WORLD HISTORY notes Day 2

Mesopotamian Civilizations

BABYLONIANS – 1790 BC

* Hammurabi best known/most celebrated of all Mesopotamian kings
  + - concerned with keeping order in his kingdom
  + Babylon was roughly 50 square miles of territory
* As Hammurabi’s “empire” grew, he saw the need to unify the diverse groups he controlled under one set of laws
  + He felt the gods had entrusted him to deal fairly with their people/issues
  + ”King of justice to whom Shamash (god of Justice) was committed the truth.”
  + he sent legal experts throughout his kingdom to gather existing laws
  + 282 laws
  + written in stone
    - laws cannot be changed
    - harder to misuse power
    - everyone knows the laws
    - government controlled punishment and government provides protection
  + punishment based on Class and “Law of Retaliation”
  + equal classes = “Parallel Punishment”
  + different classes = punishment harder for lower classes
* the code is also one of the earliest examples of the idea of “Innocent until proven Guilty”
* it also suggests that the accused and accuser have the opportunity to provide [evidence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evidence)
* not 1st written law code, but the best preserved

REASONS FOR LAW CODE

1. stability and order
2. increase equality
3. protect trade
4. power over the people