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The Ancient Throne

The Mediterranean, Near East, and Beyond, from the 3rd Millennium BCE to the 14th Century CE

Proceedings of the Workshop held at the 10th ICAANE in Vienna, April 2016

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Interdisciplinary Research Center in the Humanities and Jewish Studies

Picture on the opposite page:
Reconstructed ivory throne, Salamis (after M. H. Feldman, Communities of Style. Portable Luxury Arts, Identity, and
Collective Memory in the Iron Age Levant [Chicago 2014], pl. 16, drawing: U. Naeh; cf. Johnson, this volume, fig. 2).
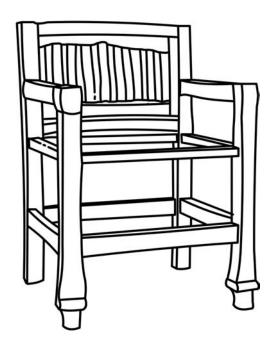
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10th ICAANE

ORIENTAL AND EUROPEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

Contents

Thrones and Crowns: On the Regalia
of the West Semitic Monarchy

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Abstract: Whereas the crown was a central icon of kingship in ancient Mesopotamia, West Semitic conceptions of kingship differed deeply from their Mesopotamian counterparts. In Iron Age Levantine cultures (including Aramean, Phoenician, and Israelite), the throne was a far more potent symbol of the monarchy than was the crown, as is reflected in the iconography, and especially in texts. Phoenician and Aramaic royal inscriptions, as well as biblical texts, show that the preeminent regalia of royalty in the region were not crowns, but thrones and "shoots," or scepters. This paper draws on epigraphic, visual, and literary materials from the Levant, as well as comparative evidence not only from Mesopotamia, but also from Egypt and the Hittite world to emphasize the significance of the image of the throne in constructing the image of the monarch in the Levant.

Keywords: royal inscriptions; Levant; kingship; thrones; Hebrew Bible

The goal of this paper is to draw attention to a difference between West Semitic and East Semitic depictions of the trappings of kingship. In brief, while Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Hittite and Persian sources speak of the crown as emblematic of the king, Levantine texts of the 2nd and 1st millennia BCE speak primarily of the throne and the 'staff,' which will be seen to be a flowering stick. Although the visual depictions of kings complicate this neat dichotomy, we will see that in texts from the Levant, including the Bible, the staff was a powerful symbol representing power and authority, primarily, though not exclusively, royal.

Let us begin with some of the textual evidence from Old Aramaic inscriptions.[2] The royal 'authors' of these texts often made reference to their ascension to the kingship, and the ways in which this is described can be valuable evidence. Some of the references are neutral in this regard; Zakkur, for example, states simply, י֯ן.בעלשמ.והמלכני (l. 3),[3] and Hazael reports, יתי.א[.]הדד.המלכ.ה[י/ו (Tel Dan 4). But some of the other Aramean kings use a more interesting locution. In the inscription that Bar-Rakib, king of Sam'āl (Zincirli), wrote memorializing his father, Panamuwa II, in c. 730 BCE, he reports,

<div dir="rtl">

אנכי.ברכב.בר.פנמ[ו].

בצ[דק.אבי.ובצדקי].[.]

הושבני.מרא[י.תגלתפלסר.מלכ.אשור.

.על.משב]/אבי.פנמו.בר.ברצר.

</div>

And I, Bar-Rakib b. Panamuwa,
Because of the loyalty of my father and my own loyalty,
My lord Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria *seated me*
On the seat of my father, Panamuwa b. Bar-ṣur (KAI I. 215, lines 19–20).[4]

In Bar-Rakib's own slightly later inscription, he proudly says,

<div dir="rtl">

בצדק.אבי.ובצד/קי.

הושבני.מראי.רכבאל/ומראי.תגלתפליסר.

על/כרסא.אבי

</div>

Fig. 1 Detail of ivory inlay (c. 1400–1200 BCE), Megiddo
(© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, and the Israel Antiquities Authority, IAA 1938-780)

> Because of the loyalty of my father and my own loyalty
> My lord Rakib-El and my lord Tiglath-Pileser *seated me*
> *On the seat* of my father (KAI I.216, lines 4–7).

