

**THE HAMMURABI CODE AND THE
SINAITIC LEGISLATION: AND THE
SINAITIC LEGISLATION
WITH A COMPLETE TRANSLATION OF
THE GREAT BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTION
DISCOVERED AT SUSA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649454075

The Hammurabi Code and the Sinaitic Legislation: And the Sinaitic Legislation with a Complete Translation of the Great Babylonian Inscription Discovered at Susa by Chilperic Edwards

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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Hammurabi, King of Babylonia

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BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTION DISCOVERED AT SUSA

BY

CHILPERIC EDWARDS

AUTHOR OF "THE WITNESS OF ASSYRIA," ETC.

[Issued for the Rationalist Press Association, Limited]

WATTS & CO.,
17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.
1904

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PREFACE

THE object of the present work is to provide a complete and careful translation of the whole of the great Babylonian inscription containing the Laws of Hammurabi, and to bring together in a brief form all the known facts connected with the period of Babylonian history to which it belongs. As, moreover, many persons will be interested in tracing out the dependence of the Mosaic Laws upon the Babylonian legislation, a chapter has been devoted to that subject. Quite independently, however, of its service in discounting arrogant claims in regard to the originality or excellence of the Jewish Pentateuch, the Code of Hammurabi is destined to be of the utmost value to the student of the history of civilisation, and the

evolution of Semitic Law. It may even be found eventually that the influence of the Babylonian Code extended beyond the Semitic boundary, and that it has modified the legal ideas of distant peoples; but as yet it is too early to verify any such suggestion. In any case, however, the age, the extent, and the remarkable state of preservation of this venerable monument of antiquity combine to entitle it to the respect and consideration of every thinking being.

The following pages do not coruscate with ingenious speculations upon the origin of the Hammurabi dynasty, as the writer totally fails to see that that has anything to do with the legal enactments. It may, however, be mentioned that some scholars have claimed that certain of the *successors* of Hammurabi bore names which exhibited grammatical forms foreign to the Semitic-Babylonian tongue; and they have argued that his dynasty must therefore be of foreign

origin. One school is anxious to connect the line with Northern Arabia, the other with Canaan, and both adduce linguistic reasons for their choice. Without entering into these precarious hypotheses, it may be sufficient to remark that we have no evidence whatever as to the *grammatical* peculiarities of the languages spoken in Arabia or Canaan during the era of Hammurabi—that is to say, before 2000 B.C. The idioms of Arabic and Hebrew may have been very different at that early date to what they became in their classical periods. Furthermore, in most countries proper names exhibit uncommon or obsolete grammatical forms, for the simple reason that the names are handed down through several generations, and thus are really relics of earlier modes of speech; so that the unusual form of some of the names of Hammurabi's family may eventually prove to be of this character, and there will be no excuse for doubting the Babylonian origin of his race. Leaving

such conjectures on one side, however, it can hardly be disputed that the Laws themselves manifest their specifically Babylonian origin. They contemplate a country with a numerous settled population, where the art of writing is in common use, where agriculture is associated with irrigation upon a large scale, and where ships and navigation play an important part. These points are combined in no other ancient Semitic land; they can only be referred to Babylonia. Mere questions of dynasty are consequently irrelevant. The legislation is only intelligible as a product of Babylonian soil; and as Babylonian culture was of ancient date, and was entirely derived from the still earlier civilisation of the Akkadians, who themselves appear to have had codes of law (see Appendix C), it seems quite unnecessary to insist upon the obvious fact that Babylonian jurisprudence is prior to all other Semitic law or custom of which we have any certain knowledge.

It will, further, be observed that the ensuing

chapters are not besprinkled with the name of "Abraham." The reasons for ignoring this worthy are stated in Appendix B.

In regard to the question of chronology, the author has, in Appendix A, quoted all the evidence that exists for determining the date of Hammurabi. It will be seen that this evidence does not enable us to fix the exact year of that monarch ; but it is sufficient to indicate the general period at which he flourished.

C. E.