アングロ・サクソン時代の衣服を表す言葉の一考察（第二報）『エクセター・ブック』の謎詩の例

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I. Introduction

This article aims to discover particular features of the usage of \textit{hrægl} (clothes), as one in a series of studies exploring the connotations of ‘clothes’ in Anglo-Saxon poetry, following research on the usage of \textit{wæd} (clothes), published in 2015. When the word \textit{wæd} appears in the \textit{Riddles}, it signifies both ‘covering’ and ‘protection’. What connotations have been recognised in the usage of \textit{hrægl}? By identifying differences between the usage and connotations of \textit{wæd} and \textit{hrægl}, this paper enables readers to draw on an additional semantic range when interpreting Old English poems.

Although \textit{hrægl} is not used very often in the \textit{Riddles} in the \textit{Exeter Book}, the situations in which it appears are both varied and clearly specified. It is therefore important to examine the word’s peripheral context when defining its usage. In the \textit{Riddles}, \textit{hrægl} can be categorised within two semantic fields: trappings and simple clothes. Unlike \textit{wæd}, which emphasises interior parts covered with a piece of fabric, \textit{hrægl} draws the reader’s attention to the exterior aspect of a suit of clothes. This article highlights differences in aspect suggested by the meaning of \textit{hrægl}.

II. OED/DOE glossaries

As a matter of course, we begin by looking up the word \textit{hrægl} in the OED: the dictionary lists three different meanings. In the oldest example, the 7th century \textit{Épinal Glossary}, \textit{hrægl} means ‘a garment, a cloak; a cloth; (also) clothing’. The second meaning of \textit{hrægl} is ‘a piece of linen or other cloth worn about the neck by women; a scarf, shawl, or neckerchief—a more modern word is the now obsolete ’rail’, recorded in 1482 in the Acts of the Parliament of England/Edward IV. \textit{Lowland Lore}, written by Gordon Fraser in 1702, defines \textit{hrægl} as ‘an upper garment or jacket worn by women; (Sc.) an over-bodice worn on formal occasions’.

According to the OED, the first gloss associated with \textit{hrægl} appears in the \textit{Exeter Riddles}, a manuscript dated between 970 and 990. The OED glosses provide no specific explanation of the various occurrences of the word.

It is also necessary to review references in the DOE, which confines itself to words that appear in Old
English literature, thoroughly examining each example.\textsuperscript{5)} According to the DOE, in \textit{Riddle 10}, \textit{hrægl} is a singular, dative noun, meaning ‘garment’.\textsuperscript{6)} The first appearance of this meaning dates from about the year 425. \textit{Hrægl} also has the following second meaning: ‘in collective sense: clothes, clothing, dress, attire’. As the editors suggest, distinguishing ‘a suit of clothes’ from ‘clothing’ seems difficult, even in modern English. It may be possible, however, to semantically separate these two categories when examining instances of \textit{hrægl} in the \textit{Riddles} because of the precise descriptions of each item.\textsuperscript{7)} The third gloss in the DOE is ‘cloth’, in the material sense, followed by a fourth, the ‘sail (of a ship)’. Section III of this article argues that the fourth gloss is less strongly associated with the context of the \textit{Riddles}. Although the DOE presents thorough contextual explanations for each occurrence of \textit{hrægl} in the Anglo-Saxon codices, a reference for each codex would be more useful. This article could then shed light on particular interpretations of \textit{hrægl} usage, at least in the \textit{Exeter Riddles}.

III. \textit{Hrægl} in the \textit{Exeter Riddles}

1. \textit{Hrægl} as Attire

The word \textit{hrægl} appears only a few times in the \textit{Riddles}; it is therefore quite remarkable that so many instances of the word express the meaning, ‘trappings’. Four examples highlight the external features of a beautiful outfit. As the passage below reveals, \textit{hrægl} clearly relates to the outward appearance of clothing:

\begin{verbatim}
Hrægl min swigað þonne ic hrusan trede
øþþe þa wic buge øþþe wado drefe.
Hwilum mec ahebbæð ofer hælæþa byht
hyrste mine ond þeos hea lyft,
ond mec þonne wide wolcna strengu
ofor fœc byred. Frætwe mine
swogað hlude ond swinsiað,
torhte singað, þonne ic getenge ne beom
flode ond foldan, ferende gest. (Riddle 5)
\end{verbatim}

My dress is silent when I walk on the earth
or when I live in houses or I disturb the water.

