathbed; rather, it meant that the previous king had appointed his successor from among his sons before he died, whether by a natural or violent death. This explains the exceptional use of the formula in the cases of Joash → Amaziah and Ahab → Ahaziah.

In sum, the most popular succession model in Judah and Israel was patrilineal succession to the throne. As stated earlier in this study, patrilineal succession was maintained by following the rule put into the mouth of David: the incumbent king had the right to appoint his successor before he died. When the king himself could not appoint his successor, other authoritative bodies intervened.

## Prophetic Model

In addition to hereditary succession models, other models of accession to the throne were practiced in the Northern Kingdom. The old model of the transfer of kingship from one dynastic line to another through the active involvement of a prophet was applied twice. The prophet Ahijah transferred kingship over the northern tribes from Rehoboam to Jeroboam by validating the succession Solomon → Jeroboam (1 Kgs 11:36), as discussed above. The end of Omri's dynasty and the anointing of Jehu followed a similar pattern. God revealed to Elijah his intention to transfer the kingship from Omri's dynasty to Jehu (1 Kgs 19:16), but it was accomplished by Elisha's servant (2 Kgs 9:1–10).

Another version of the prophetic model is characterized by prophecies of doom. Here the prophet is not directly involved in the enthronement of a new king, as was the case in the previous model. Rather, the prophet predicts the end of a dynasty. Consequently, the transfer of kingship from one dynasty to another represents the fulfillment of a prophecy. The prophet Ahijah predicted that the dynasty of Jeroboam I would end with Nadab (1 Kgs 12:15). His prophecy came true in the coup d'état led by Baasha (1 Kgs 15:27–30). Similarly, the prophet Jehu predicted the end of Baasha's short-lived dynasty, which was terminated by Zimri, who conspired against Baasha's son Elah and eliminated the whole royal family (1 Kgs 16:1–13). Ahaziah's death is also explained as the fulfillment of a prophecy. When Ahaziah became ill he consulted Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron. Elijah reproached him and predicted that Ahaziah would die of his disease (2 Kgs 1:16–17). Furthermore, when the general Jehu killed King Jehoram, the assassination was explained as the fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy (1 Kgs 21:19–21; 2 Kgs 9:25). Finally, the end of Jehu's dynasty was predicted by the prophet Elisha. Thus, Shallum's conspiracy and assassination of Zechariah was interpreted as the fulfillment of Elisha's prophecies of doom (2 Kgs 10:30; 15:12). In sum, while prophetic involvement in the transfer of kingship from one dynastic line to

the other virtually disappeared after Solomon in Judah, in Israel this model of accession to the throne was still used and assumed two different forms: the prophet was directly involved in the appointment of a new king, or the prophet predicted the end of a given dynasty.

### Elective Nonhereditary Model

Another model of accession to the throne attested in Israel was the election and enthronement of a new king by the people. Jeroboam was not only elected by the prophet Ahijah but also chosen and confirmed by the people (1 Kgs 12:20), similar to David. Likewise, all Israel made Omri king after hearing about the conspiracy of Zimri (1 Kgs 16:16). Zimri, acknowledging his desperate situation, committed suicide. So Omri was actually made king before the death of the previous king. The people did not recognize Zimri as a legitimate king, although the biblical authors treated him as a king by granting him the standard opening and closing regnal résumés.

Thus the Israelite version of the elective model is different from that applied in Judah. In Judah, the election of the candidate respected the royal lineage. Since the king elected by the people was a son of the previous king, we can speak about an elective patrilineal system in the Southern Kingdom. In the two cases of elective succession to the throne in Israel, the hereditary system was bypassed, since neither of the candidates chosen was a son of the previous king.

### Usurpation Model

In the South, all of the kings who occupied the throne after Rehoboam belonged to the Davidic dynasty. In the North, however, the kingship was transferred several times from a reigning king to an unrelated individual. Practically all of these changes of regime were associated with violence, or with a rebellion as peaceful as a rebellion could be (Ishida 1977, 171–179). Altogether, there were nine regime changes in the North (Table 6). Only five of the usurper-kings—Jeroboam I, Baasha, Omri, Jehu, and Menahem—managed to establish even a short-lived dynasty, while the remaining four—Zimri, Shallum, Pekah, and Hoshea—each fell victim to another usurper. The longest dynasty was that of Jehu, amounting to five kings, and the shortest-reigning usurper was the general Tibni, a rival of Omri, who was not even considered a king by the biblical authors. A change of regime was most frequently accomplished by a coup d'état.<sup>35</sup> Seven such coups are recorded, and they are usually expressed by means of a stereotyped formula or a narrative.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Most coups d'état were justified by a prophecy or divine will; cf. 2 Kgs 15:12.

