

The Legal and Social Status of Women in Assyrian Law

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Abstract: The study addressed the legal status of women in Assyrian law, reviewed the historical framework of women's roles in Assyrian society and their social position. It also examined the rights recognized by law and their effective impact on society, particularly politically, religiously, and culturally, as well as their role within the family. Additionally, it highlighted the effects of marriage on the relationship between spouses, its impact on women's legal capacity, and pointed to women's right to divorce and conduct business. Women were able to enjoy full legal capacity without any diminution due to marriage.

Keywords: Assyrian law, Assyrian society, women's right to divorce, marriage.

Introduction

The Assyrians were a group of people who settled in the northern part of Iraq. Historical and civilizational studies of the Mesopotamian region indicate the political, economic, and social significance of Assyria, as well as the level of advancement and development reached by Assyrian society. Additionally, these studies highlight the influence and contribution of women to the prosperity of Assyrian civilization. Women in Assyrian society enjoyed certain rights, including recognition of their capacity to manage their own finances and the right to conduct various legal transactions without their husband's permission. Economic conditions played an important role in shaping the of relationships between men and women, impacting their lives as women were involved in production. During the stable agricultural stage, women were able to participate alongside men and were granted equal rights because they were essential for the continuation of life in societies, playing a crucial role in family formation.

Methodology

Research Design:

This study employs a qualitative historical-legal research design. The research focuses on examining the legal and social status of women in Assyrian society through the analysis of legal texts, historical records, and scholarly literature. The design is appropriate because it enables an in-depth understanding of legal principles, social practices, and historical developments relating to women in ancient Assyria.

Sources of Data:

The study utilizes both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include Assyrian legal codes, legal provisions, inscriptions, and historical records relating to women's rights and obligations. Secondary sources include books, journal articles, research papers, and scholarly works on Assyrian civilization, Mesopotamian law, women's history, and ancient legal systems.

Research Importance: Marriage is essential in human life as it is a significant natural and social

phenomenon with numerous functions and benefits for individuals and society across different ages and civilizations. Due to the great importance of marriage and its implications, rules governing marriage and all associated obligations and rights have been carefully structured. Research Methodology: The analytical and historical approach was utilized to illuminate the role of women by examining their legal status in ancient societies. This includes exploring their interaction with society in terms of what they contribute and what they receive.

Research Plan: The research will be divided into two sections. The first section, will delve into the general framework of the role of women in Assyrian society, while the second section will focus on the status of women in Assyrian law

Chapter One

General Framework of the Role of Women in Assyrian Society

Introduction and Division:

The family system relies on the presence and continuity of women because of their distinguished role in various aspects of economic, social, and political life. They have actively participated with men in building and developing Assyrian society. In the first section, we will discuss the historical development of Assyrian society. In the second section, we will review the status of women in Assyrian law.

First requirement

The historical development of Assyrian society

The Assyrians are one of the Semitic peoples who left the Arabian Peninsula and settled in the northern part of Iraq, near present-day Al-Sharqat[1] They settled in four cities: Ashur, Arila, Kalhu, and Nineveh. The land of Ashur was founded by King Shamsi-Adad, with Ashur as its capital, and he established a strong state whose influence extended to Damascus, Palestine, and the Nile Delta region in Lower Egypt[2].

The Assyrians succeeded the Babylonians in dominating Mesopotamia since the mid-2nd millennium BC, and settled on the right bank of the Tigris River, which was called (Subartu) before their settlement[3].

The Assyrians named their country Assur after the god Ashur, the god of the Assyrians, and the ruins of the ancient city of Assur still exist in Al-Shirqat south of Mosul. The city of Assur remained the capital of the Assyrian state until 1275 BC. Due to the expansive growth of the Assyrian state to the north, King Shalmaneser moved the capital to the city of Nimrud, located north of Assur. When King Sargon II assumed the throne in 721 BC, he made Nineveh the capital of the state and later established a new capital called the city of Sargon, known as Dur-Sharrukin. The governing system of the Assyrian state did not rely on divine authority, and the king was considered an intermediary between the people and the gods. The Assyrians were a highly organized militarily strong people and formidable warriors to confront the threats of their neighbors and defend their territories, making their society fundamentally military-based, although culturally and civically they were less advanced than the Babylonian society[4].

