

Amorites or Eastern Canaanites. They very soon obtained supremacy in a city known as Babylon and then began to extend their influence over the rest of Mesopotamia. The 16th king of this first dynasty of Babylon is called Hammurapi, conquered all of Babylonia and extended his control as far west as the Mediterranean. He ^{codified} ~~quoted~~ the laws of Babylon and inscribed them on a stone pillar.

Not so very long ago, there were those who maintained that the laws of the Pentateuch could not possibly have originated as early as the time of Moses. Here we have a code of laws which are similar to them in many respects which were written some centuries before the time of Moses and which in turn presupposed a legal development that must have gone on for a long time before.

Babylon soon came to be the generally recognized leader of the cities of Mesopotamia. The Babylonians had taken over the religion of the Sumerians, almost without change. Now, many of its features were attributed to Marduk, the god of Babylon who was made to become the leader among the many gods whom the Semites had taken over from the Sumerians.

The culture and commerce of Babylon gave it a language and a prestige which continued even during the many periods when the city was politically of little importance. The influence which Babylon came to exert upon the whole ancient world, can only be compared to the position which Rome came to hold through the Middle Ages.

About 750 B.C., the mountain peoples who always threatened the safety of Mesopotamia, succeeded in conquering the land. Before the rise of Babylon to power, some Sumerians from Southern Mesopotamia had formed a colony in the far north and named their new cities Ashur and Nineveh. When the mountain folks conquered Babylon and Southern Mesopotamia, these northern peoples who called themselves