

preserved chiefly through documents from Assur; Hittite law, in so far as it can be reconstructed from the documents in the state archives of the capital Hattusas³ (Boghaz Keui) in Asia Minor, which were written in the Akkadian and Hittite languages; and Subaraean (Hurrite) law in the documents from Arrapha (Nuzi-Kirkuk) east of Assur written in Akkadian. Although Arrapha was only a small vassal kingdom of the Mitanni Empire, the fourth great power in the Near East, its documents are representative of the law of the latter; for the peoples were of the same race, neither Indo-European nor Semitic.

The great migration which began about 1200 B.C. represents another dark period in the history of Babylonian law. Again there was a change in the population, this time characterized by the penetration of Aramaic tribes, who gradually adapted their primitive forms of life to the Babylonian civilization, which had maintained itself with difficulty in the cities. Toward the close of this period there emerged the Neo-Assyrian law (800-700 B.C.) evidenced particularly by finds in Nineveh; Assyria was at that time a world power but toward the end of the seventh century it disintegrated thus disappearing from the history of the world. The following neo-Babylonian period (c. 700 B.C. to c. 200-100 B.C.) may be considered homogeneous although it includes the domination of the Persians (after 539 B.C.) and that of the Greeks (after 331 B.C.), subsequent to the rule of the native Chaldaean dynasty. As far as it has been possible to observe, foreign rule involved no profound changes in the law. It is true that the vast mass of material covers only a portion of Babylonia, although the clay tablets found in Nerab (near Aleppo) indicate a wider dispersion of neo-Babylonian law. The major competitors of cuneiform writing and of the clay tablet were the Aramaic alphabet and the parchment or papyrus document, which was much better adapted to the latter script. Developing as early as the neo-Assyrian period, it must have spread increasingly among the Aramaic population from the time of the Persians, whose official language was