

history

by K Vincent

Submission date: 28-Mar-2019 06:12AM (UTC+0500)

Submission ID: 1101084832

File name: The_Hammurabi_code.docx (24.08K)

Word count: 2151

Character count: 12296

King Hammurabi and the Code of Hammurabi

Student's Name

Course

Professor

Date

Introduction

Ancient kings ruled with their people with heavy hands; they could act ruthlessly to their subjects, especially those who do not approve their mighty. Thus, people in the ancient kingdoms could not live without the laws since there were norms they had to observe in their daily personal and communal endeavors. However, one king, Hammurabi ruled his people in a fair way. The kingdom of Babylonia, about four millennia ago, prospered and thrived under his regime. King Hammurabi's ambition was to protect the weak and the vulnerable in his kingdom, and by so doing he taught his people how to exercise justice and righteousness. The king's success comes from the implementation of a law that governed the code of conduct of the kingdom of Babylonia. The code of Hammurabi inscribes on a stone pillar, known as **stele**. This paper will focus on the law of Hammurabi and how it influences the lives of people in the kingdom of Babylonia.

Biography of King Hammurabi

King Hammurabi ruled the Babylonia kingdom for thirty years (1894- 1595 B.C).¹ The kingdom was in central Mesopotamia, which is **the** present- day Iraq. The king's family was a member of the Amorites which is a semi-nomadic tribe found in the western part of Syria. However, the king's name suggests that he valued the diversity of cultures. For instance, the word "Hammu" refers to "family" in the Amorite language. **Then, "rapi" Akkadian name for "great."** Therefore, Hammurabi symbolizes **big** and unified family whose members come from slightly varied cultures. He loved development. For instance, when Hammurabi was in his thirtieth year

¹ Marc Van de Mieroop, King Hammurabi of Babylon: a biography. Vol. 19. John Wiley & Sons, 2008.

on the throne, he started expanding the Babylonia kingdom along the valley of river Tigris and Euphrates. Consequently, he conquered empires like, Assyria, Larsa and Mari for they stood his way. It is worth remarking that the king used his military and political skills and irrigation project to manage his thousand subjects. Hammurabi constructed fortifications and temples in the glory of Marduk, the deity of Babylonia. Today, the kingdom of Babylonia lies beneath the water- table of the area but excavations have proven the King's statecraft.

A Brief Description of the Hammurabi Code

The regime of King Hammurabi inscribed the Hammurabi's code on a heavy slab of diorite. The inscribers might have chosen the stone for its hardness because people could find it difficult to utter the inscriptions. Besides, the top side of the stele contains the carving of Babylonian god of justice, Shamash, handing over the law to Hammurabi. The rest of the flat teams include the cuneiform script.² The steles prepared at the beginning of Hammurabi's reign convey proclaimed principles, but those made at the end of his reign contain columns of legal precedents, probably celebrating Hammurabi's just ruling. However, the code of Hammurabi is a set of laws of retribution, which people refer to as "an eye for an eye" doctrine.

Although the code of Hammurabi involved severe punishment, for instance, cutting off the guilty person's tongue, breasts or any other body organ, the Hammurabi law stated that a person was innocent until proven guilty. Thus, the Hammurabi regime, just like the contemporary society's rule of law, gave a chance for the accused to face trial before being sentenced. About two hundred and eighty edicts of the Hammurabi code starts with the conditional clause "if." The law,

² John. Peam. "Hammurabi's Code: A primary datum in the conjoined professions of medicine and law." *Medico-Legal Journal* 84, no. 3 (2016): 125-131.

however, touch ethical codes from the family level to professional and administrative law. Also, the proposal describes the kind of justice rendered to the three distinctive classes of people in Babylonia, for instance, propertied, freedmen and slaves.³ For instance, the laws stated the amount of money a doctor can charge to the three classes of people since their standards of living are not the same. Interestingly, any deviation from the inscribed medical laws could bring the doctor severe consequences like loss of his hands.

