

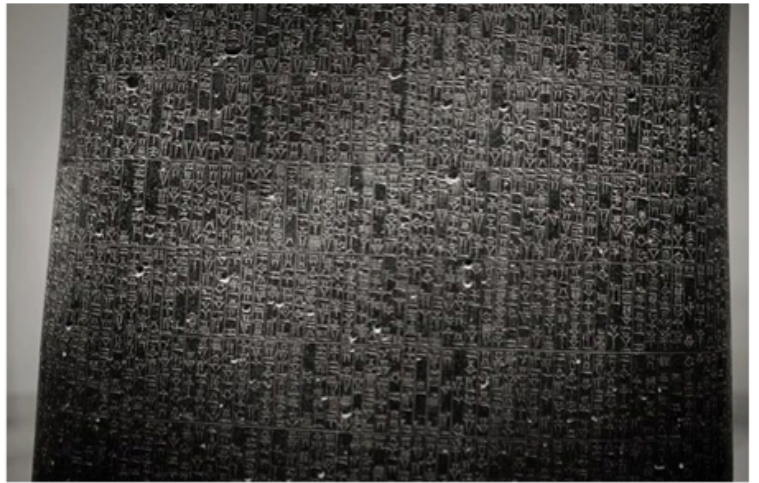
The **Code of Hammurabi** is a well-preserved [Babylonian law code](#) of ancient [Mesopotamia](#), dating back to about 1754 BC. It is one of the oldest deciphered writings of significant length in the world. The sixth Babylonian king, [Hammurabi](#), enacted the code, and partial copies exist on a seven and a half foot stone [stele](#) and various clay tablets.

The code consists of 282 laws, with scaled punishments, adjusting "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" as graded depending on social status, of slave versus free man. Nearly one-half of the code deals with matters of contract, establishing, for example, the wages to be paid to an ox driver or a surgeon. Other provisions set the terms of a transaction, establishing the liability of a builder for a house that collapses, for example, or property that is damaged while left in the care of another. A third of the code addresses issues concerning household and family relationships such as inheritance, divorce, paternity, and [sexual behavior](#). Only one provision appears to impose obligations on an official; this provision establishes that a judge who reaches an incorrect decision is to be fined and removed from the bench permanently. A few provisions address issues related to military service.

The code was discovered by modern archaeologists in 1901, and a translation published in 1902 by [Jean-Vincent Scheil](#). The code is inscribed in the [Akkadian language](#), carved into the stele. It is currently on display in the [Louvre](#).

Appendix 6

The Code of Hammurabi 1792-1750B.C.



Code of Hammurabi

Author: Hammurabi

Created: 1750 BC



Figures at top of stele "fingernail" above Hammurabi's code of laws

The Code of Hammurabi is the longest surviving text from the Old Babylonian period. The code has been seen as an early example of a fundamental law, regulating a government — i.e., a primitive **constitution**. The code is also one of the earliest examples of the idea of **presumption of innocence**, and it also suggests that both the accused and accuser have the opportunity to provide **evidence**. The Code issues justice following the three classes of Babylonian society, namely property owners, freed men and slaves. For example, if a doctor killed a rich patient, he would have his hands cut off, but if he killed a slave, only financial restitution was required.

Slander

Ex. Law #127: "If any one "point the finger" at a sister of a god or the wife of any one, and can not prove it, this man shall be taken before the judges and his brow shall be marked. (by cutting the skin, or perhaps hair."

Trade

Ex. Law #265: "If a herdsman, to whose care cattle or sheep have been entrusted, be guilty of fraud and make false returns of the natural increase, or sell them for money, then shall he be convicted and pay the owner ten times the loss."

Slavery

Ex. Law #15: "If any one take a male or female slave of the court, or a male or female slave of a freed man, outside the city gates, he shall be put to death."

The duties of workers

Ex. Law #42: "If any one take over a field to till it, and obtain no harvest therefrom, it must be proved that he did no work on the field, and he must deliver grain, just as his neighbor raised, to the owner of the field."

Theft

Ex. Law #22: "If any one is committing a robbery and is caught, then he shall be put to death."

Liability

Ex. Law #53: "If any one be too lazy to keep his dam in proper condition, and does not so keep it; if then the dam break and all the fields be flooded, then shall he in whose dam the break occurred be sold for money, and the money shall replace the corn which he has caused to be ruined."

Divorce

Ex. Law #142: "If a woman quarrel with her husband, and say: "You are not congenial to me," the reasons for her prejudice must be presented. If she is guiltless, and there is no fault on her part, but he leaves and neglects her, then no guilt attaches to this woman, she shall take her dowry and go back to her father's house."

One of the best known laws from Hammurabi's code was:

Ex. Law #196: "If a man destroy the eye of another man, they shall destroy his eye. If one break a man's bone, they shall break his bone. If one destroy the eye of a freeman or break the bone of a freeman he shall pay one gold mina. If one destroy the eye of a man's slave or break a bone of a man's slave he shall pay one-half his price."

Thanks to Wikipedia.org for this text.