The notion that 'sitting on the seat' represents the assumption of kingship is widespread in the Northwest Semitic and especially Aramaic world, at least into the 1st millennium of the Common Era. An inscription from Tang-e Sarvak in southwestern Iran, in the Parthian empire, declares in an investiture scene:

<div dir="rtl">צלמא זנה זי ורוד נאסיב כורס[יא] בר בלדוש ...</div>

> This is the statue of Worod, who is ascending to the throne, son of Bēl-duša…[5]

In the iconography of the monarchy from the Levant as well, the king is often (but not always) seated.[6] One thinks, for instance, of the famous ivory from Megiddo, or the Egyptianizing ivory from Tell el-Farʿah South, both of which show the king seated and drinking from a small cup (Figs. 1–2).[7] In the 1st millennium, the enthroned figure in the Samaria ivory was now joined by the seated figure at Rəḥov.[8]

In other West Semitic texts from the Iron Age, we find that the imagery of sitting on the throne is combined with another motif: grasping the royal sceptre. Slightly earlier than Bar-Rakib's

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[5] Altheim – Stiehl 1957, 90–93.

[6] Some examples are shown and discussed below. It should be reiterated, however, that my discussion here is primarily a textual one, and only secondarily relates to the visual realm. It is my impression that a full study of the art in various media can corroborate the conclusions reached on the basis of the texts, but many more artifacts would have to be discussed than can be addressed here.

[7] See, for instance, Feldman 2006, 123–124. On the Egyptianizing style, see: Bryan 1996, esp. 60–73. Indeed, even in the Middle Bronze Southern Levant, royal statuary shows the king sitting; see the example from Hazor discussed by Ornan 2012.

[8] Naeh 2015, esp. 85–88.

Fig. 2   Detail of ivory inlay (c. 1300–1200 BCE), Tell el-Far'ah
(© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, and the Israel Antiquities Authority, IAA 1933-2537)

inscription, Panamuwa himself had expressed his thanks to Hadad in an inscription on the skirt of a statue of the god Hadad. There he expressed his rise to kingship in somewhat different language:

גם].[.ישבת.על.משב.אבי.

ונתג.[ה]דד].[.בי]ד].י.חטר.חל]בבה

    I also sat on the seat of my father
    And Hadad placed the sceptre of kingship in my hand
    (Hadad Inscription/KAI I.214 lines 8–9)

The expression חטר חלבבה, restored here, appears clearly earlier in the inscription, but the etymology and meaning of the second word is unclear. (There are half a dozen attestations, but all in this one text.) Based on the context, as well as on parallels in Akkadian royal inscriptions, Hayim Tawil suggested translating the phrase as, 'sceptre of kingship/dominion.'[9] An etymology was suggested by Ron Brauner pointing to the Akkadian *elēpu*: 'send forth shoots, flourish,' thus 'flourishing sceptre.' The comparative evidence discussed here supports these suggestions.

    The same pairing of 'seat' and 'sceptre' is found in Aḥirom's sarcophagus inscription, where he curses anyone who would open his sarcophagus with the curse:

תחתסף חטר משפטה, תהתפכ כסא מלכה

    May the sceptre of his rule be stripped[10]/
    May the seat of his kingship be overturned!
    (KAI I.1 line 2)

As Matthew Suriano notes: "The curses [of the Aḥirom sarcophagus inscription] are primarily directed at symbols of royal power."[11] The staff or sceptre as the symbol of legitimate rule is found in the Bible as well. For example, Genesis 49:10 says, "The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet," and the difficult text in Judges 5:14 (מִנִּי מָכִיר יָרְדוּ מְחֹקְקִים וּמִזְּבוּלֻן מֹשְׁכִים בְּשֵׁבֶט סֹפֵר) seems to refer to 'chiefs' as 'those bearing staffs.' The significance of the image seems to derive from the metaphor of the plant as life and the king as guarantor of

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9   Tawil 1974, 46–47. See also Greenfield 1971, 256; Greenfield 1987, 69.
10   The precise translation is debated; Hoftijzer – Jongeling 1995, 393; Gevirtz 1961, esp. 147 n. 2; Lehmann 2005, 38.
11   Suriano 2014, 101.