<sup>36</sup> The notice of Shallum's coup d'état provides an example of the key verbs of the coup d'état formula (2 Kgs 15:10): “Shallum son of Jabesh *conspired* against him, *and struck him down* in public *and killed him*, *and reigned* in place of him” וַיִּקְשֶׁר עָלָיו שְׁלֹמֹם בֶּן-יָבֵשׁ *and struck him down* וַיִּמְתְּהוּ וַיִּמְלֹךְ תַּחְתָּיו וַיִּבְהוּ קִבְלָ-עִם וַיִּמְתְּהוּ וַיִּמְלֹךְ (Dubovský 2014, 322–326).

	<i>Usurpers and their successors</i>	<i>Mechanism of usurpation</i>
1	Jeroboam I ⇒ Nadab	<i>Rebellion</i>
2	Baasha ⇒ Elah	Coup d'état (formula; 1 Kgs 15:27–28)
3	Zimri	Coup d'état (formula; 1 Kgs 16:9–10)
4	Omri ⇒ Ahab ⇒ Ahaziah ⇒ Jehoram	<i>Military victory</i>
5	Jehu ⇒ Jehoahaz ⇒ Joash ⇒ Jeroboam II ⇒ Zechariah	Coup d'état (narrative; 2 Kgs 9–10)
6	Shallum	Coup d'état (formula; 2 Kgs 15:10)
7	Menahem ⇒ Pekahiah	Coup d'état (formula; 2 Kgs 15:14)
8	Pekah	Coup d'état (formula; 2 Kgs 15:25)
9	Hoshea	Coup d'état (formula; 2 Kgs 15:30)

*Note*

The siglum ⇒ indicates the presence of the formula בָּנָה תַּחֲתָיו PN וַיִּמְלֹךְ.

Table 6. Regime changes in the Northern Kingdom.

Even when usurpers seized the throne and eliminated the ruling dynasty, the biblical authors indicated that they considered most of them to be legitimate kings by providing them with regnal résumés. Whereas the formula of the concluding regnal résumés בָּנָה תַּחֲתָיו PN וַיִּמְלֹךְ describes the patrilineal succession to the throne, the synchronizing formulas of the opening regnal résumés do not have the same meaning, although they also employ the verb מָלַךְ. The synchronizing formula opening the reign of Abijah can be taken as an example (1 Kgs 15:1): “Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam son of Nebat, Abijam began to reign over Judah” וּבְשָׁנָה שְׁמֹנֶה עָשָׂרָה לְמֶלֶךְ יִרְבְּעָם בֶּן־נִבְט מֶלֶךְ אֲבִים עַל־יְהוּדָה. Despite variations in the synchronizing formulas in Judah and Israel, all of them contain the *qatal* form of the verb מָלַךְ, usually explained as an ingressive *qatal* and translated “PN became king” or “PN began to reign.”<sup>37</sup> However, the synchronizing formula is employed not only in cases of patrilineal succession to the throne (cf. 1 Kgs 15:25), but also in the case of usurpers such as Shallum (2 Kgs 15:13), or founders of new dynasties such as Baasha (1 Kgs 15:33) and Omri (1 Kgs 16:23).<sup>38</sup> A similar synchronizing formula is used in *ABC* 1, but instead of the *qatal* form מָלַךְ the chronicle uses the expression *ina kussē ittašab*, “PN ascended the throne.” As in the case of מָלַךְ, the stereotyped Akkadian formula does not distinguish between self-made kings and hereditary successors to the throne. Thus, the formula is applied to the usurpers Tiglath-pileser III (*ABC* 1 i 2) and Sargon II (*ABC* 1 i 31), but also to Shalmanaser V (*ABC* 1 i 28) and the Elamite king Hallushu (*ABC* 1 ii 35).

<sup>37</sup> For another interpretation see *IBHS* 30.1d.

<sup>38</sup> It is important to notice that the accounts of the reigns of Jeroboam I and Jehu do not start with a synchronistic formula, probably because each was installed as king by a prophet.

