

Sumerian empire and the akkadian empire history essay

[History](#), [Empires](#)



The era change dividing the Sumerian Empire and the Akkadian Empire was a turning point in the aspects of criminal justice and current laws. The creation of the Code of Hammurabi proved to be a long lasting, harsh code of laws developed during King Hammurabi's reign (1792 - 1750 B. C.). Although the Code of Hammurabi was developed after the fall of both empires, many codes were brought from those eras and some lead way to laws and codes in criminal justice today. Development, current influence, social regulations, religion, and crime are all addressed to the full extent.

Literature Review

Between 2900 and 2350 B. C., the Sumerian Empire thrived in Southern Mesopotamia. This time became known as the Early Dynastic. There was a distinct political division between competing city-states. These city-states were under the control of a complete dynasty of rulers. In approximately 2350 B. C., the city of Agade, of Akkad, brought down rival Sumerian city-states by means of conquest. Semitic monarchs of the region united these city-states.

Discussion

During the time of the Akkadian Empire, there began to be a strong focus on certain codes and laws. These were a very strict set of codes set with punishments for the people of the Akkadian Empire who did not obey. These laws were known as the Code of Hammurabi. Although they were prominent in Akkad, the Code of Hammurabi was not developed during the peak time of the Akkadian Empire. The Code of Hammurabi is thought to be the oldest set

of known law codes. The code was written by a Babylonian king, Hammurabi, at the very beginning of his reign (1792-1750 B. C.).

Akkadian Empire

The Akkadian Empire succeeded from approximately 2350 - 2150 B. C. The empire peaked to its highest point under reign of Naram-Sin (around 2260 - 2223 B. C.). The empire stretched as far north as Anatolia, east to Iran, south to Arabia, and as far west as the Mediterranean. The Akkadian Empire became known and recognized for its new creativity and an art form that would reflect harsh cultural continuity,

After the death of Naram-Sin, the empire was controlled by his successor, Shar-Kali-Sharri. This took place around 2223-2198 B. C. Shar-Kali-Sharri appeared to have a strong control over Akkad until the end of his reign. A struggle for power of the throne seemed to take place. This downfall brought upon a re-establishment of many independent cities in Southern Mesopotamia. The empire that once appeared to continue to grow shrank back down to Akkad and the cities directly surrounding regions. The Sumerian city of Ur revolted as the Akkadian Empire fell and Sumerian city-states began to reappear.

Location

The Akkadian Empire is generally thought to be the state that grew around the city of Akkad. The Akkadians were a Semitic speaking group of people. The Akkadian Empire was located on the Arabic Peninsula. Their language

became the main language for diplomacy and commerce through Mesopotamia. The city of Akkad was located directly north of Sumer, where the Sumerian Empire was established. The Akkadian Empire was located on one of the most fertile planes on the globe. It was located on the alluvian plain of Southern Mesopotamia. King Sargon of the Akkadian Empire established all people from Southern Mesopotamia into one strong central state. This empire led to an important role in the building of culture, commercial practices, and social organizations of the entire region.

Language

The language of the Akkadians became the language of commerce and diplomacy for the millennium after Sargon's reign. The Akkadian language gave way to an understanding of certain translations of the Hebrew of the Bible. Akkadian artifacts have helped in some ways to contextualize Hebrew religion and society. Documents have recently been discovered from the Akkadian era on cuneiform clay tablets. The transition to pictographs and hieroglyphics from cuneiform was an important change that is not usually obvious at first glance. Cuneiform aided in the expansion of literacy, government regulations, and authority for a public that was becoming increasingly literate. These artifacts have helped locate the Hebrew religion and culture in a larger context. It has been stated the Akkadians thrived for a more peaceful single world in which negotiations and trade would help all parties prosper.

Religion

The Akkadians worshipped a temple of many Gods. The Akkadian gods were thought to have a human form, meaning they had some-what human emotions. They were thought to be wise, silly, and at times even angry. Each god played a different role in the Akkadian Empire. Each could be related to a part of nature and ultimately had complete control over the seasons. There was a sky-god, an air-god, sun-god, a moon-god, and so forth. King Sargon was thought to be the representative of the gods and they ruled through him.