Fig. 3   Broken stela of Bar-Rakib, king of Sam'āl (c. 730 BCE), Zincirli
(© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Vorderasiatisches Museum, S 06581; photo: Olaf M. Teßmer)

that life.[12] Other biblical texts related to the monarch too mention the staff or sceptre as the insignia of royalty.[13]

Returning to the world of visual images, both the Tell el-Far'ah and the Megiddo scenes show the same pairing; in both, despite their very different artistic styles, the king is shown sitting on his throne, drinking from a cup in his right hand and grasping a lotus flower in his left.[14] From the Middle Bronze Age, cylinder seals show figures (sometimes standing) grasping a flowering staff.[15] The combination of throne and staff is found in one broken image of Bar-Rakib (8th century BCE), while another stela of this monarch shows him seated, holding the flower (Figs. 3–4).[16] The Ammonite statue of Yarih-'ezer too shows the king holding a lotus flower.[17]

The trappings of the kingship in the Levant were quite constant; this lotus flower on a long stem is apparently the ḥoṭer referred to in the texts.[18] As noted, according to Brauner, Panamuwa

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[12]   Schmitt 2001, 80–82.
[13]   See Psalms 2, 21, and 45, in addition to Isaiah 11, all discussed by Levin 2017, esp. 246–248.
[14]   See the discussion in Ziffer 2002, 18–19, on the Megiddo ivories. In these ivories, the ruler is shown seated on a throne, holding a drinking bowl and a flower. Here and in other Levantine representations, the flower is an Egyptian lotus, which became the conventional flower in throne scenes, a motif that eventually was adopted in neo-Assyrian art. The banquet ivories from Tell el-Far'ah (South) and Megiddo are the first known works of Canaanite art to define royalty by way of the symbolism of an enthroned figure holding a cup and a flower. In Akkadian and Ugaritic, and later in biblical Hebrew, the formulaic expression 'throne and plant' (or staff) stands for exercising kingship. The pictorial formula relays the same message. See also Ziffer 2005.
[15]   Brandl 1996, 9–11; Teissier 1996, 221; Ziffer 2002, 17; Ben-Tor 2007, 148.
[16]   For discussion, see Schmitt 2001, 17–21.
[17]   Recent discussion in Berlejung 2017, esp. 170–174.
[18]   See Ziffer 2014, 131.

actually specifically mentions the 'flourishing scepter.' Thus, the 'sceptre' grasped by Iron Age Levantine kings was a flowering staff, which symbolized their rule.

Within Israel, there are a few depictions of royal figures, but none are completely preserved.[19] A small statue from Tel Rehov is missing its arms, head and legs.[20] A drawing from 7th-century Ramat Rahel shows an apparently royal figure, seated on a throne, hands outstretched, but the drawing breaks off just at the wrists.[21] According to Beck, Ziffer, Ornan and others, another royal image is found among the drawings at Kuntillet 'Ajrud, presumably that of Joash or Jeroboam II of Israel.[22] Again the hands are missing, so Ziffer asks, "Did he hold something in his second hand? A staff? A cup?

Fig. 4   Stela of Bar-Rakib, king of Sam'āl (c. 725 BCE), Zincirli (© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Vorderasiatisches Museum, VA 02817; photo: Olaf M. Teßmer. For the text, see KAI 217)

Perhaps he was lifting his hands in blessing?"[23] This last option seems the least likely. If the depiction here were in keeping with Levantine traditions, then, as far as is known, the king would almost certainly have been holding a flowering staff.

It seems likely that the biblical story of Aaron's flourishing staff in Numbers 17 would then be a reflex of this imagery as well:

וַיַּנַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הַמַּטֹּת לִפְנֵי ה' בְּאֹהֶל הָעֵדֻת. וַיְהִי מִמָּחֳרָת וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה אֶל-אֹהֶל הָעֵדוּת וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מַטֵּה-אַהֲרֹן לְבֵית לֵוִי וַיֹּצֵא פֶרַח וַיָּצֵץ צִיץ וַיִּגְמֹל שְׁקֵדִים.

Moses placed the staffs before the Lord in the tent of the covenant law. The next day Moses entered the tent and saw that Aaron's staff, which represented the tribe of Levi, had not only sprouted, but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds.

There is a natural logic in the idea that whoever's staff flowers is the rightful authority, since through the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, the flowering staff symbolized authority in the Levant. Thus, the fact that Aaron's staff flowered was a recognizable symbol of his rightful rule. Normally, it is true, the authority thus symbolized was royal, but here it represented the elite status of Aaron in the religious realm. As we will also see below, the symbols of royalty and priesthood – within Israel at least – were similar and even sometimes interchangeable.

