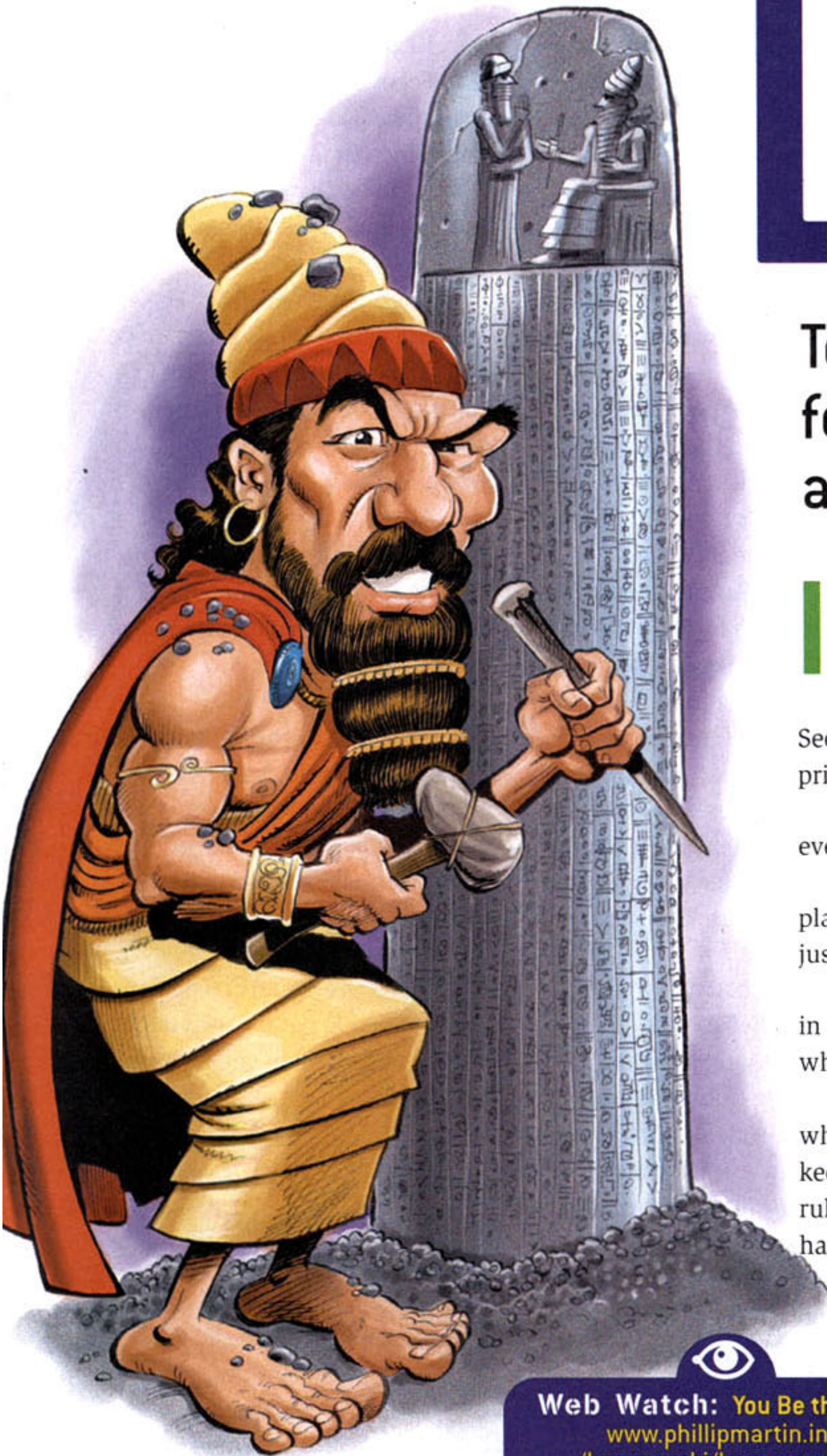


Laying Down the LAW



To Hammurabi, “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” meant justice

Imagine that you are far from home in a strange land. Two men lead you into a dreary courtroom, where a stern judge sits behind a mammoth bench.

“The accused is guilty under Section 21 of the Official Secrets Act,” the judge thunders, pounding his gavel. “Off to prison with you!”

You have no idea what you did wrong. You have never even heard of the law you are accused of violating.

