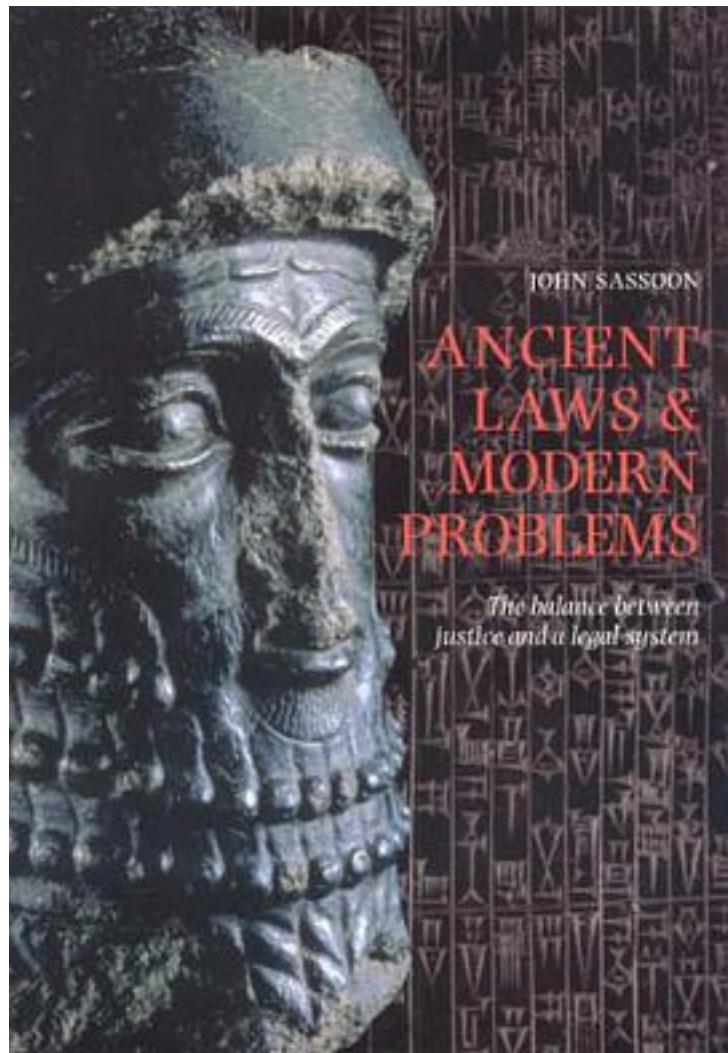


Ancient Laws and Modern Problems



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The easiest point from which to start a discussion of the ancient world is their laws, because their laws have often survived in original when other indications of their ways of life have vanished, or reach us only at second hand. A comparison of some of the principles which underlie the most ancient legal systems with those of today raises two questions which neither our historians nor our lawyers appear to have addressed: the first, how did our ancestors manage to solve, or avoid having to face, so many of the social and legal problems which baffle us? The second, how has a situation arisen where thousands of sincere, intelligent, devoted, trained, honest, normal men and women who are our barristers and judges, find themselves consciously running a system which in the course of its normal, correct operation can produce injustice on a magnificent scale? There are plenty of excellent histories which depict the ancient world as it appears to modern eyes; but apparently none that attempt to understand the ancient world by trying to visualise the modern world as ancient eyes might have seen it; nor is there any recognition that an exercise of that kind might contribute to our understanding of ourselves. In spite of the conjectural elements, that is what this book does.

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