

Other examples of usual contracts.

After the peasant had fenced in the land with a fence of reed or of mud, the work of establishing the agriculture of the land began. If he failed in this duty, he was required to "pay grain equivalent to the amount that was produced on the next field." The principle necessity for the production of a good harvest ~~was~~ was the securing and distributing of water. Therefore it was always one of the principle duties of an enlightened regime to take care of the canals. By this means new land was reclaimed and also good business was established for whoever wanted to use the water otherwise had to pay a heavy amount of goods. Great landowners had banks made at the side of the canals ~~and~~ at their own expense and then charged very heavily for the use of the water. Example of a contract from Persian times. The people who lived by the canal were required to keep it in condition. They must guard themselves against soil seepage and they must also take care of their "dams", so that the high water would not tear them away and flood the neighboring fields. (quotation from Code of Hammurabi)

The care of these dams was quite an important duty. The various levees had to be closed and opened so as to water fields at different regions and in ancient times as in modern times, this required a good deal of ability and care. Aside from the period of high water, the farmers land was nearer always higher than the ~~river~~ level of the water, so it was necessary to artificially raise the water in the canals. The method used in Irak today does not seem to have been known in ancient times, but the method used now in Egypt is exactly the same as that which was used by the Babylonians in ancient times. (see picture and description of schaduf). Sennacherib introduced this Babylonian instrument into Assyria and shows it in one of his reliefs.

In general the artificial irrigation of the mountainous regions of Assyria was less practiced than it was in Babylonia. The Assyrian agriculture was much more dependent on rain. (The eyes were