Similarly, the *qatal* form  $\text{קָלַל}$  in the synchronizing formula, contrary to the stereotyped formula  $\text{בָּנֵי תַחְתָּי קָלַלְוּ$  PN  $\text{קָלַלְוּ}$ , is applied to any successor to the throne, whether a son succeeding his father, a self-made king, a victorious general who became king such as Omri, or a conspirator such as Hoshea.<sup>39</sup>

## Summary

The succession models attested in Judah and Israel differed significantly. In Israel, there were several different models of succession in practice. First, the old prophetic model was applied twice, in the installation of Jeroboam son of Nebat and Jehu as kings. Second, the hereditary model assumed two forms: patrilineal succession and lateral succession. Third, even though the elective model was in practice in both kingdoms, in Judah it was a special case of patrilineal succession, whereas in Israel the people could appoint a candidate who was not from the royal lineage. Finally, whereas kings were unseated by conspiracies in both Judah and Israel, in Judah the conspirators never took the throne. In Israel, however, seven conspirators became king.

## Israelite and Judean Succession Models in Comparative Perspective

This study has shown that besides David's succession model there were at least seven other succession models in practice in one or both kingdoms:

- The prophetic model, in which God directly elected his candidate and communicated his choice through a prophet, or the prophet announced the end of the current dynasty.
- The patrilineal model, in which kingship passed from father to son.
- The usurpation model, in which the previous king was eliminated and replaced by a self-made king.
- The lateral hereditary model, in which kingship passed to another member of the royal family.
- The elective model, in which the people appointed a new king.
- The imposition model, in which a foreign king removed a legitimate king and appointed his candidate.
- The campaign model, in which the candidate campaigned to win the favor of the crowd.

This list shows that the transfer of royal power in Judah and Israel often followed models common throughout the ancient Near East. Other models of suc-

<sup>39</sup> My colleague W. Mayer informed me that the Akkadian terms *šapāru* in Št form (*AHw* 1171, *CAD* Š/1, 448) and *šalātu* in Dt form (*AHw* 1147, *CAD* Š/1, 240) have a similar meaning. Both verbs mean not only “to reign” but also “to make oneself king” (“sich zum Herrscher machen/erklären”); cf. Blenkinsopp 2013, 172.

cession, such as kingship by marriage, known in Bronze Age Greece (Finkelberg 1991), or matrilineal succession to the throne were never applied in Judah and Israel.

## Prophetic Model

The Bible presents the prophetic model as the most ancient model for appointing a king, used when monarchy was first established in Israel. Despite being the original model of accession to the throne, it did not become the predominant succession model. It was directly implemented only three times (Saul → David, Solomon → Jeroboam, and Jehoram → Jehu), although prophets also delivered prophecies of doom that provided theological clues for interpreting the end of four Israelite dynasties<sup>40</sup> and the death of the Israelite king Ahaziah. The model practically fell into oblivion in Judah, whereas in Israel it was applied in moments of crisis and dynastic instability. Transfers of royal power that followed the prophetic model were deeply marked by military campaigns, violence, bloodshed, and conspiracies. In narratives of prophetic succession, the king is portrayed as a king-warrior, waging wars and eliminating enemies,<sup>41</sup> while the prophets assist in royal military enterprises.<sup>42</sup> The ideal of the king-warrior was not an Israelite invention, but it had always been present in the ancient Near Eastern concept of kingship. Thus, for example, Idrimi, the king of Alalakh, in order to prove himself as a king had to conduct military campaigns. Mesopotamian royal annals are also full of descriptions of bloody military campaigns.

The prophetic model is based on the theocratic conception of Israelite society, in which God was the true king and lord of the Israelite tribes. In terms of patriarchal society, God was the *paterfamilias* who had the right to choose the man who would rule his nation. S. W. Flynn's (2014, 35–72) study on divine kingship demonstrated that the earlier phase of divine kingship was governed by the concept of god as a warrior. Based on his study and the violent substratum of prophetic succession, we may conclude that the prophetic succession model reflects earlier models of divine and earthly kingship. Once the warrior model of divine and human kingship began to wane in Judah, different models of succession took over. But the other models were not immune to violence either.

## Patrilineal Succession Model

In 2 Sam 7:11–12, God through the prophet Nathan promised David in a rhythmic speech that he would build a house for him and give him a successor:

<sup>40</sup> Namely the dynasties of Jeroboam I, Baasha, Omri, and Jehu.