Sometimes it raised me over men’s dwellings
my trappings and this high sky.
and when it carries me far clouds’ strength
over people. My trappings
make a noise loudly and they sing,
sing clearly, when I am not near to
a stream and a land, a stranger going.

The answer to this riddle is ‘a swan’, and the bird is clearly described throughout the whole body of the poem. The phrase \textit{hrægl min swigað} in line 1a shows that the bird moves around silently when not using its wings. Both \textit{hyrste} and \textit{frætwe} are presented as synonyms for \textit{hrægl}, while the subject of the poem remains consistent to the end. The feature that lifts a swan into the air is obviously the same feature that makes noise: its wings (or feathers). Associating the swan’s clothes with trappings draws the reader’s attention to the exterior beauty of bird feathers.\textsuperscript{9)}

In \textit{Riddle 9}, whose solution is conveyed by the title, ‘Barnacle Goose’, feathers are once more depicted as clothes.\textsuperscript{10)} This poem focuses on the bird’s outer appearance. Moreover, the description of the bird’s appearance and habitat may establish a formula for the bird songs in the \textit{Exeter Book}, conveying images of water, air, land and sky.

\begin{verbatim}
Neb wæs min on nearwe ond ic neofan wætre,
flode underflown, firgenstreamum
swiþe besuncen; ond on sunde awox,
ufan yþþum þealht, anum getenge
liþendum wuda lice mine.
Hæðe feorh cwico þa ic of fæðum cwom
brimes ond beames on blacum hrægle;
sume waerun hwite hyrste mine.
Pa mec liþende lyft upp ahoft,
wind of wæge; siþþan wide beor
ofor seolhtabo. Saga hwæt ic hatte. (Riddle 8)
\end{verbatim}

My beak was closed and I beneath the water,
going down by the wave, by big streams
sunk deeply; and grew up by the sea,
covered by the waves above, resting upon the one
sailing wood  with my body.
I had a living life  when I came out of embrace
of the sea and the wood  in a black dress;
some were white  my trappings.
Then me, a living one,  the air raised up,
the wind of wave;  then bore far and wide
over the seals’ bath.  Say what I am called.11)

As the modern translation shows, the bird’s black and
white feathers are figuratively expressed as ‘my
trappings (hyrste mine),’ a term that also appears in line
4a, Riddle 5. Here, the concept of ‘clothes’ is obviously
based on ornaments. The word hrægl is used to depict
the outer aspects of clothing. There is also a very
significant repetition of the phrase hyrste mine in several
riddles in the Exeter Book, in reference to outfits. In
Riddle 9, as shown below, the same phrase occurs in
line 1b, as a metaphor for a beautiful exterior. It is
remarkable that the ornamental connotation of hrægl
emerges gradually from the beginning of the first group
of riddles.12) This usage clearly associates the serial
images of clothes with outer trappings.

The third example of hrægl in this category appears
in Riddle 9, the solution for which is ‘cup of wine (or
spirits).’ Here, in contrast to Riddles 5 and 8, an inorganic
object is personified as wearing a beautiful dress. The
outer decoration of the cup is the evident focus. It seems
to be a distinctive feature of Anglo-Saxon poetry to
personify a tool as an entity putting on a gem-studded
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I saw treading upon the soil—ten of all were six brothers and their sisters likewise—had living lives. Skins hung evident and manifest from the wall of the house of each ones'.

