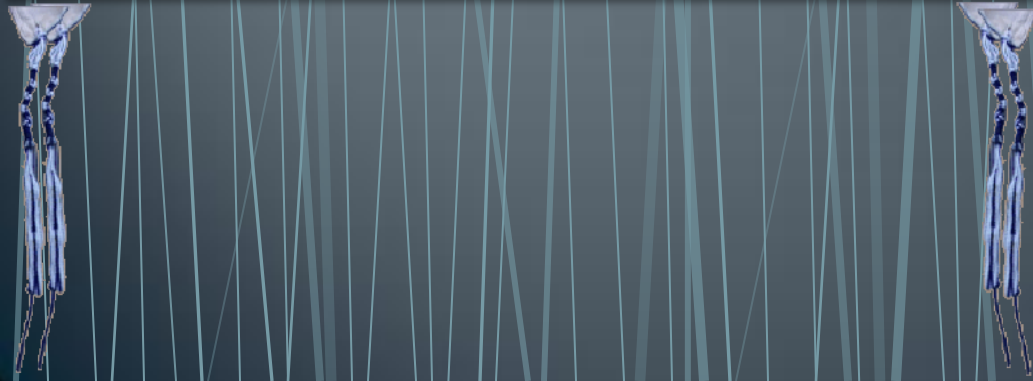


The Hem and the Garment

Ancient Near East
Customs

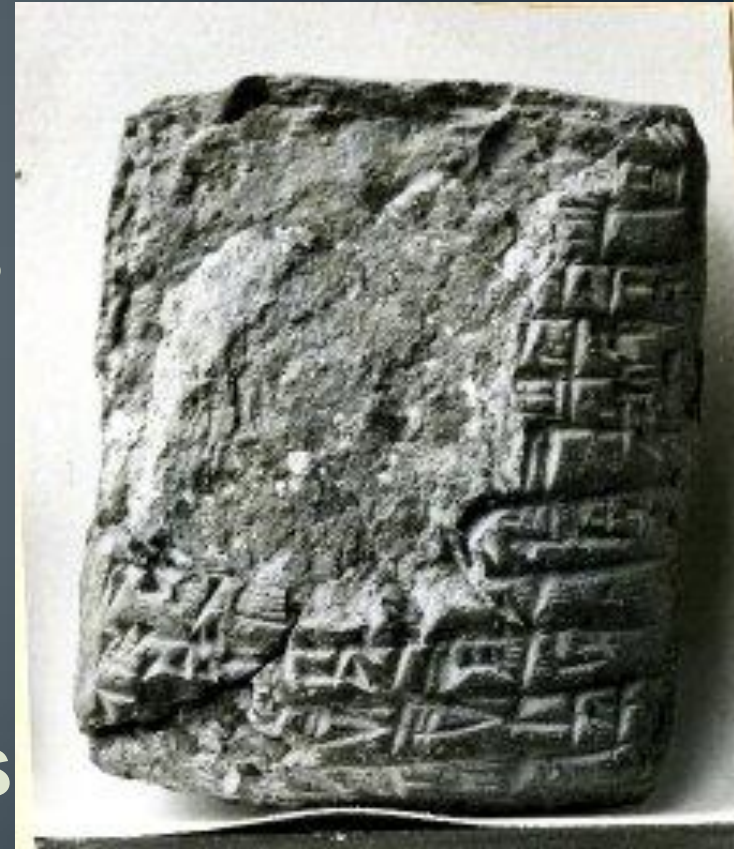


Significance of the Hem of a Garment

- There were no wallets nor office to register land deeds in the Ancient Near East (ANE)
- Old Assyrian documents show when leaving home, men would put their wealth, their property deeds, in the hem of their garment

Significance of the Hem of a Garment

- There are credit/loan tablets from the ANE where a man would press the hem of his garment into the tablet and then sign it before it was baked; this signified he was using his property as collateral for the loan



Significance of the Hem of a Garment

Nuzi text:

*(Man) sews into the hem of (his sister)
her dowry, the silver and gold that she
would inherit.*

Significance of the Hem of a Garment

- There are countless examples in ANE literature of women with their dowry sewn into the hem of their garment.
- This dowry was to be used to support the woman if she were to become divorced without cause or if her husband died
- If the woman was caught in adultery, often the man would strip her garments off in public, showing the shame and removing the dowry for his own.

Special Garment of Inheritance

- The sons would receive special outer garments which signified their inheritance.
- If for whatever reason the son lost his inheritance, in the ANE, he would forfeit his robe too.

