

Structure of Ancient Society and Economy

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In a continuation of his long-range project on the structure of ancient society and economy, Professor Gelb has written three lengthy articles which have been published or will appear in the near future.

The first of these, published in Germany, is entitled "From Freedom to Slavery" and represents a programmatic projection of his planned monograph on the topic of the evolution of dependent labor from free peasantry to semi-free serfdom and fully unfree chattel slavery.

The second article was published in France under the title "The *Arua* Institution." The article deals with the temple labor personnel, consisting of women and children, much less of men, who were offered ex-voto (Sumerian *a-ru-a*, Akkadian *širkum*) to the temple. The rich gave whatever they could afford, animals, objects, as well as humans out of their service personnel, while the poor gave away other poor and unwanted people, mainly their women and children. The whole process of giving and taking involves a quid pro quo arrangement. The giving away of individuals by the rich may be an expression of piety on their part; but the giving away of women and children by the poor is the outcome of economic stress. The temple, by receiving these individuals, fulfills its pious duty of taking care of the weak and rejected; in return, the temple obtains cheap labor which helps to sustain its economic life.

The third article, entitled "Prisoners of War in early Mesopotamia," will be published in the planned issue of our *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* devoted to the memory of Keith C. Seele. The main conclusion of that article is that prisoners of war, mainly of foreign, not native, origin, did not become chattel slaves after their capture, but were resettled as serfs on crown and temple lands. Captives often were released to serve as the king's loyal bodyguard, mercenaries, and a movable soldier/worker force which could be rapidly transferred from one part of the country to another, for military as well as peaceful purposes.