Not was worse to anyone of them by that, not sore side by that, although they must be deprived of a garment, of heavens' guardian awaken by the power, to tear by mouths grey flowers. Dress was renewed to them who were formerly come forth let the trappings go to remain behind, departed the land to tread upon.14)

In this bird song, the eggshells are interestingly replaced with new garments, in other words, feathers. The garment (reafe) in line 7a refers to the eggshell (haswe blede) in line 9a, according to the context. Again, the connotation of outer beauty in dress (hrægl) in line 9b can be inferred from the trappings (frætwe) in line 10b. These lines tell the story of ten chicks with bare skins, who were born tearing apart the eggshells that were supposed to be their beautiful outfits. After birth, they left their shells behind and obtained new garments to set forth in the world.

2. Hrægl as a Simple Suit of Clothes

The following examples suggest that the word hrægl was also used to indicate simple human clothing. In the Exeter Book, hrægl appears in four riddles for which the solutions have a double meaning, undoubtedly obscene. Riddle 42, for which the polite solution is 'key', is cited in the DOE as follows, '...þonne se esne his agen hrægl ofer cneo hefeð, wile þæt cuþe hol mid his hangellan healfde gretan þæt he <elenlang> ær oft gefylde (polite solution is ‘key’).15) It is followed by another embarrassing riddle called 'Dough'. Riddle 43, in which a lump of dough is kneaded by the lord's daughter, who covers the swelling thing with cloth in the following lines, 'hrægl þeahþe þrindende þing þeodnes dohtor’ (lines 4b-5a). A further double entendre, Riddle 52, known as 'Churn' by many scholars, denotes the simple clothing of a man who lifts up his clothes when using a churn to get milk from a cow. In this riddle, hrægl simply refers to the man's clothes, as shown in the lines ‘...hif his agen hrægl honundum up, hrand under gyrdels...’ (lines 3b-4).16) In these three cases, hrægl conveys a concrete image of clothing, in the form of a suit of clothes that a person can put on. The word is not a lyrical or aesthetic metaphor, as discussed in Section III-1; it simply denotes the common, practical use of clothes.

As a final example of clothing, it is important to mention that Riddle 60, for which Williamson has provided the solution, 'borer', provides another example of ordinary clothes. This outfit is worn in the workplace, judging from the meaning of the lines 'Rinc bið ofeste se mec on þyð æftanweardne, hæleð mid hrægle:' (lines 4b-6a).17) Like the other three examples, this wording suggests that the man's clothes are probably work clothes, which are generally simple and practical. As discussed above, in Section III-2 of this article, some occurrences of hrægl in the Exeter Riddles may denote simple clothes, unlike the various examples discussed in Section III-1. In these cases, the word hrægl provides a concrete image of people's clothes, which may even distinguish a human being from an animal or tool.

IV. Hrægl and Wæd

As this article discusses the connotations of hrægl, it is important to compare them with those of wæd, discussed in the previous article.18) It seems remarkable that hrægl does not include the metaphorical meaning of 'covering', which makes the word wæd so distinctive. The only possible example of hrægl being used metaphorically to mean 'covering' appears in lines 4b-5 of Riddle 43. This poem has a double solution; its hidden meaning explicitly depicts a man putting on his clothes after intimate contact with a maiden. As the scene is excitingly and frankly depicted to help the reader decode the riddle, it is unclear whether the man feels that his action is embarrassing enough to require covering up.

The discussion above suggests that hrægl is generally used to denote the exterior appearance of clothing, which is often evaluated for its beauty. By
contrast, *wæd* generally appears in contexts in which a suit of clothes is used to suggest a covering for something precious inside. Although the distinction between the usage of these two words is difficult to confirm, given the shortage of exemplars in the *Exeter Riddles*, a study of Anglo-Saxon terminology may help to understand the wordage of the Anglo-Saxon poets.

