

The Structure of Ancient Mesopotamian Society

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As part of the long-range project on the structure of the ancient Mesopotamian society Professor Gelb is now preparing a chrestomathy of texts relating to this broad subject. The Sumerian and Akkadian texts already collected deal with such topics as family and clan, social stratification, household, land tenure, rations, wages, agriculture, animal husbandry, law, services, taxation, and metrology.

It is planned to contain each topic within a single chapter, which will include a general socioeconomic introduction, the texts reproduced in both the native languages and the English translation, and philological annotations to the texts.

An outgrowth of a very successful seminar "Structure of the Mesopotamian Society and Economy," given for five quarters in 1964/65 at the University of Chicago, the planned chrestomathy has two aims: one, to put together in a preliminary fashion the results attained heretofore in the investigation of the ancient society and economy; and two, to provide materials for the young, uninitiated students in this long-neglected field, dubbed in recent years "onionology"—irreverently, but quite appropriately.