Does this sound far-fetched? Such forbidding scenes still play out in countries around the world. America’s criminal justice system, too, can sometimes fail its citizens.

In ancient societies, people didn’t even have a courtroom in which to plead their cases. Kings ruled according to their whims and desires, and ordinary people enjoyed few rights.

Hammurabi wanted to change this. The powerful king, who ruled ancient Babylon from 1792 to 1750 B.C., had a keen sense of right and wrong. He was one of the first rulers to display the laws of the land for all to see. First, he had the laws **inscribed** (carved) on a huge slab of stone.

This stone, called a **stela**, was then put in a place where townspeople could see and discuss it.

Hammurabi clearly thought a lot of himself. “Let the oppressed, who have a case at law, come and stand before this my image as King of righteousness,” he wrote. “Let him read

Web Watch: **You Be the Judge**
www.phillipmartin.info/hammurabi/homepage.htm

the inscription, and understand my precious words.”

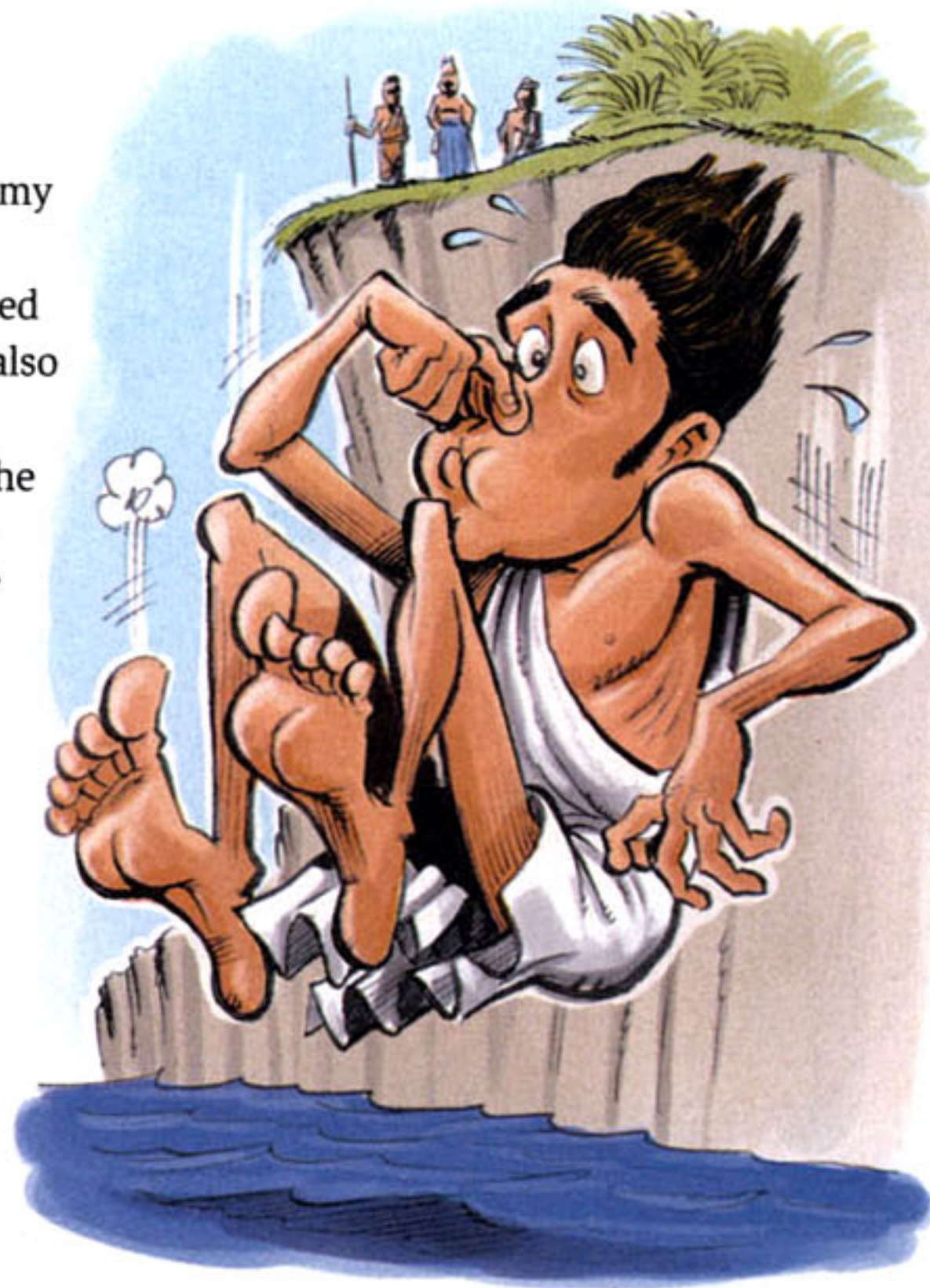
Look to me, Hammurabi seemed to say, for a model of justice. He also promised relief for the husband feuding with his brother-in-law, the son with his father. “The inscription will explain his case to him,” Hammurabi continued. “He will find out what is just, and his heart will be glad.”

