

〈研究ノート〉

アングロ・サクソン時代の衣服を表す言葉の一考察 (1)

——『エクセター・ブック』の謎詩の例——

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Poetic Connotations of Clothes in the Anglo-Saxon Period (Part 1):
Examples from the *Riddles* in the *Exeter Book*

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要 旨 『エクセター・ブック』の謎詩には、アングロ・サクソン時代の生活が生き生きと表現されている。現存する写本の大半が宗教詩や叙事詩（英雄詩）を中心とする中で、エクセターの写本はコレクションの多様性において特異といえる。『エクセター・ブック』に特徴的な謎詩とは、例えば、詩人たちの興味は生活に密接にかかわる動物（家畜）、自然界の事象、日用品などに向けられ、対象物は擬人化され1人称で自分のことを語るという様式を持つものである。そこで、人にとって身近な日用品である「服」がどのように扱われているかを、まずこの写本において調査し、複数ある服を表す古英語の使われ方に何か法則があるかどうかを考えたい。仮に法則を見つけたとして、さらに、宗教詩（主に聖書の翻訳）に頻繁に登場する「服を破く」という怒りや悲しみを表すユダヤ人特有の表現に注目し、使われる用語の違いによって表す感情の違いがあることを証明したい。本稿では、まず手始めに、服を表す一般的な用語である *wæd* が謎詩に現れる箇所を引用し、その文脈から見えてくる表象を考える。古英語 *wæd* の本質的な意味が「覆い」であることに対して、宗教詩に頻出する *hrægl* という語の持つ意味合いの違いがあれば、上述する仮説が成り立つであろう。

キーワード The Exeter Book The Exeter Riddles Clothes

According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the word for 'clothes' (*wæd*) first appeared in King Alfred's *Boethius* (c888). The editor interprets *wæd* as 'a garment' in this context as, 'Although now the unrighteous king Neron aroused himself, with all his radiant clothes' (*Deah nu se unrihtwisa cynig Neron hine zescyrþte mid eallum þam witezestum wædum*). As *wæd* is likely to be the etymological origin of the modern word 'weed,' it seems valid to interpret the literal meaning of the word as 'a garment.'¹ However, in poetry, there are contextual differences in the usage of *wæd*, as a both a singular and compound word, that reveal the semantic range of the term in Anglo-Saxon English. This is particularly true of its usage in the *Riddles* of the *Exeter Book*, where many of the secular poems are concerned with domestic items such as furnishings, cattle, animals, and nature. Most of the poems utilize prosopopoeia and conclude with the

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exhortation to 'Say what I am called.' Thus a study of everyday objects and scenes from the literature of the time may reveal an insight into Anglo-Saxon thinking.

The meaning of *wæd* in the early Anglo-Saxon period is usually interpreted as 'a suit of clothes'; however, by the year 1000, it became the collective noun 'clothing' and was extended into metaphorical meaning as 'covering' by 1200.² This indicates that the meanings attributed to *wæd* are more complex than provided by the *OED* and this article will explicate its usage in the *Riddles* and compare its secular meaning with its religious connotations.

To begin, the famous *Riddle 9* is significant, because its solution, which is agreed to be, 'cuckoo,' provides an example of *wæd* in an explicit context.³ In this poem, a mother bird is covering a baby cuckoo with her 'clothes' in the nest. The chick is fostered by its false mother who, personified as a woman, embraces and protects it. As the cuckoo says:

Mec on þissum dagum deaden ofgeafun
fæder ond modor; ne wæs me feorh þa gen,
ealdor in innan. Þa mec an ongon
welhold mege wedum þeccan,
heold ond freoþode, hleosceorpe wrah,
swa arlice swa hire agen bearn,
oþþæt ic under sceate- swa min gesceapu wæron -
ungesibbum wearð eacen gæste.⁴

Me in these days, abandoned dead
Father and Mother, still no life in me
life inside. Then one began for me
the very faithful, covered with clothes,
held and protected, covered with a protecting garment,
so kindly, as her own child,
until I under her bosom, so my fates were,
unrelated became the mighty spirit.

In this riddle, 'with clothes' (*wedum*) implies a 'covering' for the chick, as the instrumental for the verb 'covered' (*þeccan*). Together with 'covered with a protecting garment' (*hleosceorpe wrah*), this may elicit a basic connotation of 'covering' in other riddles in which the word *wæd* appears. It will also prove useful to compare *wæd* with *hrægl* (trappings), one of the synonyms for 'garment' in Old English.⁵

Interestingly, the next exemplar of *wæd* appears in another bird song, *Riddle 40* where it is

given the connotation of 'cover' or 'hidden' in clothing. Here, the phrase *wlanc under wædum* can be interpreted as 'with a pride hidden under her clothes' as follows:

Ic seah wyhte wrætlice twa
undearnunga ute plegan
hæmedlaces; hwitloc anfeng,
wlanc under wædum, gif þæs weorces speow,
fæmne fyllo. (1-5a)

I saw the creatures, the wondrous two
openly, play at
a marriage-game, received fair-haired,
proud under a garment, if the work succeeds,
the woman to fullness.

Here, the mating cock and the hen, the solution of the riddle, are personified to make a match and breed their offspring. The solution to the riddle is suggested by the final line: a woman to fullness (*fæmne fyllo*). Moreover, the key phrase *wlanc under wædum* refers to the hen, a woman, who probably hid (covered) her swollen belly under her feathers (clothes). The first three lines of the riddle indicate the match as 'the marriage-game' where, in the woman's resulting pregnancy, a baby (fullness) under the clothes, *wæd* is used as the word for covering.