The Assyrians used to impose themselves through force and wars, which for them were an end in themselves, and they began a policy of conquests. They seized Elam and reached the peak of their power by establishing the Assyrian Empire during the period (1000-612 BC). The Assyrian state was known as the greatest state the ancient world had known in terms of power and organization[5]. Assyrian society was divided into classes, with each class defining the rights and duties of its members both among themselves and towards the general authority. The ruling family and clergy were not part of the Assyrian social class division, but instead enjoyed special privileges and occupied a high rank in society.

Assyrian society is divided into the free class and the slave class, with a middle class called the Moshkino. The social class system is considered a closed hereditary system, and one cannot move from

one class to another[6].

Second Requirement

The Status of Women in Assyrian Law

Women held a prominent position in society and the family in ancient Iraqi times, as evidenced by archaeological findings like seals and wall carvings depicting women's status and their active role in shaping civilized life. Texts, especially those related to religious beliefs and motherhood, also support this. Assyrian law paid attention to women by defining their rights and duties, considering them the heart of the family and a pillar of society as mothers and the source of life's continuity. Strict laws were enacted to protect pregnant mothers from harm, with abortion being a crime punishable by impalement for the woman and denial of burial if she died before the sentence was carried out. This is detailed in Article 53 of Assyrian law[7]. If a man causes a pregnant woman to miscarry, he is punished by paying two weights of silver, receiving fifty lashes, and working at the royal palace for a month[8]. Harsh penalties were emphasized for women who self-aborted to protect pregnant women, highlighting the importance of children in ancient Iraqi society. In cases where a husband is absent or has left the city, the law requires the wife to wait two years before remarrying if the husband is captured, the wife can request a divorce and remarry after waiting two years, even if she has no children or father-in-law for support. Palace employees whose husbands are captured receive food in exchange for their service while women from the general populace may request a hut on land to cultivate for two years if their active husband did not leave means of support.

In Assyrian society, free women were required to wear veils in public to maintain their status, social position, and class affiliation, distinguishing them from others. Veils were forbidden for female slaves and women considered prostitutes, with strict punishments imposed if they wore them. The Assyrians were among the first ancient peoples to recognize women's veiling, influenced by factors such as their harshness in war, prolonged absences of men during conflicts, and moral decay due to a large number of slaves in Assure. This led to more restrictions on Assyrian women's freedom. Assyrian law differentiated between two groups of women regarding veil wearing. The first group includes free women, whether married, unmarried, or widowed, as well as maids when they accompany her mistress in public, and temple prostitutes when taken as wives by free men. This group is required to wear the veil, and a married free woman was not allowed to go out without it.

The second group consists of prostitutes and slave women who were forbidden to wear the veil. The Assyrian legislator punished a prostitute caught wearing a veil by giving her clothes to whoever apprehended her and delivering her to the royal palace. Similarly, the law punished anyone who saw a prostitute or her mother veiled and did not report it; such a person would be brought before the palace court and punished with fifty lashes, pierced ears with a thread passed through and tied at the back, their clothes given to the accuser, and one month of hard labor for the king. If a man married a secret wife and wished her to be veiled, he was required to veil her in front of five or six witnesses, declaring in their presence, 'She is my wife.' A secret wife who was not veiled before witnesses and whose husband did not declare her as his wife in such presence was not considered a wife and remained a secret wife. The veil was a sign of a legitimate wife and served to distinguish free Assyrian women from temple prostitutes and slave women[9].

Article 40 of the Assyrian law addressed the issue of women's veiling: a free Assyrian woman is not allowed to go out into the public street without a head covering or cloak, while a prostitute is not allowed to veil. Anyone who sees a veiled prostitute must apprehend her and has the right to take her clothes[10], with her punishment being fifty lashes and pouring tar on her head. If someone sees and recognizes a prostitute but does not report her, their punishment is fifty lashes, piercing of the ears, and hard labor in the king's palace for a month, with the person who reports her receiving her clothes. We notice that wearing a veil in Assyrian society carried a national distinctive concept, imposed on Assyrian women but not on slaves or prostitutes, highlighting the distinction of Assyrian women from others. Previous Babylonian laws granted women rights in cases of divorce, but Assyrian law did not grant women any rights upon divorce. Article 37 of Assyrian law stated that if a man divorced a woman, he might give her rights if he wished, but if he wished not to, he could give her nothing and let her leave empty-handed.