At last, people had a clear explanation—however imperfect—of right and wrong. Known as the **Code** of Hammurabi, this system of laws set the standard for all future societies. Legal scholars call it the first great legal document of civilization. It even predates the Bible!

Discovering the Code

We know little about Hammurabi aside from his Code. It is a fluke that his set of rules even survived.

In 1901, French archaeologists were



working at the site of Susa, an ancient Persian city. There, they made an astonishing discovery: the stela of Hammurabi’s Code. Written in **cuneiform**, the Code was a list of 282 legal judgments that formed the basis of Babylonian law.

With its fancy palaces and temples, Babylon was one of the greatest cities of **Mesopotamia**. That historical region, home to some of the earliest human societies, is often called the “cradle of civilization.” Under Hammurabi, Babylon became the dominant military and cultural power in the region.

Rulers had written down laws before. Hammurabi’s were partly based on Mesopotamian traditions that

Law 196

“If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.”

Law 2

“If any one bring an accusation against a man, let the accused go to the river and leap in. If he sink in the river, his accuser shall take possession of his house. But if [the accused] escape unhurt, then he who had brought the accusation shall be put to death.”

were old even then. But as far as we know, never before had a system of laws been so complete, and so available to the people who lived under them.

Hammurabi’s Code touched every aspect of daily life—including bad weather and the fees for renting oxen.

“An Eye for an Eye”

What trouble could a Babylonian get into? Here is one example from Hammurabi’s Code: “If any one is committing a robbery and is caught, then he shall be put to death.”

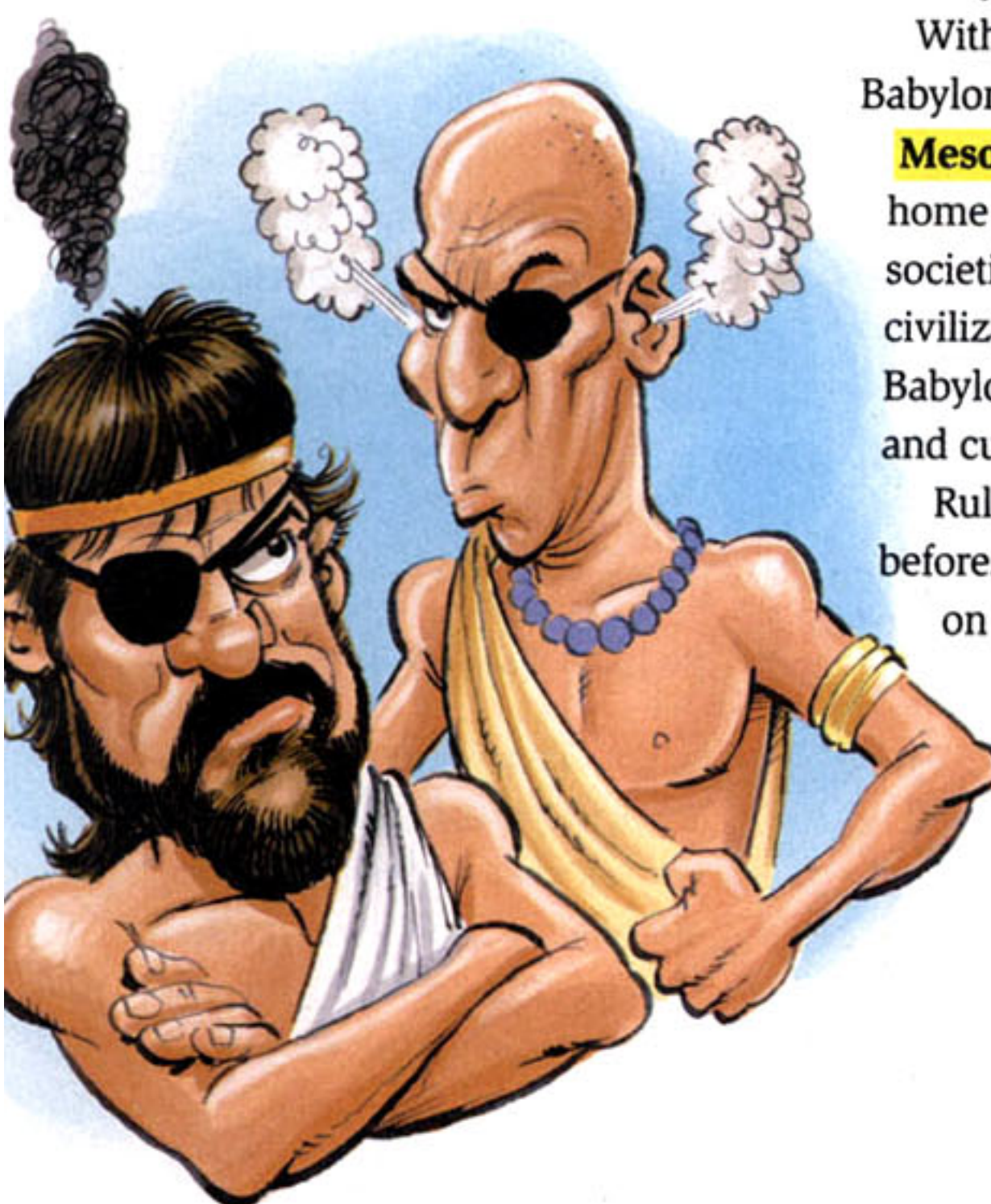
That was that. Punishments were swift, to the point, and much harsher than they are today. Many of them may seem unfair to us. Some are downright inexplicable. For instance, Babylon, like many other ancient