We find idiomatic use of these images elsewhere in the Bible as well. The pairing of 'sitting on the throne' and 'grasping a sceptre' is found twice in Amos 1, in reference to Levantine kings:

וְהִכְרַתִּי יוֹשֵׁב מִבִּקְעַת-אָוֶן וְתוֹמֵךְ שֵׁבֶט מִבֵּית עֶדֶן

I will cut off the Sitter from the Valley of Aven, and the Staff-holder from Bet 'Eden (Amos 1:5).

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[19]   Ziffer 2014, 138.
[20]   Mazar 2007.
[21]   See Schmitt 2001, 95–96; Ziffer 2014, 143.
[22]   Beck 2000, esp. 180–181; Ziffer 2014, 148; Ornan 2015, esp. 47.
[23]   Ziffer 2014, 148.

וְהִכְרַתִּי יוֹשֵׁב מֵאַשְׁדּוֹד וְתוֹמֵךְ שֵׁבֶט מֵאַשְׁקְלוֹן

I will cut off the Sitter from Ashdod, and the Staff-holder from Ashkelon (Amos 1:8).

Most translations have here 'the inhabitants of' for יושב (the King James version has 'inhabitant' in the singular), but some, such as the NIV, have 'the king.' The parallelism with the תומך שבט, and the fact that this locution is specifically used within the Aramean realm first, support the claim that the יושב is 'the one who prototypically sits,' that is, the king, as it is indeed understood by a number of modern scholars.[24]

To this point we have therefore seen that the symbols of kingship in the Levant, from the 2nd millennium BCE all the way through the 1st millennium BCE, were the throne and the sceptre. As mentioned, in many of the visual images, there is also a 'royal cup.'[25] Although some of the depictions do show kings wearing headgear, none of the Levantine royal inscriptions mention being crowned or a literal coronation as a metonym for becoming king.[26] It may well be that statuary and art better show us how kings actually dressed and presented themselves, but texts, and especially stereotyped and idiomatic texts, can show us what was felt to be most salient by the speakers of the language. The fact that no king says he 'was crowned' means that the crown was not a primary emblem of royalty in the Levant; the use of 'to sit' and 'to grasp the sceptre,' on the other hand, tell us that these were the prototypical emblems of the office.

The same combination appears even as late as the Mishnah. The Mishnah (Sanhedrin 2:5) discusses rules that are meant to protect the honour of the king by forbidding anyone other than the king from using those objects that were meant to be special to the monarch:

אין רוכבין על סוסו, ואין יושבין על כיסאו, ואין משתמשין בשרביטו, ואין רואין אותו ערום, ולא כשהוא מסתפר, ולא בבית המרחץ, שנאמר, "שום תשים עליך מלך" (דברים יז,טו): שתהא אימתו עליך.

One may not ride on his horse, or sit on his throne, or use his staff, and it is forbidden to see him naked, or when he is in the barbershop or the bathhouse, as it says, "Indeed, set a king upon yourself" (Deuteronomy 17:15) – that fear of him be upon you.

This Roman-era text, composed at a time when there was no Jewish king, reflects on what needs to be unique to royal use, and singles out three items: horse, throne and sceptre. As we have seen, this list (with the exception of the horse) does reflect long-standing Levantine traditions of kingship.

When we look outside the Levant, we find that headgear played a distinctive role in the trappings of the king, literarily and visually. Rather than engage in detailed discussions, I will refer only in brief to the relevant data.

In Egypt crowns played a prominent role – the New Kingdom blue crown (*ḫprt*), and the more famous red (*dšrt*), white (*ḥḏt*), and double crowns, among others. From the earliest recorded Egyptian history, crowns symbolized the different roles of the king as ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt.[27] In her survey of Egyptian crowns, Katja Goebs emphasizes the difficulty of separating icons of terrestrial kingship from divine imagery. Interestingly, the 'Ba'al with a thunderbolt'

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[24]   See Paul 1991, 50–51. It is conceivable that this usage is found in the Song of Deborah, as well, in Judges 5:10: רֹכְבֵי אֲתֹנוֹת צְחֹרוֹת יֹשְׁבֵי עַל-מִדִּין וְהֹלְכֵי עַל-דֶּרֶךְ שִׂיחוּ; Schloen 1993, 25–26, translates the phrase ישבי על מדין as "who sit over Midian." Mihăilă 2013, 121 n. 50, objects, writing: "The problem of the former rendering is that ישב על is not attested with the sense 'rule'." But since יושב elsewhere can apparently mean 'the one who sits, i.e., the ruler,' it is certainly possible that ישב על can bear that meaning, as well.