In Assyrian society, a woman was considered the property of her husband, and he could do with her as he wished under the law, and she was no different from female slaves owned by their husband. A penalty was imposed on a wife who fled her husband's house, involving disfigurement of her face by her husband, and the owners of the house that sheltered her were also penalized. The law allowed a widow to be married to the brother of her deceased husband, and if the father of the deceased did not consent to marry her to his other son, he had the right to reclaim all the gifts his deceased son had given her, except for perishable items. If the wife died, the husband had the right to request her father to give him one of her daughters in place of his deceased wife, and if her father did not agree, he had the right to reclaim the gifts he had given her, except for perishable items as well[11]. Assyrian society took the parents' consent into account when arranging a marriage, but a man who reached adulthood had the right to contract his marriage himself without needing parental permission[12]. As for women, their father or legal guardian had to complete the marriage contract on their behalf, and the contract was considered void even if consummation occurred without the guardian's knowledge. However, the law gave widows and divorced women the right to choose

However, social class differences no longer prevent marriage between individuals from different social standings; a slave has the right to marry a free woman[13]. Assyrian law allowed a man, under Article 31, to marry his deceased wife's sister if she died before he consummated the marriage. The Assyrian girl was under her father's absolute authority and could not contract her marriage without his consent, even if she served another person as collateral for her father's debt. Her brothers had to free her from the pledge upon their father's death; if they failed to do so within a specified period, they lost their rights over her, and a creditor could free her and marry her. In Assyrian society, a marriage contract was preceded by an agreement between the bride's family and the groom, and the engagement included a celebration where the groom poured perfumes on the girl's head and presented gifts of jewelry, other items, and food. The fiancée then became affiliated with her father-in-law's household. If the groom died before consummating the marriage, she did not regain her freedom but would marry one of his adult brothers. When a man accuses a married woman of lacking chastity but cannot prove it with witnesses, the accuser must submit to the river ordained as sacred, and drowning in it confirms the accusation.

If the slander is against a married woman and happens during a quarrel and cannot be proven, his act is considered a mitigating circumstance and he is punished with fifty lashes, serves one month of labor in the king's palace, has his weight paid in lead, and is completely disfigured. The punishment for an adulterous wife was severe under Assyrian law; if a married woman frequented her lover's house, both were sentenced to death, though her lover was exempt if he did not know she was married. If a married woman consensually committed adultery in another woman's house, the death penalty applied to the wife, her partner, and the homeowner. If the adultery was forced, the wife was exempt from punishment if she informed her husband of the incident, and the man and the homeowner were executed. A man could lose his wife under the law of vengeance; a man who raped a girl could have his wife taken by the girl's father to be forced into prostitution and not returned. Assyrian law placed no restrictions on a man wishing to divorce his wife; the husband who divorced his wife who had lived with him owed her no compensation, and all property she brought into the marriage remained with their children. If the wife lived in her father's house and the husband divorced her, he had the right to reclaim all the jewelry she gave her, but he does not have the right to reclaim the gifts given to her on the occasion of the marriage[14].

In the case of a husband being absent from his wife for more than five years, especially when he has not provided enough for her support and they have no children to meet her needs, she can petition the court for widowhood status, and she is allowed to choose another man. If the absent husband returns and gives a justified reason for his absence, he has the right to reclaim his wife, provided he offers a substitute wife to the second husband. In the case of a husband sent by the king to serve outside of Assyria, his wife must wait five years before marrying another man, and upon his return, the second marriage is considered void and, by law, the children become heirs of the first husband.

Chapter Two

Women's Rights in Assyrian Law

Introduction and Division:

Despite the deteriorating conditions of women in Assyrian society compared to previous Sumerian and Babylonian civilizations, women managed to assert their presence in social, economic, political, and even religious spheres. Women played a significant role in Assyrian civilization, even though Assyrian society regarded women as the property of men, allowing men to act with them as they pleased, divorce them, and deny them their rights. Women were expected to obey without objection. Nevertheless, Assyrian women reached positions of power and had an active influence on society. In this discussion, we will explore the role of women within the family, in both economic and cultural spheres, as well as their political and religious roles. We will also examine the capacity of women to engage in financial and legal transactions.

First Requirement

Women's Rights at the Family Level

First: The Assyrian Woman's Eligibility for Marriage:

Legal texts and daily documents indicate that a woman enjoys full legal capacity once she has reached adulthood, so marriage does not diminish her legal capacity; she remains fully capable as before. Marriage is considered the cornerstone of family life in Assyrian society. When a man wants to marry, he brings friends and announces before them that this woman has become his wife, and a veil is placed on her head to cover her.

