

# Law codes

Law



## Chad Goering Essay #1 " Hittite Law Code" and the " Code of the Assyrians"

In this paper, I'll compare both law codes of the Hittites and Assyrians by comparing the two aspects dealing with sexual conduct and relations. Also, I'll examine their differences and similarities and consider why regulating sexuality was so important to both the Hittites and Assyrians. When examining the Hittite and Assyrian law codes, I thought there was a big difference. The first thing I noticed was that the Hittite laws were stricter and focused more on men, where the Assyrians laws were more punishable to women.

A majority of the laws written by the Hittites only involved punishment towards men. Yes Assyrians also had punishments but not as largely targeted towards men as the Hittites. For example there is a Hittite law saying " If a man have intercourse with a cow, it is a capital crime, he shall die. They shall lead him to the king's hall. But the king may kill him; the king may grant him his life. But he shall not approach the king. " As said in the " Hittite Law Code: excerpts from The Code of the Nesilim. There is nothing in the Assyrian code mentioning anything about a man committing bestiality. The Assyrians are opposite compared to the Hittites; their laws are mainly targeted at women rather than men. According to " Excerpts from the Code of the Assyrians," there is a law stating, " If a man have relations with the wife of a man at her wish, there is no penalty for that man. The man shall lay upon the woman, his wife, the penalty he wishes. " From my understanding, they do not focus on what the man did but rather just what the woman has done.

The women alone will take punishment for the act. Examining the two laws makes me believe the difference between the two groups is the harshness towards men or women. However, the Hittites and Assyrians do have similarities. There are two laws that are closely comparable regarding a man raping a woman. The Hittite law states, " If a man rape a woman in the mountain, it is the man's wrong, he shall die. But if he rape her in the house, it is the woman's fault, the woman shall die. If the husband find them and then kill them, there is no punishing the husband. (Hittite Law Code: excerpts from The Code of the Nesilim).

The Assyrians law stated by " Excerpts from the Code of the Assyrians" based on rape states, " If the wife of a man be walking on the highway, and a man seize her, say to her " I will surely have intercourse with you," if she be not willing and defend herself, and he seize her by force and rape her, whether they catch him upon the wife of a man, or whether at the word of the woman whom he has raped, the elders shall prosecute him, they shall put him to death. There is no punishment for the woman. In my opinion, the punishment for this crime is almost exactly the same for both the Hittites and Assyrians.

Therefore, there are some similarities between the Hittites and the Assyrians law codes. One aspect on punishment I find interesting is how harsh the Hittites and Assyrians punishments were compared to how they are today in the United States. The reason why I think the Hittites and Assyrians were so harsh was because they didn't have a problem with killing somebody. To them, both groups felt if you committed the crime, you will receive the punishment deserved.

I'm not saying that America doesn't have a good system, but I don't think the punishments given are nearly as harsh as what they should be. When it comes to relationships, Hittites and Assyrians treat it the same. They both have a male dominated culture. Men can do whatever they want while women have to be loyal to their husband. From reading the laws about sexual conduct, I understand that if you're a man, you can have sex whenever and wherever if the partner is willing. As stated before, if the man rapes a woman there will be punishment.

However, if you're a woman, you cannot cheat on your husband. Therefore, makes this sexual conduct law one sided towards men. Overall, when comparing the laws between the Hittites and Assyrians, I believe that they are pretty similar. Both of the codes are saying to not cheat on your husband. I find it interesting though that they both focus on the women cheating and not the male. Neither code has a law saying anything about a man cheating on his wife. Yes, they have punishment for men who rape women but nothing more than that. They expect women to be more proper and focus on doing the right thing.

Even in today's society they expect women to be perfect and loyal and not be sluts. Nowadays, men are expected to be the same as women. Allowing men and women to have the same expectations is a good thing because both are treated more closely equal. In today's society, men and women are still somewhat treated different in certain situations, however, both men and women are now treated equally when it comes to punishment which is a good thing. The only problem I have with the punishment in today's society is it's not nearly as harsh as it once was.

Punishment in general is the most comparable thing between the Hittites and Assyrians law codes. The punishments are very harsh and nothing is tolerated. The only main difference between the two group's law codes is who the punishment is targeted towards. Now in this paper I have compared both the Hittites Law Code and the Code of the Assyrians. I have examined their differences and similarities and also reasoned why regulating sexual conduct was so important to them both. By doing this, it makes you think of how easy we have it in today's world and makes you wonder what it would be like to live back then.