Discovery of the Stele with Hammurabi's Code

Jacques de Morgan, a French miner, found the stele of Hammurabi at Persia in the Elamite, capital of Susa in 1901. Elimate is located more than 250 miles from the headquarters of the kingdom of Babylonia. Probably, people of Susa brought with them the stele as a spoil of their war with the Babylonians. Jacques and his crew shipped the stele to Louvre where people of parish translated and publicized the Hammurabi's code as legal code which paralleled the Hebrew Old Testament. Today, the south wall of United States Supreme Court has the carving of Hammurabi as praise ancient lawgivers. Hammurabi's regime protected the weak from the oppression of the strong.

The influence Hammurabi and his Code to the lives of Babylonians

King Hammurabi took a lot of time to campaign for his leadership, but when he became the Babylonian king, he served and provided for the people of Babylonia. During that period many people referred to him as the "Bani matim" which means: the builder of the land." Hammurabi's efforts amounted to one objective: to better the lives of his subject. He achieved his aim by

³ Daniel Van Ness, W. "New wine and old wineskins: Four challenges of restorative justice." In Restorative Justice, pp. 137-162. Routledge, 2017.

initiating numerous building projects. The Babylonians lived in decent houses, and the entire kingdom looked magnificent due to the work of skilled engineers and architectures. Also, Hammurabi's skilled working force dug water canals throughout the region. Therefore, the residents of Hammurabi's kingdom enjoyed beautiful water and lived in strong and secure houses. The many letters and inscriptions that Hammurabi made attest to his use of skills as well as the ultimate desire to do good to his people. The oddest law code is the code of Ur-Nammu which either king Ur-Nammu or Shulgi of Ur created between c. 2100 to c. 2050 BCE and the Hammurabi's code serves as a model for many other laws from diversified cultures. Although his regime is not the oddest, Hammurabi influenced the system of justice in the biblical Hebrew community, narrated in the book of Exodus.⁴ For instance, a Hammurabi law may state: if a person builds a weak house for another and the house falls and kills the owner, then the builder shall face death. In a similar way, a law in the biblical Hebrew Testament state, if people hit a pregnant mother in the event of a fight and the victim give birth to a premature baby, then the offenders should pay whatever demanded by the woman's husband but if the woman or the baby dies then the offenders should face death.⁵

Before the Hammurabi's regime and his subsequent code of Hammurabi, communities lived as a joint member of one family. They were all equal before their gods, but offenders earned

ADEKUNLE OGUNLANA, BABATUNDE. "DIVINE INSPIRATION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LAW CODE OF HAMMURABI AND THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT." (2017).

⁴ Walter Johns, Claude Hermann. *The Relations between the Laws of Babylonia and the Laws of the Hebrew Peoples: The Schweich Lectures*

1912. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016. ⁴ADEKUNLE OGUNLANA, BABATUNDE. "DIVINE INSPIRATION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LAW CODE OF HAMMURABI AND THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT." (2017).

⁵ Walter Johns, Claude Hermann. *The Relations between the Laws of Babylonia and the Laws of the Hebrew Peoples: The Schweich Lectures*

1912. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016.

severe punishment at the event of murder because the people of the Sumerian- Akkadian period believed that blood is thicker than water. Therefore, people avenged death with death. During that period confrontation between different speakers of Semitic- Amuru languages resulted in war. The ancient Ur- Nammu code stated that only the king could present gods in the administering of justice to the people. For this reason, the carving of Hammurabi receiving the laws from god, Shamash, portrays the authority granted to kings by gods. In short, people feared their kings just as they would fear the gods. In the case of Hammurabi, his subjects followed the orders he issued and always looked upon the code of Hammurabi for guidance in their conduct with one another. However, the codes came when the understanding about gods and will of gods took a different view from the communities. Thus, the code of Hammurabi does not just punish without considering the intensity of the mistake and whether the offender is guilty or not.⁶

The code of Hammurabi followed a strict process of determining whether an accused person is guilty. The Hammurabi laws subjected a person to a particular task so that he or she so to prove his or her innocence or guilt. When the accused performs the task successfully, he or she is innocent, and the accuser receives a punishment instead but failure to perform the ordeal to perfection, an appropriate sentence befell the accused. For instance, when a person accuses a woman of committing adultery with other woman's husband, the woman accused swims across a divine river. If she survives the ordeal, people say that she is innocent and the accuser is guilty of false accusation which is punishable by death. This system of determining guilt and innocence among the Babylonians served to reinforce their behavior and tame vices such as adultery and sorcery. Incidences of witchcraft attracted very brutal punishment since individuals accused of

