GENERAL OVERVIEW

228 Crime and Punishment in Pharaonic Egypt
~ Renate Müller-Wollermann

This article provides an overview of crime and punishment in ancient Egypt. Sources for crimes and punishments are mainly texts, but no criminal law code is preserved. Evidence for crimes against the state or king comprises treason, lese majesty, and desertion, those against other human beings killings, injuries, adultery and rape, robbery and theft. Punishments are the death penalty, corporal punishments, forced labor, deprivation of property or degradation, but not imprisonment. Torture is widespread.

IDEOLOGY OF PUNISHMENT AND KINGSHIP

236 Punishment as Crime: The “Sins” of the Just Ruler in the Art of the Ancient Near East
~ Mehmet-Ali Ataç

In the art of the ancient Near East, the theme of the ruler trampling a defeated enemy is a commonplace trope. However, this formula is far from politically neutral in underscoring a successful or victorious king, and may be thought to play into a mythical pattern of a rebellious divine being with his own rights and privileges challenging an order established by an authoritarian warrior or ruler god, the chief paradigm for which in ancient Mesopotamia is the Anzu myth. In this regard, such images of punishment are ambivalent. While they show the supremacy of the mainstream ruler, they also draw attention to what the defeated enemy represents in a wider cosmic or sacral history, in which the vanquished, too, was entitled to his numinous background. Such complexity blurs the distinction between good and evil and offense and punishment in the representation of the legitimate ruler in the ancient Near East.

244 Sacred Violence: When Ancient Egyptian Punishment was Dressed in Ritual Trappings
~ Kerry Muhlestein

According to the evidence at hand, it appears that during the period spanning from the Old Kingdom through the Libyan Era, institutionally sanctioned ritual violence centered around two main ideas: interference with cultic practices (temple and funerary), and rebellion (both the uprising of conquered enemies rebelling against Egypt’s hegemony and the rebellion of actual Egyptians). It seems that while there were many crimes that the ancient Egyptians felt merited capital punishment, and many ways such punishment could be inflicted, most did not include a ritual element. However, it is clear that there were many executions that did include a ritual element, and in many cases it is likely that information conveying a ritual context is unavailable. For now, it can only be concluded that some executions were ritualized and others probably were not. Evidence regarding the forms of punishment that received ritual trappings remains inconclusive.
Traces of violence found on human bones are very difficult to interpret. Determination of the cause of death is often based on circumstantial evidence drawn from the way the body is buried. But burials – and bodies – were sometimes manipulated in Mesopotamia for very different purposes. Here we examine three examples from the fourth and third millennia B.C.E. where bodies were not only killed, they were cooked, moved, dressed, pulled apart and turned into tools. Such behavior appears transgressive, and yet some of it must have been socially sanctioned, performed in order to satisfy perceived needs. Despite the difficulties in interpreting such remains, one thing is clear: we cannot take the pictures presented by the dead at face value.

**MURDER AND ITS SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**264 Violence and the City: On the Yahwist’s Leviathan**
~ Robert S. Kawashima

The story of Cain is ultimately an origin story of the city, i.e., a narrative representation of its nature and function. This being the case, there seems to be a constitutive relationship between violence and the city, for Cain builds the first city only after committing the first homicide. Reminiscent of Hobbes, the Yahwist sees the city as originating in the domestication of the violent impulses of its citizens. Hence the mark of Cain: it is the threat of reprisal that enables Cain to overcome his fear of, and thereby co-exist with, the Other. But vengeance alone will not suffice to maintain civilized collective life, as we learn from the example of his descendant, Lamech. Rather, it is only through hospitality that men can hope to live together in peace. This is the lesson of the story of Sodom, in which the Yahwist juxtaposes the hospitality of Abraham and of Lot with the violent barbarism of the men of Sodom.

**274 An Early Islamic Homicide at Qasr Hallabat, Jordan**
~ Megan Perry, Kathryn Parker, and R. Taylor Montgomery

In the 8th to 10th century C.E., six adult individuals, five males and one female, were murdered in the northern Badia of Jordan amongst the ruins of Qasr Hallabat. The four males and one female show a combination of blunt force trauma to the head and sharp force trauma to the arms and legs. Who are these individuals, and what are the circumstances surrounding their deaths? Forensic and bioarchaeological analyses of the skeletal remains uncover evidence surrounding this crime and how these individuals may have ended up meeting their deaths at Hallabat.

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

**286 Crime and Sexual Offense in Hatti**
~ Ilan Peled

This article offers an introductory overview of the topic of crime and punishment in the Hittite kingdom. I offer general background to the topic and focus on one case-study: crimes related to sexual behavior. Even within this narrower topic, the discussion is limited to one main example, incest prohibitions and the regulation of kin relations, which have not previously been studied as a distinct topic.
Although biblical texts identify a range of sexual behavior as illicit, adultery is the only sexual act addressed in the law collections of the Hebrew Bible as a crime – i.e., as a serious harm against another person for which punishments beyond financial compensation are allowed. Some scholars have argued that the treatment of adultery in biblical law is better and more favorable toward women than that found in the cuneiform law collections; others have argued precisely the opposite. What is more likely is that biblical law is largely in keeping with how ancient Near Eastern societies other than Israel and Judah handled adultery and should not necessarily be evaluated as either better or worse from a modern perspective.