

## HAMMURABI

The Hammurabi Code, written in approximately 2150 B.C. in Babylonia, is the first known compilation of civil law. In the code sections regarding parent-child relationships, children owed a **duty of respect** to their parents, and if children fulfilled this duty, they were entitled to receive minimum care and treatment from their parent. If the child's duty was violated, the parent owed the child nothing, and the child's status reverted to that of a slave (property), or a non-family member.

The code defined the parent-child relationship as **proprietary interest**. This concept persisted in legal codes for more than 3000 years. The child, in simple terms, was viewed as an economic unit and could be sold or exchanged at the discretion of the parent.

Without inherent rights and protections, children could suffer abuse without state interference. Infanticide of unwanted children with birth defects, and punishment of children by dismemberment were accepted practices.