

Hammurabi's Canal

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OVERVIEW

Hammurabi, the great king who ruled Babylon between about 1792 B.C. and 1750 B.C., could claim credit for many great works besides the code of laws for which he is famous. Here is an inscription commemorating a canal that Hammurabi had ordered excavated.

GUIDED READING As you read, consider the following: Great engineering accomplishments, such as the Hoover Dam, are often revered in our culture.

- How do we commemorate such things today?
 - What are the differences between the commemoration of Hammurabi's Canal and commemorations of architectural landmarks today?
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HAMMURABI the powerful king, King of Babylon,
the King renowned through the four races,
conqueror of the enemies of MARUDUK,
the ruler the delight of his heart am I.
When ANU and BEL the people of Sumir
and Akkad to my dominion gave,
powerful adversaries into my hand they delivered.
The river Hammurabi-nuhus-nisi
flowing waters giving pleasure to the people
of Sumir and Akkad I excavated,
the whole of its banks to its course I restored,
the entire channel I filled, perennial waters
for the people of Sumir and Akkad I established.
The people of Sumir and Akkad
their chief men I gathered,
authority and possessions I established to them,
delight and pleasure I spread out to them,
in luxurious seats I seated them.
Then I HAMMURABI the powerful King
blessed by the great gods;
with the powerful forces which MARUDUK gave me,
a great wall with much earth,
its top like a mountain raised,
along the river Hammurabi-nuhus-nisi I made."