Although its form is not exactly the same as *wæd*, the word *gewæde* in the following riddle provides another exemplar of 'covering.' *Riddle 35*, whose solution is a mail coat, has two examples of *gewæde* that provide it with the clear connotation of 'protection,' particularly in the combination with the word 'hopeful' (*hyhtlic*) in line 12b as follows:⁶

Wyrmas mec ne awæfan wyrda cræftum,
þa þe geolo godwebb geatwum frætwað.
Wile mec mon hwæþre seþeah wide ofer eorþan
hatan for hæleþum hyhtlic gewæde.
Saga soðcwidum searoþoncum gleaw,
wordum wisfæst, hwæt þis gewæde sy. (9-14)

The worms did not weave me, with the power of speech,
then the yellow precious web, adorned with ornaments,
Desires me the man, however, wide over the earth

Babylonia, cruelly orders a group of young men be burnt to death, but God protects them from the fire. Significantly, *wæd* symbolises their defence against the flames personified as evil as follows:

Ne forhogodon þæt þa halgan, sibþan hi hwætmode
woruldcyninges weorn gehyrdon,
ac eodon of þam fyre, feorh unwemme,
wuldre gewlitegad, swa hyra wædum ne scod
gifre gleda nið, (184-188a)

The holy did not neglect, since the brave ones
of the king of the world, the words they heard
against the fire, their lives intact,
embellished with the glory, therefore did not harm their clothes
The greedy, evil fire,

Here, the word of God protects the brave, and the greedy evil fire does not harm the *wæd*, the clothes that covered them; and an implicit metaphor pertains between the protective word of God and *wæd*. A similar usage of *wæd* as protection from fire is also found in *Azarias, Juliana* 591b where a holy woman is also put to the torch. However, as the text reveals, the flames could not damage her ornament, garments, hair, skin, body, or limbs (*Næs hyre wloh ne hrægl, ne feax ne fel fyre gemæled, ne lic ne leoðu*).¹⁰ As it is clear from the Old English lines, the author of *Juliana* prefers the word *hrægl* in this context.¹¹ Furthermore, here *hrægl* as 'trappings' connotes the protection of the woman's beauty, which remained intact, 'Then, the female saint still stood, her beauty uninjured' (*Ða gen sio halge stod ungewemde wlite*).¹²

In conclusion, it should be noted that there are not as many examples of the word 'clothes' in the *Riddles* as expected from a work that purportedly concerns the everyday, and *wæd* as garment seems to have been given a metaphorical connotation as both covering and protection as evidenced by the *Exeter Book*. Some critics argue that the word should be interpreted alliteratively since Old English poems are composed in metrics. However, determining the meanings of *wæd* would require comparison with other examples of Old English terminology for clothing and this exercise is sometimes very limited. For example, Williamson (1977) restricts *wæd* to denote 'garment, and dress.'¹³ Furthermore, as shown in this article, there is a rich vein of metaphorical uses of *wæd* as 'covering' in the *Riddles*, which is further extended to 'protection' by the use of *hrægl*. Further research on the biblical references in the *Exeter Book* when read intertextually with the Latin texts on which they are based is required to fully explicate the

metaphorical meanings of *wæd* as clothing.

NOTES

- 1 *Wæd* as 'weed' was an archaic word for clothing and was used to refer to a person's sex, profession, condition in life, etc. See Lesley Brown, ed., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. 2, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 3648.
- 2 The *OED* gives an example of the meaning of 'clothing' from *Daniel* 103, (c1000), 'Then, to the young troop, it was a lack of food and clothes' (*ƿæt þam zengum þrym gad ne wære wiste ne wæde*). The *OED* also mentions the figurative meaning of 'covering' in *Ormulum* 8171, (c1200), 'All the cover was torn up when found there, all was taken off the best robe' (*All þatt wæde þatt tær was Uþpo þe þære fundenn, All was itt off þe bettste pall*). John A. Simpson and Edmund S. C. Weiner, eds., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).
- 3 Although, the editor of *The Old English Riddles of the 'Exeter Book'*, numbered the Cuckoo poem as *Riddle 7*, the numbering of *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* is adopted here. Craig Williamson, *The Old English Riddles of the 'Exeter Book'*, (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 1977). George Krapp and Elliott Dobbie, *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records III*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936).
- 4 All citations of the riddles in this paper are from Williamson.
- 5 A study of *hrægl* will be presented in a forthcoming article.
- 6 Williamson argues that *Riddle 35* (33 in his version) is translated from the Latin text, Adhelm's Riddle 33, *Lorica*. In general, as he argues, the Old English riddler uses two lines to translate one line of the Latin, though the order of the lines is rearranged, and, in some cases, there is a departure from the Latin text. According to his theory, *gewæde* cannot be regarded as a direct translation of the Latin. See Williamson 243-5.
- 7 *The Phoenix* is a moral and religious tale, symbolising the Resurrection.
- 8 Krapp and Dobbie.
- 9 See 2 Samuel, Chapter I, verse 2, 'It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.', and verse 11, 'The David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him:'. The Holy Bible: Authorised King James Version, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1983), 377-8.
- 10 Krapp and Dobbie, *Juliana* 590b-592a.
- 11 The most likely author of *Juliana* is considered to be Cynewulf, but the authorship of this work, discussed by many scholars, is still unknown. See Krapp and Dobbie 287-8.
- 12 Krapp and Dobbie, *Juliana* 589b-590a.
- 13 A variety of translations of *wæd* including 'robe' 'dress' 'apparel' 'clothing' 'garment' and 'covering'

appears in the glossary of J. R. Clark Hall's *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 4th ed., (Buffalo: the Medieval Academy of America, 1984). The dictionary covers most of the Anglo-Saxon texts including prose.