Importing the law? Possible elements of the Mesopotamian legal tradition in New Kingdom Egypt (1549-1064BCE)

Features of New Kingdom justice not attested earlier
- Oracle courts, as attested at Deir el-Medina and elsewhere
- Increase in severe corporal punishment: for example, mutilation of nose and ears becomes a standard element in oath formulae
- Detailed protasis-apodosis legal decrees, such as the Karnak Decree of Horemheb (1328-1298BCE) or the Nauri Decree of Seti I (1296-1279).

Why might this be connected to Mesopotamia/Semitic law?
- “Hyksos” period (1650-1549BCE) immediately prior to New Kingdom
- Amarna letters/greater exposure to Akkadian in Egypt during New Kingdom
- Legal associations: Akkadian and Egyptian copies of Ramesses II – Hattusili III treaty (1258BCE), where corporal punishment is a prominent topic
- Mesopotamian law, and broader scholarship, often associated with protasis-apodosis
- Mesopotamian law often associated with severe corporal punishment: for instance, see Code of Hammurabi (1792-1750BCE), Middle Assyrian Laws (c.1400-1100BCE) etc.

Why might this NOT be connected to Mesopotamia/Semitic law?
- Were earlier periods truly different, or is this down to chance preservation of sources?
- Protasis-apodosis has precedents in the Middle Kingdom (2066-1650BCE): for instance, see 2nd Semna stela of Senusret III (1865BCE) or Illahun Medical papyri (c.1800BCE).

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1 All Egyptian dates are calculated according to the chronology set forth in Dodson & Hilton 2004: 287-294, while Mesopotamian dates follow the chronology in van de Mieroop 2007: 302-317.
2 McDowell 1990: 143-186.
5 Kruchten 1981.
7 Langdon & Gardner 1920.
9 Roth 1997: 71-142; Richardson 2000.
11 Sethe 1924: 83-84.
12 Quirke 2002; Collier & Quirke 2004: 53-64.