[25]   For further discussion, see: Ornan 2012, 5, 11.

[26]   I thank Liat Naeh for emphasizing this point in this context. See also below, n. 38, regarding words for headgear in Biblical Hebrew.

[27]   Goebs 2008, provides a very thorough discussion of the red and white crowns in OK and MK funerary contexts. For a more general brief survey with bibliography, see: Goebs 2012.

stela from Ugarit depicts the storm god holding a flowering branch; this too shows a homology of divine and human royal imagery.[28]

In Mesopotamia, there is a royal crown that in Sumerian is lexically distinguished from the headdress of the high priest and high priestess. Indeed, in the Mesopotamian world, the crown is an important part of the king's regalia as early as the 3rd millennium BCE. William Hallo summarized the coronation ceremony as revolving around "blessings of relevant patron deities…[and,] in addition, involved the king's assumption of the insignia of the office, or what may be called the regalia, including crown, scepter, [and] staff…."[29] As Claus Ambos observes, "The basic ritual of the legitimation of power is the coronation."[30] In the script for the Assyrian coronation ceremony, we find that the crown plays a major role:[31]

> [*a-di ku-lu-li*] *a-na qaqqad šarri i-s*[*a-li-ú-ni* [lú]*šangû a-ki-a i-qa-b*[*i*]
> *ma-a ku-li-li ša qaqqadi-ka ma-a Aššur* [d][*N*]*in-líl bēlē ša ku-lu-li-ka*
> *1 ME šanāte li-i*[*p-p*]*i-ru-ka*

> [While] he is setting [the headdress] on the head of the king, [the priest] says the following:
> "May Aššur and Ninlil, the lords of your headdress, cover you with the headdress for your head for a hundred years."

In fact, in Mesopotamia, instead of the West Semitic pairing of "throne and staff" found in Aḥirom, Hadad and Amos, among other texts, we find a triad of emblems: frequently in Akkadian royal inscriptions we encounter clauses such as *ḫaṭṭa kussâ agâ ušsatmeḫanni*, or "he (the god) handed to me scepter, throne, and crown."[32] The same triad is seen in the images. To take one example of many, the famous banquet scene of Aššurbanipal shows the king reclining on a royal couch, with the flowering staff in his left hand (as his right hand holds his cup), and distinctive headgear on his head.

Interestingly, however, in the West Semitic Akkadian world, this expression is modified, and at Mari we find *šarrūtum ḫaṭṭum u kussûm* … and *Zimrilim nadnat*, meaning, "kingship, the scepter and the throne…were given to Zimrilim." It seems likely that this modification of the Akkadian formula reflects West Semitic conceptions of the symbols of kingship.

Looking to the north of the Levantine world, which is our focus, we have but meagre information regarding the Hittites. "Unfortunately," writes Yakubovich, "no Hittite script of an inauguration ceremony has been identified so far in the royal archives of Hattusa." In a ritual for a substitute king, however, we read:

> Behold, this one is the king! [I have bestowed] the title of kingship upon this one, I have clothed this one in the [garments] of kingship, and I have put the *lubanni*-cap on this one.[33]

Finally, within the Bible the royal culture of Persia looms very large, and in Persia the crown was the prototypical symbol of the king. The official headgear of the Achaemenids was the crenelated

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[28]   See http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/stela-depicting-storm-god-baal (last accessed 13 July 2019). I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer of this paper for this point.

[29]   Hallo 1996, 199. The central role of the crown in Mesopotamian kingship was argued earlier by Hallo 1966, but see the counter arguments by Civil 1980. Hallo 1996, 197 also observed that Mesopotamian conceptions of kingship differ deeply from their West Semitic counterparts.

[30]   Ambos 2017, 67.

[31]   Transcription and translation from Machinist 2006, 158. The text was published in Müller 1937, 8–9.