### V. Conclusion

To reveal the distinctive features of *hrægl* in the *Exeter Riddles*, it may be useful to review the points discussed in this article. First of all, the most characteristic usage of *hrægl* involves the embellishment of outfits. Through a frequent association with bird feathers, the outer beauty of clothing is clearly recognised. The decoration on the outside of a cup is also depicted through an image of metaphorical clothes. If this analysis of the *Riddles* establishes a potential reading of the term in Anglo-Saxon poetry, a further study of *hrægl* in other poetic works could generate a new interpretation of individual verses.

A second feature of *hrægl* provides an image of practical clothing, when it appears in poetic lines. Several obscene songs mentioned in Section III-2 offer hidden but explicit secondary solutions that suggest a sensual body in clothes. It is interesting that this method of composing a poem is the inverse of prosopopeia, in which a human being is depicted as a tool. In other words, the suit of clothes that a man wears may highlight the poem’s double solution: a human being versus a tool.

One additional argument involves the use of *hrægl* to denote practical clothes. The beautiful outfits described in Section III-1 also support the idea that the word *hrægl* was used to denote clothing in a general sense. The fact that *hrægl* appears at the beginning of a piece of verse seems to provide a literary formula within Anglo-Saxon poetry.\(^{10}\) Beginning a song with *hrægl* presents the reader with a simple depiction of clothes, without any referential presuppositions. Anglo-Saxon readers must have recognised the practical, everyday usage of *hrægl* as soon as it appeared in the texts. This placement suggests that the word *hrægl* was regularly used to denote people’s everyday clothes. As the above discussions suggest, this article concludes that the term *hrægl* was used much more often than *wæd* to denote appearance; it denotes either the external decorations on an outfit or everyday clothing worn for common use.

### NOTES

1) I would like to thank Editage (www.editage.jp) for English language editing.
6) In the DOE, the gloss represents ‘garment, article of clothing; some instances are difficult to distinguish from sense 2’.
7) Every riddle in the *Exeter Book* is supposed to have one specific solution, such as ‘a key’, ‘a cup’, etc.
8) All of the following citations of the *Riddles* are attributed to Williamson’s *The Old English Riddles of the ‘Exeter Book’*.
9) Williamson also suggests, in his notes, that ‘Tupper (p.265) defines the word here and in Rid. 88 as ‘wings’ however, *hyrste* is used generally in the *Riddles* to refer to any outer covering (cp. Rids. 9.1, 12.11, 29.20, 51.7, and 84.12). See Williamson, p.153.
10) Williamson suggests that this solution is now accepted by all editors. See Williamson, p.161.
11) ‘The one sailing wood’ probably refers to a ship, while ‘the seals’ bath’, a typical kenning in Anglo-Saxon poetry, is apparently the sea where many seals are seen.
12) The riddles in the *Exeter Book* are segmented and recorded in three groups of folios. *Riddles* 5, 8 and 9 appear in the first group of folios: 101a-115a. See Williamson, p.3.
13) The exact nature of the red, shining, and bright trappings is unknown. However, they obviously refer to the decorations covering the cup. The personification of tools also appeared distinctively in one 16th-century Japanese picture scroll, the *Night Parade of One-Hundred Demons’ Picture Scroll (Hyakki Yagyo Emaki)*, where an instrumental tool resembling a lute with human hands and legs carries away another instrumental tool.
14) In this poem, ‘the house’ is interpreted to mean the eggshell; likewise ‘the grey flowers’.
15) This riddle is Number 44 in the DOE. The modern translation of the lines above is as follows: ‘…when he raises the clothes covering his knees, he desires to approach the familiar hole that he often filled many times.

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before, with its hanging head’.

16) In a modern translation, the lines are translated: ‘...lifted up his own clothes with his hands, pushed under the belt...’

17) The meaning of the Old English lines is as follows: ‘A man is in haste to push me on that behind, the man in clothes’.

18) See Note 2.

19) ‘Hraegl min swigð’ (line 1a, Riddle 5); ‘Hraegl is min hasofag’ (line 1a, Riddle 9); ‘Hraegl bids geniwead’ (line 9b, Riddle 11).