Marriage in the Assyrian capital is a private matter without interference from public authorities; it is conducted by agreement between the young man and the girl's father, meaning it is concluded by mutual consent of the parents. Additionally, a woman has the right to conclude her marriage contract herself.

Second: The role of the marriage contract in ensuring women's rights was significant. The marriage contract was considered one of the most important contracts due to its continuity and permanence, and Assyrian law did not differ from other laws of ancient Iraq, as it included a set of conditions to guarantee marital rights. Among these conditions: the consent of the parties to the marriage contract; a marriage contract can only be concluded with the consent of the guardians of the couple, the consent of the woman, and the consent of the man about to marry, provided he is fully capable of expressing his will. If the man is partially or completely incompetent, then the marriage is concluded with the consent of the guardians[15]. Requiring the marriage contract to be in writing in ancient Iraqi laws aimed to protect the wife's financial rights. However, in the Assyrian era, oral contracts conducted in the presence of witnesses were used to complete the marriage. The system of cohabitation marriage was also known, meaning that a widow residing in a man's house for two years was considered married without the need to formalize a contract[16].

Monogamous marriage was the norm in Mesopotamia. During the Sumerian period, the law allowed a man only one legitimate wife. However, the Assyrian legislator permitted a husband to take more than one concubine if he wished, living in his house, and she could reach the status of a legitimate wife if the husband explicitly declared it in an official document in the presence of witnesses.

Among the customary traditions of the Assyrian community, pouring oil on the bride-to-be's head is practiced; the law prohibited the fiancé from doing this on a woman's head on the day of her ritual bath and from presenting her with wedding gifts on that day, and he is not allowed to reclaim the gifts afterwards. If the oil is poured on the bride-to-be's head and she is given wedding gifts on the day of the ritual bath, and then the fiancé dies, it becomes the right of his father to marry her off to one of his sons who is at least ten years old[17].

Third: Women's rights in marriage payments: Assyrian women used to receive a dowry (*terhatu*), paid by the husband to his wife at the marriage contract or to her family, and it was paid at the time of engagement. However, it did not belong to the wife or her father as a final right except in the case of completing the marriage, and if the marriage was not completed, it would return to the husband. That is, if the engagement was broken at the request of the husband, he would lose the right to reclaim the dowry. However, if the engagement was broken, it would return to the girl or her father. The father of the girl is obliged to return double the dowry to the husband, and if he dies, she has the right to keep

the dowry. In case of non-payment of the dowry, the husband is required to provide her with compensation upon divorce. The father of the fiancée provides her with assets, whether movable or immovable, and anything given to her by her father-in-law on the occasion of her marriage is for the wife's right of use and transfers to her children after her death.

A wife whose husband dies and who was not allocated money for her support after his death, known as (Nodino), is legally required under Assyrian law for the deceased's children to support their father's widow, and she remains in her house despite any dispute from the children about leaving the marital home. This indicates that Assyrian legislators considered protecting the widow, ensuring her a dignified life, and preventing the deceased husband's children from depriving her of her rights. A married woman could sometimes live in her father's house, and the husband was obliged to pay for her ordinary household expenses, and upon divorce, the husband gave her (Terhato), which became her private property. If a widow marries a man and has a child from her deceased husband, the child, if not adopted by the new husband, will inherit from the deceased father. The law stipulates that a widow is recognized as a legitimate wife if she has lived in a man's house for two years, and she cannot be evicted after this period. The ownership of the belongings she brought with her passes to her husband. If the man lives in the widow's house, his belongings become the property of the widow. The Assyrian society requires married women to wear a veil from the moment of marriage to distinguish them from unmarried women. We can observe that wearing a veil among married women is exactly like wearing a wedding ring today. The Assyrians are considered one of the oldest peoples to have introduced the woman's veil. The veil system influenced other regions of Mesopotamia and neighboring countries. Several circumstances contributed to the emergence of the veil among the Assyrians, as they were a warrior people who conducted many wars in neighboring areas.

War forced their men to stay away from their women for long periods, and the abundance of slaves in Assyrian society led to moral decay, resulting in restrictions on women's freedom; veiling was imposed on free women, whether married, girls, or widows. A veiled woman had to wear the veil when accompanying her mistress. A temple prostitute was obliged to wear the veil when a man took her as his wife. The veil was also worn by a concubine whom her master wanted to make a legitimate wife, and he had to veil her in the presence of five or six of his neighbors and say "she is my wife," after which she became his wife. If witnesses were absent when a man veiled his concubine and he did not recite the specific words, she remained a concubine and did not rise to the status of a wife. The social status of Assyrian women dropped compared to their position in previous civilizations; an Assyrian woman was considered the property of a man, who could deprive her of everything she owned and divorce her whenever he wished. The Assyrian law ignored the rights of divorced women. In ancient laws, a divorced woman received rights equal to her dowry upon divorce, but Assyrian law did not specify the amount of the dowry in the case of divorce.