[32]   This example from Sargon; Winckler 1894, 2.1:35. As Ziffer 2002, 11–12, says, Mesopotamian kings have their 'distinctive headgear.' But as Ziffer further notes, there is obvious overlap between the Levantine and Mesopotamian images: Mesopotamian plaques, too, show the king holding a plant, "suggestive of a palm frond or shoot … In figurative terms, the palm frond or shoot (*ḥoṭer* in Hebrew) implied kingship"; Ziffer 2002, 13.

[33]   Text cited by Yakubovich 2006, 124.

crown, at least from Achaemenid times through the Sasanians. The coronation ritual of the Parthian kings centred on the physical placing of the crown on the head of the new king.[34] In turn, local kings were crowned by the Parthian king of kings, and Josephus reports (Ant. 20:68) that the king of kings had to give permission to the local kings to wear the tiara upright.[35]

In the Persian-set book of Esther, the royal crown plays a major role. This is also the only book in which the noun כתר is attested,[36] and the crown in Esther plays a prominent symbolic role, although on the head of the royal horse rather than on the royal monarch.[37] It should be emphasized that though earlier Biblical Hebrew has numerous terms for headgear, including headgear worn by kings, none of the terms refers to something worn exclusively by the monarch.[38] Other terms for 'crown' are also potentially instructive; the Persian word תָּג was borrowed by Aramaic and later by Hebrew;[39] the Aramaic word כליל is first attested in P. Amherst 63, in Achaemenid times, and it is not sufficiently clear whether it is native to Aramaic or a loan from Akkadian.

Thus in all the cultures – Egyptian, Hittite, Mesopotamian, and Persian – around the Levant in the 2nd and 1st millennia BCE, headgear played a central role in the presentation and iconography of the king. Only in the Levant is this not reflected in texts. There are hats of various types on some of the Levantine kings seen earlier in this presentation, but these hats are not distinctively royal, and the texts make no mention of these hats as part of what it means to become king.

A word should be said about the biblical data. Von Rad points to the investiture of Joash as king as the single best example of what could be considered a "coronation" in the Hebrew Bible:[40]

וַיּוֹצֵא אֶת־בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו אֶת־הַנֵּזֶר וְאֶת־הָעֵדוּת וַיַּמְלִכוּ אֹתוֹ וַיִּמְשָׁחֻהוּ וַיַּכּוּ־כָף וַיֹּאמְרוּ יְחִי הַמֶּלֶךְ.

He [Jehoiada] brought out the son of the king, and placed on him the *nēzer* and the *'ēdūt*, and they proclaimed him king, anointing him and clapping, and they said, "Long live the king!" (2 Kings 11:12).

The identity of the *nēzer* and *'ēdūt* are unfortunately not known. Yeivin argues that *'ēdūt* here is merely homonymous with the common word for testimony, and that in fact it means 'ornament.' Von Rad, on the other hand, thinks that it is a 'royal protocol,' for which he finds Egyptian precedent; he therefore concludes that "the diadem and the protocol were the two items of sacral and royal insignia, conferment of which constituted the essential act of coronation."[41]

The *nēzer*, on the other hand, is relatively easy to identify; it seems to be a metal diadem that could be worn over a cloth (called a *miṣnefet*). The only other narrative in the Bible in which the *nēzer* is associated with a monarch lies in 1 Samuel 1, where the Amalekite brings Saul's *nēzer* to David. (It does seem strange that a king would wear his diadem to battle.) Two royal psalms also make this association:

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[34] See Wiesehofer 2001, 137, quoting Plutarch; see also Sarkhosh-Curtis 2006, citing classical and Armenian sources.

[35] For more on Persian crowns, see Koller 2012, 240–243.

[36] See Salvesen 1999, 35–46.

[37] For the possibility that the crown was on a human head, based on a retroverted Persian, despite the unambiguous Hebrew (ואשר נתן כתר מלכות בראשו), see Wechsler 1999, 183–185. It should be noted that Iranists are prepared to accept the testimony of the biblical book regarding the wearing of the crown by people other than the king: "Biblical testimony relates a tradition of gifting in the Achaemenid Empire whereby the king might offer a royal crown and robes to an honored and loyal friend. It is possible that the inclusion of the crown on the royal name seals (which, as we now know, were used by administrators at the court) was a reference to this honor having been bestowed upon these administrators. In this case, the crown becomes a reference to the symbolic potential or reality of a non-king acquiring an attribute of kingship as proof of his status as part of the collective identity of the 'Persian Man'." See Garrison – Cool Root 2001, 57.