<sup>41</sup> The king-warrior is best exemplified by the first two Israelite kings, Saul and David. The first deed of the newly crowned Saul was the formation of a royal army (1 Sam 11). Saul's entire reign was marked by military campaigns (1 Sam 13–15; 2 Sam 5:2). Similarly, the narrative about David features the new king as a successful military leader before and after taking the throne (1 Sam 17; 18:5.13–16; 19:8; 29:6; 2 Sam 5). The conspiracy of Jehu, another king-warrior, was the bloodiest coup d'état in the history of Israel (2 Kgs 9–11).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. the stories of Elisha (2 Kgs 6–7; 13:14–25) and Micah (1 Kgs 22), etc.

וְהָגִיד לְךָ יְהוָה  
 בְּיָמֶיךָ יַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ יְהוָה  
 כִּי יִמְלֹאוּ יָמֶיךָ וְשָׁכַבְתָּ אֶת־אֲבוֹתֶיךָ  
 וְהָקִימְתִי אֶת־זַרְעֶךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִמֶּעֶד  
 וְהָכִינְתִי אֶת־מַמְלַכְתּוֹ:

Moreover the LORD declares to you  
 that the Lord will make you a house.

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors,  
 I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body,  
 and I will establish his kingdom.

The promise to build a house for David has raised numerous questions about the meaning of “house.” M. Leonard-Fleckman (2016, 242) demonstrated that the “House of David” was originally “a small, geographically mobile political body, with shifting central towns of Hebron, Jerusalem, and Mahanaim.” She convincingly argued that “an early political House of David . . . was defined not by an administrative center but rather by its leader” (81). Indeed, she concluded more generally that Syrian polities, the House of David included, were primarily defined by their leaders and did not necessarily rely on the principle of hereditary succession when choosing a new leader. Thus, names typical of Syrian polities, such as the “House of X” or the “Sons of X,” did not always imply biological succession but rather referred to a polity “whose leadership arises from within the people, and whose leaders and centers could shift over time” (81).

The Deuteronomistic discourse put into the mouth of David evidently presented a different rule for the succession to the throne. First Kings 1:29–30 states that the king and not the people had the decisive word in the succession process, and that the successor should be one of the first-ranking biological sons of the king and not a man selected from the mobile political body called the “House of David.” The rhetoric of David’s double oath underlined the gravity of such a decision. In this way the Deuteronomistic writers used David to bind the succession to the throne with the promise and oath theology, in which prophets played a different role than Samuel had played in the election of Saul and David. David’s succession rule comprised three stipulations: (1) the king had the final word in nominating his successor; (2) the successor had to be his son; and (3) the successor had to be one of his first-ranking sons, but not necessarily the oldest son.

After Solomon’s death, the Judean kings followed David’s new succession rule. Despite turbulent events in which several Israelite kings lost their life, patrilineal succession to the throne prevailed in the Northern Kingdom as well.

A survey of Mesopotamian texts shows that patrilineal succession was also the most widespread model of succession in the ancient Near East. The foundation of a royal dynasty and the promise that it would be eternal was a widespread idea whose origins cannot be located in one region or period (Laato 1997, 263). The importance of tracing royal lineage back to the founders of the dynasty through hereditary succession found its way into genealogies, king lists,<sup>43</sup> and even ar-

<sup>43</sup> Cf., for example, Gen 36:31–39; Sumerian King List i 24–42; Assyrian Chronicle (*MC*



chitecture. An illustration is provided by an inscription of Ninurta-kudurri-ušur, who reigned in the second half of the eighth century BCE in Suḫu, a region between Assyria and Babylonia. After listing his direct predecessors, he claimed to be of NUMUN *da-ru-ū* “eternal seed/enduring lineage” and traced his predecessors back to Hammurapi. His reconstruction of the Akitu temple was intended to guarantee not only his own health and long reign, but also the well-being of his offspring (RIMB 2 S.O.1002.1:3–9). Thus, being able to trace one’s dynasty back to its founder and to ensure that it would extend forward into the future was something to be proud of.

