

in the hands of prominent families, however, especially of the city rulers. In Akkad the clans were deprived of their land by the king partly through purchase and also by the use of force. If we may generalize the course of development in Lagash in southern Babylonia, this process seems to have continued during the subsequent centuries until toward the end of the Sumerian period all land had become the property of temples and of the state. Houses and gardens were privately owned, but not tilled land; this accords with the rather pronounced state socialistic character of the period. The population, ordered in castes according to trades, lived largely for and through the state; state economy was predominant and with it a vast bureaucracy, which also managed the public storehouses. The economic status of the individual seems to have been for the most part poor, as is indicated by the frequent evidence of the sale of children. Nothing is more characteristic of the social transition to the Old Babylonian period than the reappearance of private land tenure. In this period the state also took over an extensive governmental economy from the Sumerians. The predominance of large estates would correspond to the feudalistic nature of the middle period. In fact it is assumed that Babylonia during the Cassite period was characterized by the collective ownership of families possessing political power. It is possible that family communities ⁿowning considerable land existed in Middle Assyria, while in Arrapha the evolution of large estates can be followed directly from the documents for various families. But little is known as yet of conditions during the neo-Babylonian period.

Acquisition of private property was chiefly by purchase. Personal property was acquired by transfer, while the purchase of real estate is attested by documents. The same holds true of slaves, cattle and, especially in Babylonia, temple benefices. Purchase was always effected for cash in accordance with certain forms; that is, direct exchange of money for commodities. The purchaser acquired full title as soon as the price was paid. Title became final with the transfer, which might be replaced by the document. The renunciation clauses which are characteristic of the Old Babylonian deeds, especially the clauses affecting the seller are related to this custom. The sale adoption of Arrapha is peculiar.