Second Requirement:

Assyrian women's rights in financial, legal, cultural, and political aspects

First: Women's financial rights

In ancient Iraq, women had the ability to manage all legal matters regarding their property freely without interference. Marriage did not restrict a woman's ability to engage in various transactions. Her dowry was considered her own property, and she could also own slaves. She had the right to acquire new property, whether real estate or slaves, and she possessed independent wealth separate from her husband with full rights to manage it in all types of transactions, including selling and leasing, without needing her husband's permission. Marriage did not diminish a woman's legal capacity; she had the right to be a party to a lawsuit, either as a plaintiff or defendant in court, not only against others but also against her husband. Additionally, she had the right to engage in trade and hold public office.

The practice of sharing money between spouses was common in the Assyrian era, representing a form of solidarity between spouses regarding responsibilities arising during the marital relationship, with both being jointly responsible for debts. Debts incurred before the marriage are the husband's responsibility, and he is not accountable for his wife's previous debts, whereas the wife is responsible

for the husband's debts incurred before marriage unless it is specified in the marriage contract that she is not able for his prior debts[18]. Evidence that a woman, whether married or unmarried, can approach the judiciary without needing permission, and can legally conduct transactions such as buying and selling without her father's or husband's consent, is demonstrated by a document preserved in the Louvre Museum depicting a legal dispute between two women concerning the price of a house sold from one to the other. The plaintiff claimed the price while the defendant appeared before the court without representation to confirm she had made the payment. This supports the notion that women have full legal capacity and are independent in conducting legal transactions.

Assyrian women only inherit in the absence of male heirs, but the dowry they receive upon marriage while their father is alive or based on his will before his death is considered an advance on their inheritance share. Women manage household affairs and finances after their husband's death for the benefit of their children, and they cannot dispose of estate property; the estate transfers to their children when they reach adulthood. Assyrian women had the freedom to buy and sell without influence or interference from their father or husband in their personal transactions, and they were also granted a significant degree of social freedom. The dowry given by the father to his daughter upon her marriage or when she is dedicated to serve as a priestess could be freely used, giving her independence in economic dealings such as buying and selling. Women also played an important role as queens or princesses and through their position as priestesses, owning agricultural land, slaves, and engaging in trade.

Daily transaction documents that were discovered also indicated that a woman had lent money or barley and recovered another mortgaged field, and that Assyrian women were able to buy or sell slaves. In the Assyrian period, the legal status of women declined economically compared to their Babylonian counterparts, as Assyrian women were seen mainly as a means to produce men to participate in Assyria's wars. However, there are documents confirming that Assyrian women could make contracts and legal transactions independently; for example, Adati, the governor's wife, made a pledge contract mortgaging a field along with the farmers on it in the city of Assur.

Assyrian women practiced many professions, actively working in fields and farms, as well as serving as cooks and water carriers in palaces, singers for weddings and happy occasions, mourners for funerals and sorrows, and musicians playing various instruments. Assyrian women also excelled in many crafts and trades such as sewing, weaving, and preparing perfumes, and they managed shops and taverns. Moreover, they were skilled in medicine, specializing in midwifery, childbirth, and childcare. Women took care of their households and children while also helping their husbands in the fields and in raising animals. Regarding the cultural aspect, Assyrian girls attended schools alongside boys to graduate as scribes for temples, palaces, and documentation.

Among the prominent female writers during the Assyrian period was the writer (Ami Dijgi), whose name appeared in a number of texts and economic letters from the time of King (Shamshi-Adad) and King (Zimrilim). It is possible that this writer lived during the reigns of these two kings, spending the first part of her life in the city of Ashur under King (Shamshi-Adad) and later moving to serve King (Zimrilim). She was known for her seals bearing her name. The royal palace had a special wing called the king's harem, which included important staff such as the queen's scribe to manage her correspondence and organize the documentation of her properties. In terms of artistic activity, women practiced playing music and singing and participated in playing musical instruments.