By putting a solemn oath in David’s mouth, the biblical authors expressed a clear rule for succession to the throne—or, from a historiographical point of view, they justified the long tradition of patrilineal succession in Judah. David’s oath not only created links between the royal succession and other biblical traditions, especially the continuity of the patriarchal promises, but also conformed the pattern of Israelite succession to the patrilineal tradition widespread in the ancient Near East. In the end, the Israelites demanded a king in accordance with the traditions of the ancient Near East so that they might “be like other nations” (1 Sam 8:20).

## Usurpation Model

The investigation presented above has shown that the final redactors considered usurpers and other nonhereditary kings to be legitimate successors to the throne. While in Judah conspiracies were quite rare, frequent coups d’état dyed with blood the Northern Kingdom. Out of four conspiracies to secure the throne of Judah, three failed;<sup>44</sup> the exception was the plot to place Joash on the throne, sustained by the priest Jehoiada (2 Kgs 12), but the biblical authors made clear that they did not view this as a conspiracy but as the necessary removal of the illegitimate queen Athaliah.<sup>45</sup> In Israel, seven conspirators, one rebel (Jeroboam), and one general (Omri) usurped the throne. Judged in light of David’s oath, the conspiracies and revolts that brought a usurper to the throne were not legitimate paths of succession; nevertheless, the usurpers were still considered legitimate kings.

The frequency of revolts and usurpations in the ancient Near East demonstrates that the coup d’état, which brought one dynastic line to an end and gave birth to another, was in fact a standard way to gain the throne (Laderman 2013,

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5). The patrilineal nature of kingship is reflected in the list of predecessors referred to as “fathers” and in the concept of the dynasty as the “House of X.” For a more detailed study, see Bachvarova 2012. The impact of patrilineal succession and the concept of the “House of X” have also been studied by Brown (2010) and Schloen (2001), for example.

<sup>44</sup> The conspiracies against Joash (2 Kgs 12:21), Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:19), and Amon (2 Kgs 21:23).

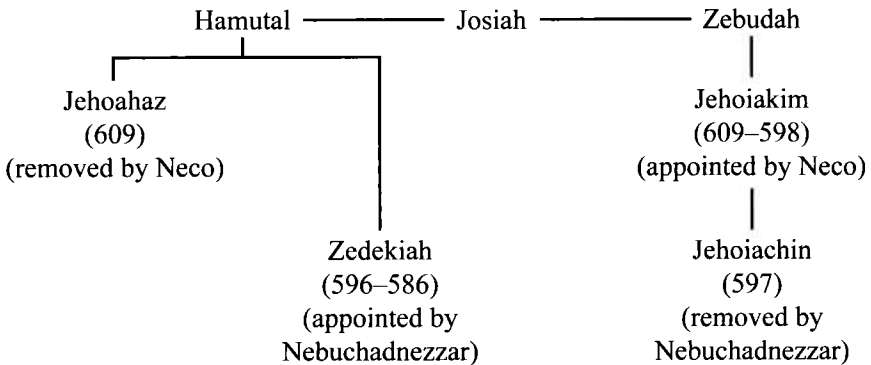
<sup>45</sup> A similar case is the succession in *MC* 5 ii 20–25. The usurper Lullaya is bracketed and the ruler who follows him resumes the previous genealogical line:

Bazaya, son of Bel-bani, reigned 28 years,  
Lullaya, son of nobody, reigned 6 years,  
Shu-Ninua, son of Bazaya, reigned 14 years.

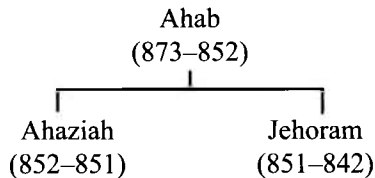
47–49). The Assyrian Chronicle includes a long list of usurpers, calling them “[sons] of nobody who had no right to the throne” (*MC* 5 ii 4). Of 114 Assyrian kings, 17—about 15 percent—were usurpers; some belonged to the royal dynasty while others founded new lines. By contrast, 45 percent of Israelite kings accessed the throne through a coup d’état or rebellion; in Judah, although no individual achieved the throne through a conspiracy, 15 percent of the kings died as a result of conspiracies.

### Lateral Hereditary Succession

In Judah, lateral hereditary succession was enforced twice by the foreign rulers Neco and Nebuchadnezzar. In both cases the formula  $\text{PN } \text{בְּנוֹ תַחֲתָיו}$  is missing.