⁶ Daniel Van Ness, W. "New wine and old wineskins: Four challenges of restorative justice." In *Restorative Justice*, pp. 137-162. Routledge, 2017.

sorcery used powers contrary to the expectations of gods. According to the culture of the Babylonians, only gods could possess skills that they use wisely to either favor or punish wrongdoers. However, a sorcerer used her powers for personal interests, especially those that endanger the lives of fellow people. Thus, the law stated that the best punishment for a sorcerer is death.

The fall of The Kingdom of Babylonia

King Hammurabi, the undisputed ruler in Mesopotamia, was old and weak by the year 1755 BCE.⁷ Thus, the king's son, Samsu- Iluna feared the kingdom might fall even before his father died. Due to that Samsu- Iluna took full responsibility of the territory in the year 1749 BCE. The war between Babylonians and the kingdom of Eshnunna destroyed the Babylonian wall to the east, therefore, creating a short pass for the Hittites and Kassites to attack the kingdom. Also, the destruction of the wall facilitated the spreading of news to the eastern tribes about the weakening king Hammurabi.

For this reason, enemies of Babylonia mobilized their army for the attack. When Hammurabi died in 1749 BCE, his son tried to fight the invading enemies while preaching unity to all the regions under the umbrella of Babylon. Since king Samsu- Iluna was young and less experienced, his efforts of mobilizing his people to unite and fight back the enemy failed. The Hittites invade in 1595 BCE⁸ followed by the Kassites. The successful invasions destroyed the uniting bond between the regions of Babylonia. Therefore, cities under Babylon city put

⁷Rannfrid Thelle, *Discovering Babylon*. Routledge, 2018.

⁸Rannfrid Thelle, *Discovering Babylon*. Routledge, 2018.

demarcations and declared their autonomy. The kingdom stumbled making it hard for Hammurabi's successors to bring back

Of all the ancient kings who introduced codes in their territories, Hammurabi is the most remembered for his stand-in administering justice to his people. He, like the Akkad's Sargon the Great, succeeded in uniting all Mesopotamians into one strong Babylonia kingdom. Due to Hammurabi's good will to protect the weak and raise the standard of living of all the Babylonians, people branded him as mighty king, the king who earned the power to rule people and land from god Bel. He claimed that gods bestowed him the king of Babylonia. However, Hammurabi's subjects enjoyed his regime unlike other kingdoms that existed before his. People loved Hammurabi for standing by the truth. He could negotiate during disputes although his judgment was ruthless. During his reign, Hammurabi did not find interest in conquering other cities to expand his territory. Instead, he unified cities under Babylonia kingdom and improved his subjects. Thus, Hammurabi was a lawgiver whose love for justice and improve lives have a never-ending significance to contemporary society.⁹

Conclusion

King Hammurabi had a reputation to protect the weak and the vulnerable in his kingdom, especially the slave class. Through his strict codes, people's morality improved, therefore, making life enjoyable in Babylonia. King Hammurabi's family descended from the Amorites, a tribe found in western Syria. His reign was a success following the implementation of a law that dictated the

⁹ ADEKUNLE OGUNLANA, BABATUNDE. "DIVINE INSPIRATION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LAW CODE OF HAMMURABI AND THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT." (2017).

way of life of his subject. The code of Hammurabi inscribes on a Stele, a black hard- to- carve stone. Thus, the Hammurabi regime, just like the contemporary society's rule of law, gave a chance for the accused to face trial before being sentenced. The code of Hammurabi had that a person to a particular task so that he or she so to prove his or her innocence or guilt. The Babylonia kingdom faced a lot of challenge when Hammurabi died, and his son took over the regime. Enemies invaded and weakened the empire to the extent that other cities under Babylonia fenced themselves and declared autonomy.

Bibliography

¹ Johns, Claude Hermann Walter. The Relations between the Laws of Babylonia and the Laws of the Hebrew Peoples: The Schweich Lectures 1912. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016.