[38] See Yeivin 1950; Salvesen 1998.

[39] It was borrowed into Arabic, as well. There is a *ḥadith* that reports in the name of the prophet, *al-'amā'imu tījānu l-'arabi* "the turbans are the crowns of the Arabs." For a detailed study of this *ḥadith*, see: Kister 2000.

[40] See: Von Rad 1947, 211–216; translated in Von Rad 2005, 167–173.

[41] Von Rad 2005, 171.

חִלַּלְתָּ לָאָרֶץ נִזְרוֹ בְּרִית עַבְדֶּךָ וְאַתָּה זָנַחְתָּ וַתִּמְאָס, הִתְעַבַּרְתָּ עִם-מְשִׁיחֶךָ / נֵאַרְתָּה ..,

But you have rejected, you have spurned, you have raged against your anointed /
You have renounced the covenant with your servant, desecrating his diadem to the
ground (Psalm 89:40).

עָרַכְתִּי נֵר לִמְשִׁיחִי / אוֹיְבָיו אַלְבִּישׁ בֹּשֶׁת, וְעָלָיו יָצִיץ נִזְרוֹ שָׁם   צְמִיחַ קֶרֶן לְדָוִד,

There I will grow the horn of David, set up a lamp for my anointed one / his enemies
I will garb in shame, but on him shall his diadem flower (Psalm 132:17–18).[42]

More common than an association with royalty, however, is its connection to the priesthood. In
the latter parts of Exodus as well as in Leviticus, priests wear alternately a *nēzer* and a *ṣīṣ*.[43] The
king and the priest, therefore, wore diadems, and these were not specifically royal artefacts.

To summarize in brief, the main contention of this paper can be stated succinctly: in the Egyptian,
Hittite, Mesopotamian and Persian worlds, 'coronation' is an appropriate word for the ascension of
the king as symbolic headgear played a central role in the regalia of the monarchy in these cultures.
In West Semitic Levantine cultures, however, the headgear of the king was not a major part of the
symbolic repertoire of the monarchy; instead, the paradigmatic emblems were the throne and the
staff, and in art, also the drinking bowl. Thus, while in English, 'the crown' stands for the monarch,
this was not the case in the ancient Levant. In fact, here 'the staff' played the same metonymous role.

To conclude, I would like to suggest one connection that seems to be worth consideration: it
is tempting to connect the absence of ceremonial headgear to the presence of anointment, a phe-
nomenon found in West Semitic cultures in Mari, Emar, and Israel, but absent from Egypt and
Mesopotamia. This requires further thought, and ideally, further data.

Abbreviations

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[42] The verb יציץ here is usually translated "to shine"; I owe the suggestion of connecting it to the "flowering" motif
discussed above to Simeon Chavel.

[43] Milgrom argued that the two words were in fact synonymous, based primarily on comparison of Exod 28:36 (טהור
זהב ציץ) with Exod 29:6 (הקדש נזר): Milgrom 1991, 512. The Egyptian etymology for the word suggested by Görg
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The Ancient Throne provides readers with a collection of articles that either study specific thrones known from historical texts, artistic depictions or excavations, or offer an overview of the role of thrones from as early as ancient Mesopotamia in the 3rd millennium BCE to as late as Iran and China in the 14th century CE. The volume thus collates the work of scholars who specialise in diverse cultures and who have all found thrones to be helpful vehicles for promoting unique inquiries into such issues as royalty, society, ritual, and religion within their areas of expertise. The breadth of their collective efforts offers a comparative view through which the dissemination of political and ideological concepts may be better explored. The following collection of articles, however, does not attempt to provide a single answer to the question of what a throne is or is not, but instead presents the authors' individual – and sometimes conflicting – outlooks. While the volume is far from being a comprehensive survey of thrones in Eurasian cultures across the ages, it nevertheless offers readers a specialised bibliography and draws attention to scholarly trends that will be useful to future studies on thrones in general. Most of all, the volume cohesively suggests that thrones have been a meaningful category of material culture throughout history, one that may inspire both inter-cultural and intra-cultural studies of the ways in which types of chairs can embody, execute or induce notions of kingship and a range of concepts pertaining to the religious, ideological, and social spheres.