

Hammurabi, King of Babylon

Ur was not the only famous city in Sumer. Babylon, located northwest of Ur on the Euphrates River, also rose in power. One of its greatest rulers was a king by the name of Hammurabi.

When Hammurabi took control of Babylon in 1792 B.C.E., Mesopotamia was made up of separate, warring city-states. Hammurabi's goal was to conquer all of Mesopotamia and unite the city-states into one country. He spent the first thirty-one years of his reign building his military power and making allies. In 1761 B.C.E., he began a military campaign to conquer the surrounding city-states and within five years he controlled all of Mesopotamia.

Once he had brought peace and control to the region, Hammurabi turned his attention to law and order. He collected all existing codes and laws and set down a detailed document known as the "Code of Hammurabi". Written in 1750 B.C.E., it contained three hundred laws on such topics as false accusations, witchcraft, military service, land and business transactions, family disputes, taxes, wages, loans, and debts. The main message throughout the code was that the strong should not hurt the weak. The code stated the rights of the individual and was the model for many law systems in later years.

Hammurabi was known as a warrior and a strong king who ruled his people with fairness. He died in Babylon in 1708 B.C.E.

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

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Answer all of the following questions using complete sentences.

1.) Who was Hammurabi, and what was his main goal? _____

2.) How did Hammurabi accomplish his goal? _____

3.) What did Hammurabi turn his attention to once he had accomplished his goal?

4.) What was the “Code of Hammurabi”? _____

5.) What types of topics did the “Code of Hammurabi deal with? _____

6.) What was the main message of the code? _____

7.) How did the code influence later law systems? _____

8.) In your opinion, should Hammurabi be remember as a hero or a villain? Why?