

Both the *Law Code Stele of Hammurabi* and the *Narmer Palette* use hieratic scale to show the power of the ruler that each object is associated with. In the *Law Code Stele*, Hammurabi appears to be the largest figure, standing upright with one hand raised in a gesture of speech or contemplation. He faces a crowned figure, Shamash, seated on a throne, who is in fact much larger and would tower over the king should he stand. Like Shamash, Narmer is larger than the other figures on the palette. Narmer is shown with his arm raised, ritual object in hand, about to strike down an enemy, who is sprawled on the ground at his feet. Shamash and Narmer are the largest figures in the stele and palette, emphasizing god and king as of the utmost importance. Hammurabi uses his small size to underscore his position; he places himself in proximity to the god of justice, but does not suggest he is more powerful than the deity. His small size shows piety, while his proximity to the god shows power. Both objects employ hieratic scale to the same end, but in the stele the god is the largest, while in the palette, the king is.

The different approaches to hieratic scale correspond to the different contexts of these objects. The Narmer Palette is a votive object that was not meant to be viewed by the public. It was donated to a temple by the king to commemorate the unification of upper and lower Egypt. On the palette Narmer wears the crowns of both lower and upper Egypt, referencing his role as the first king of a unified Egypt. Narmer is interested in memorializing his military conquests that led to this unification, and so highlights his strength through his size and acts of ritualistic violence. The stele, however, was a public monument, meant to display Hammurabi's law code in newly conquered territories. Hammurabi showcased his piety and justice. With an image of him receiving that law from the god of justice, Hammurabi suggested that his rule and his law were blessed by the gods. Making himself bigger than Shamash would conflict with that message and would not have been as effective on a public monument. Both works then consider their contexts and use hieratic scale accordingly.