




ALFRED JEWEL

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Glossary

- goldsmithing - /'gəʊld ,smiθɪŋ/ - ювелирное дело
- enamel - /ɪ'næm(ə)l/ - эмаль
- quartz - /kwɔː(r)ts/ - кварц
- filigree - /'fɪlɪɡriː/ - филигрань
- ecclesiastical - /ɪ ,kliːzi'æstɪk(ə)l/ - церковный
- reign - /reɪn/ - правление
- to inscribe - /tə ɪn'skraɪb/ - надписать, начертать
- to attach - /tə ə'tætʃ/ - прикреплять
- terminal - /'tɜː(r)mɪn(ə)l/ - зажим
- bishop - /'bɪʃəp/ - епископ

What is it?

The Alfred Jewel is a piece of Anglo-Saxon goldsmithing work made of enamel and quartz enclosed in gold. The Alfred Jewel is about 6.4 cm long and is made of filigreed gold, enclosing a highly polished tear-shaped piece of clear quartz "rock crystal", beneath which is set a cloisonné enamel plaque, with an image of a man, perhaps Christ, with ecclesiastical symbols.





Time period

It was discovered in 1693. It has been dated to the late 9th century, in the reign of Alfred the Great and is inscribed "Alfred ordered me made". The jewel was once attached to a rod, probably of wood, at its base.

How was it used?

Although the function of the Jewel is not absolutely certain, it is believed to have been the handle or terminal for one of the precious "aestels" or staffs that Alfred is recorded as having sent to each bishopric along with a copy of his translation of Pope Gregory the Great's book *Pastoral Care*. He wrote in his preface to the book: "And I will send a copy to every bishop's see in my kingdom, and in each book there is an aestel of 50 mancusses and I command, in God's name, that no man take the staff from the book, nor the book from the church." After decades of scholarly discussion, it is now "generally accepted" that the jewel's function was to be the handle for a pointer stick for following words when reading a book.



Where is it nowadays?

- In 2018-2019, it was displayed in the British Library, London as part of the 'Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms: Art, Word, War' exhibition.



- **Is there a web-page dedicated to it?**

There is a web-page:

<https://www.ashmolean.org/alfred-jewel#/>

- **What information for visitors can you find there?**

Nothing except for general information about the piece.



Sources

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Jewel
- <https://www.ashmolean.org/alfred-jewel/#/>
- https://collections.ashmolean.org/collection/search/per_page/25/offset/0/sort_by/relevance/object/75670



THANK YOU