People were created in the Akkadian Empire to serve the gods. It's been stated that ethics were not a concern at all for Akkadian gods. Woman seemed to play a large part in Akkadian religion and should have been respected for it. It's also been said that Sargon's mother was thought to be a temple prostitute. One of the most striking of gods and goddesses is Ishtar, she was said to protect prostitutes and alehouses. Some even referred to her as " Queen of the Universe".

Achievements

The Akkadians proved to be an intelligent group, considering the era of time in which they existed. Akkadians developed a road system that bound together the entire empire. A postal service was developed for the empire using this very system of roads. Instead of stamps, however, a clay seal would be present and on that seal would be the names of both Sargon and his son. It's a possibility that the first collection of astronomical observations also came from a library that Sargon himself developed.

Collapse of the Akkadian Empire

The fall of the Akkadian Empire seemed to be as sudden and unexpected as its rise. Naram-Sin noted of the war the Akkadians fought against the people of Ararat. Many facts of the collapse of the Akkadian Empire are unknown. It's unknown if Sargon and Manishtushu fought alongside Naram-Sin in the war. Multiple wars were recorded by Naram-Sin before the fall of the Akkadian Empire. Not much is known from the time of the fall of Akkadian Empire until around 2100 B. C. E.. The Babylonian Civilization followed the Akkadian Empire.

Lex Talionis

After the development of the Code of Hammurabi, it's punishments became more prominent and mandatory. The Code of Hammurabi was based on a need for punishments to fit the crimes that were committed. This is when the lex talionis became popular, which translates to "eye for an eye". However, the code provided different punishments for different social classes. Such as in the code 8 it's stated, "If anyone steal cattle or sheep, or an ass, or a pig or a goat, if it belonged to a god or to the court, the thief shall pay thirty fold; if they belonged to a freed man of the King he shall pay tenfold; if the thief has nothing with which to pay he shall be put to death". This is a prime example of the effects social class had on punishments in the Code of Hammurabi.

Not only did the Code of Hammurabi use the eye for an eye concept, but also tooth for a tooth and so forth. It appeared the code was created to be fair

and equal by matching crimes with and equally horrible punishment, however, there was still a large inequality when facing social class, gender, morality, and overall equality. Many thought of the code by have Sumerian spirit but had such a harshness to it that must have been Babylonian inspired.

Code of Hammurabi and West Virginia State Laws

Almost every code involved in the Code of Hammurabi seems to be overwhelming and very harsh. Lex talionis (eye for an eye), is very relevant in this code of laws. In some ways, the eye for an eye concept is still used in the court and justice systems today.

In the Code of Hammurabi, Code 14 stated, " If a man has stolen the son of a freeman, he shall be put to death". In the United States, kidnapping is also still taken very seriously, perhaps not seriously enough, but a death penalty for this crime is rare if at all possible. The general punishment for kidnapping in the state of West Virginia is one to fifteen years in a state correctional facility.

In the Code of Hammurabi, Code 152 states, " If from the time that that woman entered into the house of the man a debt has come upon them, both together they shall answer the merchant". This code is much more reasonable than others in the Code of Hammurabi. However, West Virginia state law 6-49 states, " The legislature shall pass such laws as may be necessary to protect the property of married women from the debts, liabilities, and control of their husbands". These two codes seem to go hand-

in-hand by stating that if there is a debt together after marriage you are both liable, otherwise it's not your responsibility for any previous debts that may have occurred.

In the Code of Hammurabi, code 21 states, " If a man has broken into a house, one shall kill him before the breach and bury him in it". West Virginia currently has a law in effect for Burglary (61-3-11) stating that punishment shall be one to ten years in a confined penitentiary.

Conclusion

The rise of the Akkadian Empire proved to be a turning point in world history. The Akkadians displayed a new outlook on religion and art forms. The Code of Hammurabi was and is a crucial part of the criminal justice system. The lex talionis, eye for an eye, played a huge role in the Code of Hammurabi. Although they aren't exactly the same, many of the Codes of Hammurabi can be matched up with current West Virginia state and United States laws. The Code of Hammurabi is one of the earliest known law codes. It displayed a harsh new way of discipline where every punishment must match the nature of the crime. For example, if a man were to cut off someone's arm, his arm too shall be cut off. The methods of this code were an efficient and effective form of punishment for quite some time. However, other codes and laws were eventually developed that were less harsh and required fewer death penalty's for petty crimes. This helped shape and mold the criminal justice system we have in effect today. However, I do believe there may still be things to learn from it in the criminal justice and court systems today.