World History continued on next page →

Words to Know

- **code**: a system of laws.
- **cuneiform** (*kyoo-NEE-uh-form*): an early alphabet written in wedge shapes.
- **Mesopotamia**: an area of early civilization located in present-day Iraq.
- **stela** (*STEE-luh*): a carved stone slab.
- **trial by ordeal**: a way of determining a person’s guilt or innocence by performing dangerous or painful tests believed to be under divine control.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM RICHMOND



societies, practiced **trial by ordeal**. “If any one bring an accusation against a man,” Hammurabi wrote, “let the accused go to the river and leap in. If he sink in the river, his accuser shall take possession of his house. But if [the accused] escape unhurt, then he who had brought the accusation shall be put to death.”

If you survived, you must have been innocent! As one historian quips: “The gods were on the side of the best swimmers.”

Two of the laws in Hammurabi’s Code will sound familiar. Said Law 196: “If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.” Law 200 said: “If he knock out the teeth of his equal, his teeth shall be knocked out.”

An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Centuries later, this tradition re-emerged in the laws of the Jews under Moses, and became a well-known part of the Bible.

No Joke!

Indeed, violating Hammurabi’s laws was no joke. Under the Code, a man who struck his father would have his hands cut off. So would a doctor whose patient died on the operating table.

Yet, for its time, the Code was **progressive** (leading to social change). Law 48 protected farmers who borrowed money to plant their crops: “If any one owe a debt for a loan, and a storm [destroys] the grain, or the harvest fail . . . in that year he need not give his **creditor** [money lender] any grain . . . and pay no rent for this year.”



Law 48

If any one owe a debt for a loan, and a storm [destroys] the grain, or the harvest fail . . . in that year he need not give his creditor any grain . . . and pay no rent for this year.”

Farmers today would love that law.

Some laws protected consumers. For instance, a builder would lose his life if his careless work led to the death of a house’s occupants. Another law allowed women, who had few rights in the ancient world, to divorce their husbands under certain circumstances. Still another demanded child support from men who deserted their families. Even slaves enjoyed some rights.

The Desire for Justice

Hammurabi’s laws did not contain many safeguards that we take for granted today. An individual could not

appeal a conviction. As far as we know, judges could not give a less severe sentence than the Code allowed.

But Hammurabi’s Code strove to be fair in ways that we can understand. He wanted, he wrote, “to destroy the wicked and the evil-doers, so that the strong should not harm the weak.”

More than 3,500 years later, the Constitution of the United States promised to “establish justice” and “security the blessings of liberty” for the citizens of a young country. The language of our rules may have changed, but the desire to seek justice endures.