Second-Women's rights in political and religious participation: Women contributed to political and administrative life and played an active role in leading the state; the king's wife stood beside him, had her extensive properties which she managed herself as well as her own palace, and participated in the administration of state affairs. Some queens ruled in place of their husbands or sons when they went to wars or were young. Queen Shammuramat also known as Semiramis], wife of the fifth Assyrian king Shamshi-Adad who ruled the Assyrian Empire with its capital at Nimrud (Kalhu), now north of Mosul, reigned during 811-822 BC. When King Shamshi-Adad died, their son Adad-Tirari was a minor, so his mother (Shammuramat) took power on his behalf for five years. The queen erected a stele commemorating herself in the Stele Square of the god Ashur's temple in the holy capital Ashur (currently Qal'at Sharqat), which read: "Stele of Shammuramat, Queen (Lady of the Palace), Shamshi-

Adad, King of the Universe, King of Assyria, mother of Adad-Tirari, King of Assyria..."

During her reign, she possessed a strong personality and significant influence, allowing her to guide the governance of the vast Assyrian Empire. Her urban and military achievements brought her widespread fame in her era. Zakutu was the wife of King Sennacherib and his favorite spouse. Through her cunning and intelligence, she played a crucial role in ruling the Assyrian Empire alongside her husband, wielding considerable influence throughout the country. She skillfully ensured that her son Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE) became heir to the throne despite not being King Sennacherib's firstborn. After her husband's death, she assumed power as regent for her young son[19].

The state system in Assyria was similar to that of Babylon, where the god Ashur was the true lord of the country and the city that bore his name. The king acted as his deputy in executing the orders he received from him, and alongside the king was his wife, who shared in managing the affairs of the state, with her own residence and multiple officials[20]. Assyrian women were involved in the priesthood, and it was customary for daughters of kings and nobles to hold high positions in the temples. Women holding priestly offices were forbidden from having children, while their right to marry was ensured. Thus, it is clear that women contributed to the construction of Assyrian civilization and had a positive impact on society at that time.

Third: A woman's right to end the marital relationship

The Assyrian law concerning women focused on protecting their rights and received considerable attention, recognizing them as the cornerstone of the family, being the mother and source of life's continuity. The Assyrian law granted a wife the right to request the termination of the marital relationship in the event of her husband's absence or abandonment of his city allowing here to submit a petition to the court for a divorce. The law mandated that the wife wait for a period of two years before marrying another person, after which she would be free to marry someone else. In the case of the husband falling into captivity, the law permitted the wife to request a divorce from him, but required her to wait for two years before remarrying.

Fourth: Assyrian women's inheritance rights

The general rule in inheritance was that women did not inherit, so a daughter only inherits in the absence of male heirs[21]. However, a woman receives a dowry upon her marriage during her father's lifetime or according to his will before his death, and the dowry money belongs to the wife during her husband's lifetime. She cannot dispose of it; it remains in her possession after her husband's death and is then returned to her family after her death. Similarly, if a wife's husband dies without leaving her a will, she does not have the right to remain in the marital home as the children inherit all the deceased's property. However, she does have the right to manage the estate for the benefit of her children if her husband dies. She cannot dispose of any of it. Gifts given to a woman by her husband during his lifetime are owned by her and do not have to be returned to the heirs. Her children inherit them from her[22].

Results and Discussion:

- 1- Assyrian women played an active role and contributed to political life and governance.
- 2- Assyrian women held high positions in temples and participated in the priesthood.
- 3- Women enjoyed freedom in engaging in various business activities, had their own money and the right to perform legal transactions with it.
- 4- A valid and organized marriage requires consent between the concerned parties and must be documented in a written contract.

Recommendations:

- 1- Review laws to ensure they do not contradict the constitutional principle affirming women's right to equality with men.
- 2- Take appropriate measures to guarantee women's political participation.
- 3- Establish a mechanism to identify obstacles and problems facing women.

4- Invite writers and thinkers to change the negative image of women and highlight the importance of their role in societal progress.

Conclusion:

Assyria is considered one of the oldest civilizations that focused on establishing freedom and equality, issuing laws to ensure justice among the Assyrian people and paying attention to women's rights and their status in society. The law included provisions guaranteeing the protection of women's rights and dignity from any violations, granting them full legal personality, freedom to work, and participation alongside men in economic life. Women had the right to manage their finances and hold various administrative positions. The law also granted them the right to request a divorce from their husband if he demeaned or undermined their dignity. Women enjoyed a distinguished position in society as a fundamental element in family building.

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