

bonds. This was similar to the feudal relationship between the Syrian vassals of this period and the pharaoh, as is evidenced by the Egyptian king's correspondence with the^m~~x~~, written in Akkadian and found in El-Amarna in Egypt. Within Hatti itself the king's position was far from absolute, being limited by a powerful aristocracy. The state possessed feudalistic traits, which supposedly also characterized Assyria and Mitanni at this period. As for Babylonia the kudurru--phallus shaped stones with inscriptions regarding grants of land which were placed under the protection of the gods, whose symbols are inscribed in the upper half of the stones, or relating the royal grant of privileges to prominent men and families--are also a sign of the weakening of centralized rule. The small fief (ilku), consisting of land allocated for the support of soldiers and artisans, must be distinguished from feudalism proper, which appears to have been characteristic of the middle period. The small fief existed in all periods and was marked by a trend toward the gradual transformation of the fief into private property through inheritance and the right of disposal or toward the conversion of the original obligation of service into a tax.

Present day knowledge of the criminal law is derived largely from the criminal provisions of the laws, which are by no means inclusive. The criminal law is an affair of the state, as there is no vestige of private vengeance except in cases of adultery. But it is largely a private criminal law in that punishment is meted out on behalf of the wronged party and not of the state. This is true of fines as well as of corporal punishment, since the latter could be remitted contractually through the payment of a sum of money. In several cases in the Middle Assyrian code of law this is expressly stated and it may have been true to a wider extent. In addition there is the public offense, which is prosecuted by the state; its delimitations require further investigation. The concept of criminal guilt is outlined. The Code of Hammurabi and the Hittite law emphasize the deliberate deed in certain cases and punish it more severely. There existed moreover a concept of guilt over and above such individual