—Bryan Brown

Word Match

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. code | A. type of alphabet |
| 2. creditor | B. system of laws |
| 3. cuneiform | C. leading to change |
| 4. Mesopotamia | D. money lender |
| 5. progressive | E. “cradle of civilization” |

Think About It

1. In your own words, why do you think Hammurabi established a written code of behavior?
2. What is the difference between trial by ordeal and trial by jury? Which would you prefer? Why?

Hammurabi's Empire



How would you find the location of an ancient city? Would you consult (a) the latest political map, (b) a travel guide, or (c) a historical atlas?

If you answered (c), stand up, and take a bow!

When reading a map, first consider the title and key (or legend). The key explains the symbols that represent rivers and other geographical features.

This map comes from a historical atlas. It shows Hammurabi's empire in 1750 B.C. The empire was then at its

largest. After Hammurabi's death that year, many of the places he had captured regained their independence.

Study the map, then answer the questions below. If you don't answer them correctly, Hammurabi might punish you!

Questions

- Which river did the city of Ninevah border?

- Leaving the city of Babylon, in which compass direction would you travel to reach Susa, where Hammurabi's Code was found? _____
- What was the approximate distance between Babylon and Susa? _____
- Into which body of water did the Tigris and Euphrates empty? _____
- Mesopotamia included most of which present-day country? _____
- Ancient Babylon was a part of which region? _____
- Which present-day country is located northwest of Babylon? _____
- The present-day capital of that country is shown on the map. What is that city's name? _____
- Which peninsula is located between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf? _____
- Susa was located in which present-day country? _____

USA How to Find Time! pp. 14-15

■ Objectives

Students should be able to:

- compare and contrast their time-management habits with those of the kids profiled.
- devise ways to improve how they organize time and tasks.

■ Word to Know

• **academic planner:** calendar, chart, or date-book with spaces to write in one's schedule (homework due dates, fun activities, etc.) to keep track of time and obligations. Various planner types can be printed off the Web, or purchased in stationery or office-supply stores.

■ Background

Today's kids juggle many activities and responsibilities. Getting everything done can be a challenge. But getting organized and setting goals and limits can help greatly.

■ Critical Thinking

FINDING SUPPORTING EVIDENCE: What, according to the article, makes today's kids "the most time-stressed generation ever"? (chores at home; various lessons and after-school programs, such as sports and clubs; time with friends; instant messaging; homework)

MAKING COMPARISONS AND INFERENCES: Of the four kids quoted (Riley, Remi, Craig, and Dana), whose time-management style is most like yours? Could yours be more effective? Explain. (Answers will vary; should be supported by reasoned examples.)

■ Activity

SAY AGAIN?: Write this statement on the board: "Procrastination makes easy things hard, hard things harder." Have students explain and discuss what the writer (Mason Cooley) meant by it. Do they agree? Why or why not?

STANDARD

SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 5-8

■ **Individual development and identity:** Learning to balance needs and wants is a sign of growing maturity.

RESOURCES

PRINT

- Covey, Sean, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* (Simon & Schuster, 1998). Grades 6-12.
- Fox, Janet S., *Get Organized Without Losing It* (Free Spirit Publishing, 2006). Grades 6-12.

WEB SITES

- **It's My Life (PBS)**
pbskids.org/itsmylife/school/time
- **Organizing From the Inside Out**
organizedteens.com

WORLD HISTORY Laying Down the Law, pp. 16-19

■ Objective

Students should be able to:

- make the connection between the ancient written laws of Hammurabi and law in society today, especially as exemplified by the U.S. Constitution.

■ Words to Know

- **conviction:** a declaration of guilt made in a court of law.
- **oppressed:** crushed by abuses of power or authority.

■ Background

Since the discovery of Hammurabi's Code in 1901, archaeologists have found evidence of codes of law older than Hammurabi's. The oldest is from Ur in Sumer (birthplace of Abraham, patriarch of the Jews), and dates from the mid-21st century B.C. None of the codes un-

covered have been nearly as complete as Hammurabi's. But they do show that the concept of law was accepted in other ancient societies.

■ Critical Thinking

RECALLING DETAILS/COMPREHENSION: What is a trial by ordeal? (determining guilt or innocence by subjecting the accused to dangerous tests in order to determine "guilt" or "innocence")

FORMING SUPPORTED OPINIONS: The Eighth Amendment forbids "cruel and unusual punishments." Do you consider Hammurabi's Code "cruel and unusual"? Explain. (Answers will vary.)

