

EARLY AKKADIAN ECONOMY AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

IN CHARGE: Ignace J. Gelb, *Professor of Assyriology*

Having begun with a primarily linguistic interest in our earliest business and legal documents written in the Akkadian language (ca. 2300 B.C.), this study has expanded into an attempt to interpret their economic and social content and antecedents as well. With the aid of a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies, Professor Gelb is investigating in particular the organization of the rural economy into private estates or manors that were owned by the king, nobles, or temples. In contrast to later conditions introduced by the gradual growth of urbanization, he has defined an essentially private economy based on family ownership in which serfs, rather than slaves or craftsmen working for wages, constituted the bulk of the labor force. Early publication of the results of this study is anticipated.



Statue of male figure, probably a priest, from the Temple of Abu at Tell Asmar in Iraq