

0. WHERE IS HAMMURABI'S STELE TODAY? - Story
Preface

1. WHO WAS HAMMURABI?
2. HAMMURABI'S HOME AND LANGUAGE
3. CUNEIFORM IS DECIPHERED
4. RELIGION of ANCIENT BABYLON
5. HAMMURABI'S LAWS

6. WHERE IS HAMMURABI'S STELE TODAY?

7. BABYLON AFTER HAMMURABI
8. CUNEIFORM AND HIEROGLYPHICS



The Bronze-Age Elamite Empire, depicted here in red, had Susa as its capital city. The body of water, depicted in deep blue, was the approximate extent of the Persian Gulf during that time frame. Map by Dbachmann, online via Wikimedia Commons. License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

Although Hammurabi was a great unifier, he never set up a proper bureaucracy to administer the Babylonian Empire. After his death, Babylon was attacked by the Elamites (from Sipur) in the 12th century BC.

The Elamites took Hammurabi's stele to Susa, their capital just east of the Tigris River and north of the Persian Gulf (in today's western Iran). This ancient-world map provides a view of how the "known world" appeared at that time.

In 1901, a French archeological team lead by Jean-Vincent Scheil was working in Susa (known today as Shush, Iran). During the winter of 1901-2, the French team found the stele. It was broken in three pieces. Jean-Vincent Scheil had the stele removed from Susa. It is now restored and in Paris, where it is one of the Louvre's greatest treasures.

The Louvre's official description of the stele also includes a reference to the headpiece Hammurabi is wearing:

The king wears the royal headpiece like Gudea.

To help you understand that phrase, here is an image of the statue of Gudea, Ruler of Lagash, Telloh. Note how the headpiece of Gudea does, in fact, resemble the headpiece of Hammurabi.

Because Sir Henry Rawlinson, and other scholars, had solved the cuneiform mystery about fifty years before French archeologists found Hammurabi's stele, Jean-Vincent Scheil was able to translate Hammurabi's laws within six months. It was Scheil who organized the laws as we see them today.

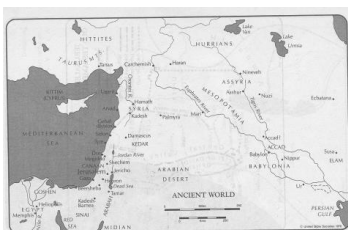
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Media Stream

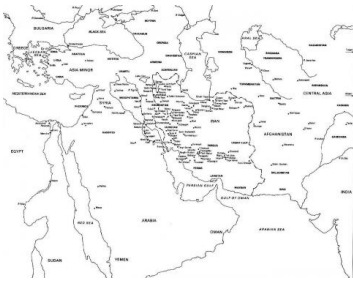


Fertile Crescent and Surrounding Countries

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Ancient-World Map

Image of the ancient world, online via Wikimedia Commons.

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Gudea - Statue "I"

Image of Gudea statue, on display at the Louvre, by Marie-Lan Nguyen. PD image, online via Wikimedia Commons.

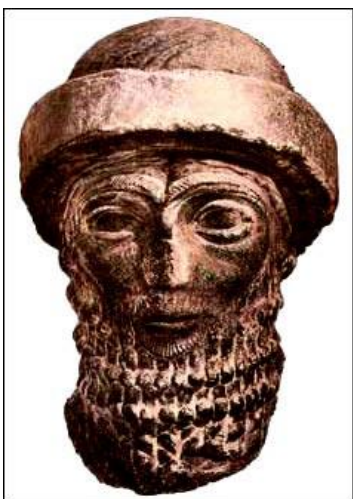
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Gudea Headpiece

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Hammurabi Headpiece

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