Special Garment of Inheritance

Divorce document from the Ugarit:

(The king of Ugarit divorced his wife and noticed that the son was favoring the wife) The king tells his son that if he goes with the divorced mother, he will forfeit his entire estate, and if that is the case, then *“let him place his garment on the stool and depart”*

Special Garment of Inheritance

From another ANE document

“He shall place his [outer] garment on the door bolt and depart”

- The outer garment would have a long hem with a large pocket, which implied the right to inherit. It was usually made of leather.

Special Garment of Inheritance

Hittite Law #171

“If a mother removes her son’s garments, she is disinheriting her son. If her son comes back into her house, she goes to the door and removes it and places it on her son, and she make him s her son again”

Seizing the Hem of the Garment

Tim Hegg:

“To tie an object to the hem is an attempt to defeat the oath, while to lay hold of the hem is to display one’s loyalty to the covenant or as part of the oath taking process.”

- **Cutting or tearing the hem signified forsaking the covenant or covenantal relationship**

Seizing the Hem of the Garment

The mother of Nabonidus to her son, the king:

Out of his love for me who worships him and have laid hold to the hem of his garment, Sin, the king of all gods, did what he had never done before, had not granted anybody else, he gave me (a woman) an exalted position and a famous name in the country

Seizing the Hem of the Garment

A text of Sumerian-Babylonian origin:

O king of heaven and earth, I have sought after thee; I have turned to thee; like the hem of my god and goddess, thy great hem have I seized because it is in thy province to give judgment, to announce decisions, and to establish well-being

Seizing the Hem of the Garment

From the Nebuchadnezzar text:

Because I seized the hem of Marduk my lord, he loved me, and entrusted me with the renewing of shrines and rebuilding of ruins.

- We see here it speaks of loyalty

ANE Context of the Hem

In summary of the hem:

- It was the place where wealth and property deeds were kept
- It contained and represented the wealth of a person or the marital dowry
- To grab hold of or seize was symbolic of loyalty and submission
- It symbolically represented the whole person

ANE Context of the Garment

In summary of the outer garment:

- It was often removed or given due to the significance of the hem or pocket.
- It represented inheritance and was thus is tied to sonship.
- It was often longer and made from leather.
- The Hebrew language describes function, not form...

Garments in the Garden

Genesis 2:25, 3:7-11, 21

- *Arom* vs. *Erom* – Special clothing vs. naked
- Naked, divorced, disowned
- Sewing fig leaves
 - Yet still naked
- Significance of God clothing Adam and Chavah

Garments in the ANE

- Gen 27:15 – Rivkah puts Esau’s garments on Ya’akov
- Gen 28:20 YHVH gave Ya’akov a garment to put on
- Gen 37:3 – Yosef’s “coat of many colors”
 - H6446 *pas* – literally a long robe

Garments in the ANE

- Gen 41:42 – Pharaoh gives Yosef a robe
- Exo 28:32, Lev 21:10 – Kohen Gadol shall not tear his garment
- Deut 24:10-13,17 – Garments as a pledge
- Num 15:38, Deut 22:12 – Tsitsiyot
 - Eze 5:3 – Binding hairs to the garment

Garments in the ANE

- 1 Sam 15:26-28 – Saul rips Samuel’s Hem
- 1 Sam 24:4-6 – David cuts the corner of Saul’s robe
- 2 Sam 13:8 – King’s daughters with long robe
- Job 29:14, Isa 61:10 – Robed in righteousness

Garments in the ANE

- Zech 13:4-5 – Hairy robe
- Eze 16:39 – Israel stripped naked
- Jeremiah 13:22,26 – Exposing the House of Israel's nakedness

Garments in the 1st Century

- Luke 15:11-32 – Prodigal son
- John 19:23 – Soldiers divided Yeshua's outer garments
- Matt 22 – Man coming to wedding feast without the wedding garments
- Luke 10:30 – Good Samaritan

Garments in the 1st Century

- **Matt 9:20 – Woman with the issue of blood grabs Yeshua’s hem.**
- **2 Cor 5:3 – Don’t be found naked**
- **Rev 3:5, 7:9-14 – New robes in the Kingdom**
- **Rev 16:15 – Guard your garments**
- **Rev 17:16 – The Beast strips the Whore**

Seals used as Amulets



Cylinder Seals



Scarabs from Egypt and Canaan



Babylonian Marriage Contract Sealed with 7 Seals



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