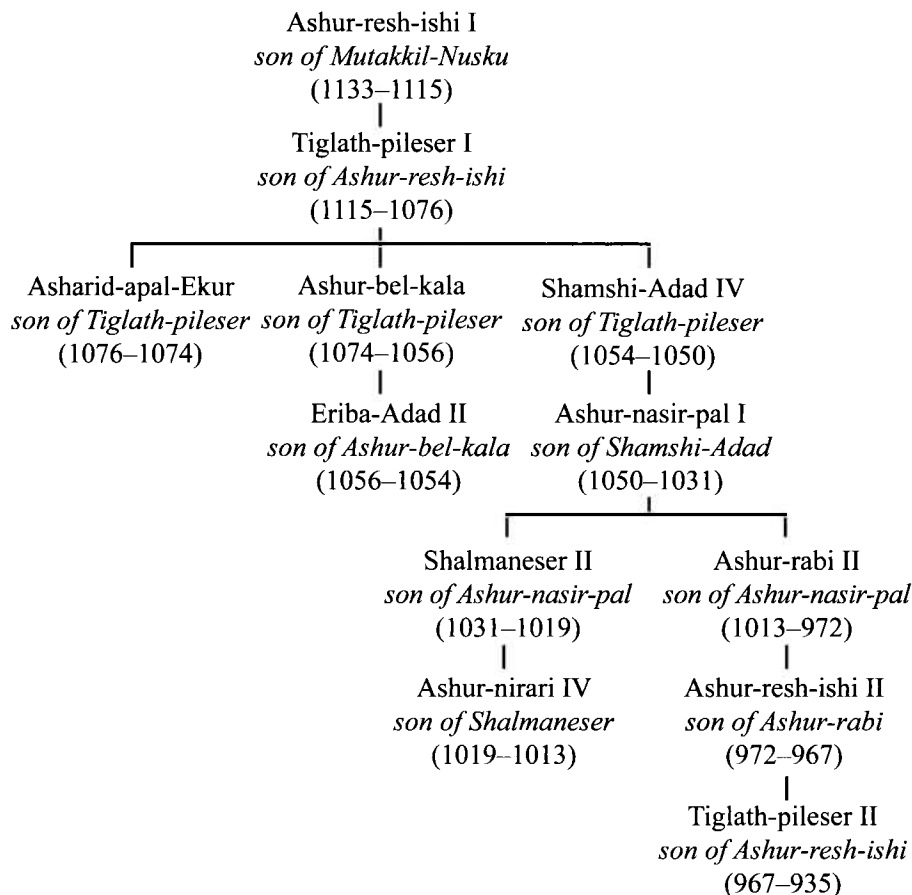


In Israel, a lateral hereditary succession was signaled by the modified formula  $\text{PN } \text{בְּיָמָיו}$ , which omits “his son.” Ahaziah, the first successor of Ahab, was succeeded by his own brother Jehoram (another son of Ahab).



A study of the succession of kings as recorded in the Assyrian Chronicle shows that the parallel hereditary model was the second most frequent model of succession in Assyria. The chronicle lists 111 kings (three others are attested in other texts). For the first 17 kings, as well as 5 kings whose names were written on bricks, no genealogical background is given. Out of 89 kings whose genealogy is recorded, 16 kings reached the throne not through patrilineal succession but through lateral hereditary succession. In most cases (9 kings) the lineage shifts laterally from one of the king’s sons to another. This succession pattern is illustrated by the kings of the Middle Assyrian period (*MC* 5 iii 37–iv 12). On three occasions in this period, the succession passed laterally rather than vertically:

from Asharid-apal-Ekur to Ashur-bel-kala, from Eriba-Adad II to Shamshi-Adad IV, and from Ashur-nirari IV to Ashur-rabi II.



### Imposition Model

The exercise of kingship and the manner of succession in a given kingdom were determined by its level of independence. When major powers such as Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia controlled the Levant, local kings became vassals and their continued reign was made conditional on their loyalty, as vassal treaties often stipulated. B. J. Parker (2001, 249–258) suggested distinguishing between provinces, vassal states, buffer states, and buffer zones during the Assyrian period. According to Parker’s model, the independence of local kings and their power to appoint a successor was circumscribed. N. Na’aman argued that there were different types of vassal kingdoms, and consequently Assyrian intervention in the Israelite succession took different forms during the reigns of Jehu and Menahem (Na’aman 1995; 2003).<sup>46</sup> On some occasions, the ruling powers did not hesitate