OGUNLANA, BABATUNDE ADEKUNLE. "DIVINE INSPIRATION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LAW ⁴ CODE OF HAMMURABI AND THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT." (2017).

³ Pearn, John. "Hammurabi's Code: A primary datum in the conjoined professions of medicine and law." *Medico-Legal Journal* 84, no. 3 (2016): 125-131.

⁶ Thelle, Rannfrid. *Discovering Babylon*. Routledge, 2018.

Van de Mieroop, Marc. *King Hammurabi of Babylon: a biography*. Vol. 19. John Wiley & Sons, 2008.

² Van Ness, Daniel W. "New wine and old wineskins: Four challenges of restorative justice." In *Restorative Justice*, pp. 137-162. Routledge, 2017.

history

ORIGINALITY REPORT

11%

SIMILARITY INDEX

7%

INTERNET SOURCES

4%

PUBLICATIONS

9%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

www.tyndalehouse.com

Internet Source

3%

2

Submitted to Farmingdale State College

Student Paper

2%

3

Submitted to University of Charleston

Student Paper

2%

4

D. D. Luckenbill. "On Israel's Origins", The American Journal of Theology, 1918

Publication

1%

5

www.mathsisfun.net

Internet Source

1%

6

Submitted to San Mateo Community College District

Student Paper

1%

7

Submitted to Georgia Gwinnett College

Student Paper

1%

8

epdf.tips

Internet Source

<1%

Exclude quotes Off

Exclude matches Off

Exclude bibliography Off

history

PAGE 1

PAGE 2



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word.



Article Error You may need to remove this article.



Frag. This sentence may be a fragment or may have incorrect punctuation. Proofread the sent to be sure that it has correct punctuation and that it has an independent clause with a complete subject and predicate.



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word.



Sp. This word is misspelled. Use a dictionary or spellchecker when you proofread your work.

PAGE 3



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word. Consider using the article **the**



Article Error You may need to remove this article.



Sp. This word is misspelled. Use a dictionary or spellchecker when you proofread your work.



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word.



Sp. This word is misspelled. Use a dictionary or spellchecker when you proofread your work.

PAGE 4



Sentence Cap. Review the rules for capitalization.



Missing "," Review the rules for using punctuation marks.



Possessive



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word.



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word. Consider using the article **the**



Sp. This word is misspelled. Use a dictionary or spellchecker when you proofread your work.



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word. Consider using the article **the**



Article Error You may need to remove this article.



Confused You have used either an imprecise word or an incorrect word.



Sp. This word is misspelled. Use a dictionary or spellchecker when you proofread your work.

PAGE 5



Sentence Cap. Review the rules for capitalization.



Frag. This sentence may be a fragment or may have incorrect punctuation. Proofread the sent to be sure that it has correct punctuation and that it has an independent clause with a complete subject and predicate.



Wrong Form You may have used the wrong form of this word.



Tone This language may not be appropriate when you write an essay.



Tone This language may not be appropriate when you write an essay.



Tone This language may not be appropriate when you write an essay.



Article Error You may need to remove this article.



Article Error You may need to remove this article.

PAGE 6



Sentence Cap. Review the rules for capitalization.



Tone This language may not be appropriate when you write an essay.



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word.



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word. Consider using the article **the**



Missing "," Review the rules for using punctuation marks.



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word.



Sp. This word is misspelled. Use a dictionary or spellchecker when you proofread your work.

PAGE 7



Sentence Cap. Review the rules for capitalization.



Sp. This word is misspelled. Use a dictionary or spellchecker when you proofread your work.



Prep. You may be using the wrong preposition.



Missing "," Review the rules for using punctuation marks.

PAGE 8



Wrong Form You may have used the wrong form of this word.



Sentence Cap. Review the rules for capitalization.



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word. Consider using the article **the**

PAGE 9



Article Error You may need to use an article before this word.



Sentence Cap. Review the rules for capitalization.



Frag. This sentence may be a fragment or may have incorrect punctuation. Proofread the sent to be sure that it has correct punctuation and that it has an independent clause with a complete subject and predicate.

PAGE 10
