

The administration of these large properties was made not simple and it required a great body of peasants, servants, officials and scribes.

What of the land remaining over was a private possession which could be sold or rented at will. There was one special class, consisting of the old soldier colonists of Hammurabi, in that they held their land not as property in fee simple, but as a loan which could not be alienated. There was a special situation in the Cassite period.

Description of the size of various farms.

The peasants took care of their plots alone with the help of their family, or in some cases with the help of slaves or free wage earners who worked for them either by the year or just for the harvest time. In spite of the fruitfulness of the land, the situation of the free peasant does not seem to have been very pleasant. The monied class took care of this in that they brought the peasant in the business depending upon them for the seeding. They loaned the farmer money for the purchase of seed, which was then naturally very expensive. After the harvest, the farmer must pay his debts (according to the price of grain at that time)? as grain was then much cheaper the farmer would lose a large part of the fruit of his industry, and he became largely dependent upon his patron. The great temple domains and also the large land owner and bankers and the priests were not always able to take charge themselves of the production on their own lands, but generally they preferred to lend them out in order to relieve themselves of the trouble and to be sure of a good return. One or more peasants would generally rent a piece of land for a year, either for a fixed payment, generally to be made in kind which varied greatly in ~~time~~ time and place, or on a share, that is the owner took one third of the harvest and the tenant received the balance. In the case of land which had not formerly been planted, the contract generally ran for three years and was so drawn up that the peasant did not pay anything the first year. In the second year he paid a small percentage while in the third year, he assumed the full responsibility.