■ Activity

PUT IT IN WRITING: Write a sentence or short paragraph explaining why having written laws available to everyone is an improvement over unwritten laws.

STANDARD

SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADES 5-8

■ **Power, authority, and governance:** Hammurabi's Code is the most complete known ancient standard of people's rights and responsibilities.

RESOURCES

PRINT

- Bryant, Tamera, *The Life and Times of Hammurabi* (Mitchell Lane Publishers, 2005). Grades 5-8.
- Chaves, Eva Bargallo I., *Mesopotamia* (Chelsea House, 2006). Grades 6-9.

WEB SITES

- **Ancient Mesopotamia: Law and Government**
oi.uchicago.edu/OI/MUS/ED/TRC/MESO/law.html
- **The Code of Hammurabi**
yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/medieval/hamframe.htm

NAME _____

NEWS SPECIAL: HOW SAFE ARE YOUR SECRETS? PAGES 6-8

■ Match each person in the left column with the correct description in the right column.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. Dick Cheney | A. onetime King of Britain |
| ___ 2. Benjamin Franklin | B. current U.S. Vice President |
| ___ 3. George III | C. Republican U.S. Representative from Michigan |
| ___ 4. Peter Hoekstra | D. Chief Justice of the U.S. |
| ___ 5. John G. Roberts Jr. | E. signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution |

WORLD: CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, PAGES 10-13

■ Write the letter of the correct answer on the line before each question.

- ___ 6. Which of the following did *not* take part in this summer's fighting in Lebanon, Israel, and the Gaza Strip?
- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| A. Israeli Defense Forces | C. Hezbollah |
| B. Hamas | D. U.S. Army |
- ___ 7. In June 2006, Hamas militants in Gaza struck which region?
- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| A. northern Israel | C. southern Lebanon |
| B. southern Israel | D. western Syria |
- ___ 8. Hezbollah was founded in 1982, after which of these events?
- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Israel's invasion of Lebanon | C. Syria's war with Lebanon |
| B. Iran's invasion of Iraq | D. U.S. invasion of Iraq |
- ___ 9. This summer, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spoke in defense of which of the following?
- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| A. Iran | C. Hamas |
| B. Israel | D. Hezbollah |
- ___ 10. According to the August cease-fire plan, soldiers from the United Nations and which of the following would patrol a buffer zone between Lebanon and Israel?

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A. Britain's Royal Air Force | C. Lebanese Army |
| B. Israeli Defense Forces | D. Palestine Liberation Organization |

USA: HOW TO FIND TIME! PAGES 14-15

■ Decide whether each sentence is true, false, or an opinion. Write your answer on the blank line provided.

- ___ 11. Remi Gibba says that she does a lot of her homework on her way home from soccer practice.
- ___ 12. Doing homework before spending time with friends is better than doing it any other time.
- ___ 13. Riley Sexton should get better organized.
- ___ 14. Getting an academic planner is the only way to organize time.
- ___ 15. "Chunking" is scheduling all your weekly chores for the same day.

WORLD HISTORY: LAYING DOWN THE LAW, PAGES 16-19

■ Use a word or phrase from this list to correctly complete each sentence.

after the Bible, after the U.S. Constitution, before the Bible, British historians, cuneiform, French archaeologists, Indiana Jones, Iraq, Mesopotamia, Palestine, stela, tough sentencing, trial by fire, trial by ordeal

16. Hammurabi's empire was in an area of the Middle East once known as _____.
17. The Code of Hammurabi was a set of laws written _____.
18. The original Hammurabi's Code was inscribed on a _____.
19. Determining guilt or innocence by performing painful or dangerous tests is known as _____.
20. We know about Hammurabi's Code today because it was found in 1901 by _____.

ANSWERS

GeoSkills, p. 13

1. Israel
2. Arab
3. Egypt and Jordan
4. Hamas
5. Iran and Iraq
6. Sunni Islam
7. Lebanon
8. Iran
9. Lebanon
10. Lebanon

Word Match, p. 18

1. B; 2. D; 3. A; 4. E; 5. C

GeoSkills, p. 19

1. Tigris
2. east
3. 280 miles
4. Persian Gulf
5. Iraq
6. Mesopotamia (or Hammurabi's empire)
7. Syria
8. Damascus
9. Arabian Peninsula
10. Iran

Some Fun, p. 20

Crossword



Brainteaser

There are eight squares.