<sup>46</sup> Other examples of the approval of a king by a foreign power can be inferred not only from

to depose a local king and appoint in his place a loyal vassal, often a puppet king. Thus, Tiglath-pileser III claimed that he appointed Hoshea to the throne in Samaria: “[I/they] killed Peqah, their king, and I placed Hoshea [as king over them]” (RINAP 1 42:17’–18’). The loyalty of Judean vassal kings became more important after the fall of Assyria in 612 BCE, when Judah became a buffer state between Egypt and Babylonia (Barstad 1996, 69). O. Lipschits concluded that the Babylonian deposition of Jehoiachin, the appointment of Zedekiah, and Zedekiah’s own deposition were part of a premeditated policy to exert close control over a sensitive region.<sup>47</sup> These examples demonstrate that succession to the throne was controlled by the power dominating a kingdom.

The Bible mentions only two cases where a king was imposed on Israel or Judah by a foreign ruler, even though in reality it is likely that Jehu in Israel and Ahaz in Judah held the throne with the approval of neighboring kings. Similarly, after the Israelite king Joash conquered Jerusalem, the freedom of Judean kings (namely Amaziah and Azariah) was more constrained by Samaria than it had been before. Consequently, the concept of kingship and succession varied. It meant one thing for Esarhaddon when Assyria was in its prime (Parker 2011; Machinist 2006) and another thing for Jehoiachin, who was removed by Nebuchadnezzar, who also chose Jehoiachin’s successor.

### **Elective and Campaign Model**

These two models were infrequent in Israel and Judah and do not seem to have parallels elsewhere in the ancient Near East. The elective model presupposes the intervention of the people. The people intervened when a king failed to appoint his successor before he died, but also after a coup d’état, when a king was killed in a conspiracy. The implementation of the elective model differed in Judah and in Israel. In Judah, the people of the land eliminated the conspirators who killed Amon and did not allow any of them to become king. The people’s intervention guaranteed the patrilineal succession (2 Kgs 21:24). In Israel, “all Israel” rejected the conspirator Zimri and made Omri king instead (1 Kgs 16:16). By their intervention the people of Israel transferred the dynastic line from Zimri to Omri. The campaign model was used only once, by Adonijah, and indeed provided the occasion for David’s double oath.

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Ahaz’s reference to Tiglath-pileser III as his father (“I am your servant and son,” 2 Kgs 16:7) but also from the tributes paid by the Israelite kings Jehu (RIMA 3 A.0.102.8:25’–27’’) and Menahem (2 Kgs 15:19–20), as well as others. Assyrian wine lists attest payments of tribute by Israel; see, for example, ND 6212 (Fales 1994, 370).

<sup>47</sup> See Lipschits 2005, 68: The removal of Zedekiah “should not be viewed as merely an act of vindictiveness against Judah or an impulsive punishment for the revolt. The reaction was a carefully calculated act, with specific political goals, and was the first manifestation of the altered Babylonian policy toward Hatti-land. The intent was to remove the Davidic dynasty from power, because it had proved itself disloyal time and again, and to destroy Jerusalem, which had repeatedly shown itself to be a center of rebellion against Babylonian rule.”

## Summary

This study aimed to demonstrate that through David's double oath, the Deuteronomistic writers legitimized a long succession tradition in Judah. Patrilineal succession to the throne was sometimes displaced by other models of succession, but overall it guaranteed the stability of the monarchy and the transmission of promises from father to son. At the same time, this model brought the Judean kingdom in line with Levantine tradition. Fidelity to the traditional ancient Near Eastern model for the transfer of royal power may explain why the monarchy remained relatively stable in Judah as opposed to the Northern Kingdom, where alternative succession models legitimized frequent abrupt and violent changes.

## Abbreviations and References

- ABC* = *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*. A. K. Grayson. Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, 1975
- IBHS* = *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Bruce K. Waltke and Michael O'Connor. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990
- KAI* = *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig. 5th ed. 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002
- MC* = *Mesopotamian Chronicles*. J. J. Glassner. Edited by B. R. Foster. Writings from the Ancient World 19. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004
- PNAE* = *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*. Edited by Simo Parpola et al. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1998–2011
- RIMA* = The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods
- RIMB* = The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Babylonian Periods
- RINAP* = Royal Inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian Period
- SAA* = State Archives of Assyria
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