In comparison with Mesopotamia, the sources of Hittite law are somewhat meager:

1. The Constitution of King Telipinu. This was an edict regulating succession to the throne and also containing regulations on the royal granaries, homicide and witchcraft (see 2.1.3–4 below).¹
2. The Autobiography of King Hattusili I.²
3. Treaties with rulers of equal rank and with vassal kings.³
4. Royal edicts.⁴
5. Instructions for royal officials.⁵
6. Royal land grants (see 6.3.2 below).⁶
7. Records of litigation.⁷ They record only the statements of witnesses and accused, and contain no information on the outcome of the trial.
8. Funerary rituals.⁸

1.1 The Hittite Laws (HL)⁹

1.1.1 The Hittite Laws are by far the most important source, a legal corpus for which the conventional term “laws” is something of

¹ Hoffman, *Telipinu* . . .; Kümmel, “Telipinu . . .” Copies of the text were made in Akkadian as well as Hittite.
³ See International Law in the Second Millennium: Late Bronze Age.
⁴ Schuler, “Königserlässe . . .”; Westbrook and Woodard, “Tuthaliya IV . . .”
⁵ Schuler, *Dienstanweisungen*; Güterbock and van der Hout, *Royal Bodyguard* . . .
⁶ Riemschneider, “Landschenkungsurkunden . . .”
⁷ Werner, *Hethitische Gerichtsprotokolle*.
⁸ Otten, *Totenrituale* . . .
a misnomer.\footnote{Used by Friedrich and Zimmern, “Gesetze . . .,” but Koschaker regarded them as “Aufzeichnungen über Recht, die wahrscheinlich beim Königsgremium in Hattusa lange Zeit in Gebrauch waren” (“Eheschließung . . .,” 252). Friedrich spoke of a “Niederschrift einmal gefällter Rechtsentscheidungen für den Gebrauch der Juristen” (Gesetze . . ., 1). See also Korošec, “Rechtssammlung . . .” (“Hethiter,” 262), and San Nicolò, “Rechtsbuch . . .” (Beiträge . . ., 96). For a general discussion of the genre of “Law Codes” in the ancient Near East, see the introduction to this History.} HL are not in the nature of a modern statute, in the sense of a juridical text issued by a sovereign body in accordance with the constitution. The “Laws” give no indication that they were issued by a ruler.\footnote{The actual ruler was in any case deemed to be the Storm God, not the king (Van den Hout, “Tuthalija . . .,” 57ff.); see further 2.1.5 below.} Nor do they accord systematic treatment to any of the matters that they regulate, although the treaties demonstrate that the Hittites were capable of dealing with specific topics in a comprehensive way.

1.1.2 Several paragraphs, notably HL 43, 54–56, 90, 171, and 172, which present the outcome of individual trials, suggest that the corpus is a collection of legal verdicts.\footnote{Albeit not a “Rechtsbuch,” i.e., private collection; see San Nicolò, “Rechtsbuch . . .,” n. 10 above.} The tablets were found in the archives of the capital Hattusa at the site of the royal court of justice, the Hittites’ supreme court. As comparison of the different manuscripts shows, the texts have been reworked over time, with older rules corrected not only with regard to individual circumstances but also as to the level of fines. Such a collection would logically have been binding on lower as well as higher courts and should therefore be characterized as a set of binding legal verdicts.

1.1.3 In his 1922 edition, Hrozný assembled the many fragmentary cuneiform sources in which the laws are found as two tablets of about one hundred paragraphs each, with continuous numbering. Friedrich’s edition numbers each tablet separately, while adding Hrozný’s numeration in brackets. The most recent edition by Hoffner numbers continuously, while adding Friedrich’s numeration in the second tablet.

Hrozný’s division into two tablets is justified by the fact that the Hittite scribes themselves speak of two tablets, which they designate “Tablet: If a man” and “Tablet: If a vine.” A third tablet is not