What Do You Know? p. 22

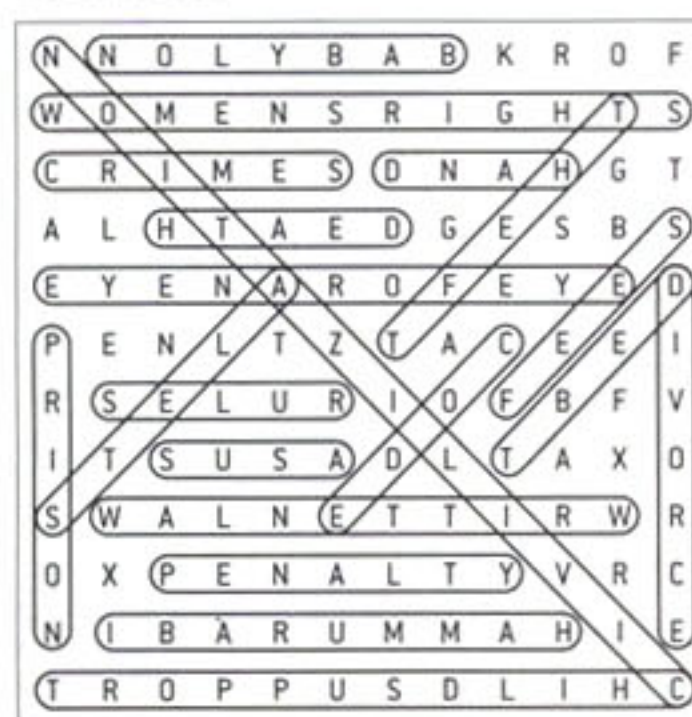
News IQ

1. C
2. B
3. D
4. D
5. C

Political Cartoon

1. civilians (noncombatants) in the clash between Israel and Hezbollah (Answers factoring in Hamas and Gaza in the following are also acceptable.)
2. It was bombed by either an Israeli warplane or a Hezbollah rocket. (Both are flying overhead.)
3. No. It could be Israel or Lebanon; both sides have been attacked.
4. Who is winning the war?
5. For civilians harmed on both sides, it doesn't matter who is winning the war. Either way, the civilians are hurt most, through loss of life and property.

Word Find



Quick Quiz, p. T-5

1. B
2. E
3. A
4. C
5. D
6. D
7. B
8. A
9. B
10. C
11. true
12. opinion
13. opinion
14. false
15. false
16. Mesopotamia
17. before the Bible
18. stela (carved stone slab)

19. trial by ordeal
20. French archaeologists

Skills Reproducible 1, p. T-6

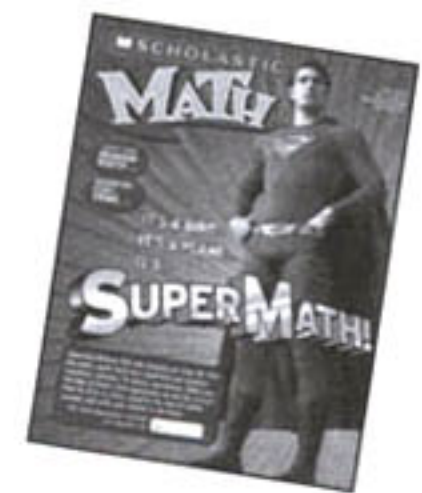
1. Iroquois only
2. U.S. only
3. Iroquois only
4. U.S. only
5. both
6. Iroquois only
7. Iroquois only
8. U.S. only
9. U.S. only
10. both (Iroquois, from 5 nations to 6; U.S., from 13 states to 50)

Skills Reproducible 2, p. T-7

1. Israel (7.2 million)
2. Lebanon and Palestinian Territories both have 3.9 million
3. The Palestinian Territories will have 2.5 million more people (7.1 minus 4.6).

4. Population density (which measures people per square mile)
5. The Palestinian Territories have 719 more people per square mile (1,609 minus 890).
6. Percentage of natural population rise
7. Palestinian Territories
8. gross national product (GDP)
9. \$24,000 (Israel's \$24,600, minus the Gaza Strip's \$600)
10. Answers will vary; in general, should include that overcrowding will mean greater competition for jobs and housing, lower standards of education; lower personal incomes put strain on all areas of life.

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