KING ALFRED'S *ÆSTEL* RECONSIDERED

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Alfred the Great is responsible for one of the most tangibly dramatic events in the history of the learned world. When he instituted the preparation of multiple copies of his Old English translation of Pope Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis* for distribution throughout his kingdom,[1] King Alfred attached an *æstel* (an object of great value and attraction) to each copy and referred to the object in the preface he wrote for each recipient of the translation.[2] He did not need to describe an *æstel* because everyone knew what it was and, if any had forgotten, an example was securely attached to each copy. But, about five hundred years later, readers and scholars could no longer identify the *æstel* to which Alfred referred. And they have been puzzling ever since.

Many identifications have been proposed, defended, and forgotten. And, in the last ten years, two learned essays have advanced identifications as diverse as a fragment of the True Cross[3] and the surviving complex artifact of gold, enamel, and rock crystal which is known as the Alfred Jewel.[4] Identifying the *æstel* has been one of the more attractive exercises for students of pre-Conquest England over the centuries, and no one ventures into the field without a real awareness of the contributions of earlier scholars. The present essay identifies the most plausible and attractive suggestion among those advanced modestly years ago, but then virtually forgotten. With increased knowledge of Anglo-Saxon arts and crafts, it becomes possible to accept a solution which is closely tied to those facts which are regarded as indisputable.

Alfred's words about the *æstel* are now well known to almost all students of Old English literature because his Preface to his vernacular translation of Gregory is one of the most familiar anthology pieces for beginning students of the language.[5] Each copy of King Alfred's Preface was addressed to a particular bishop (or other ecclesiastic),[6] but the text of the Preface was virtually the same in each copy.[7] Alfred lamented the state of learning in ninth-century England and set forth a plan for an expanded educational system in English and, then, for the ablest students, in Latin. He reviewed the translations of the Scriptures from Hebrew to Greek, from Greek to Latin, and then proposed the translation of Latin documents into English. After he learned to read Latin himself, his own contribution to the educational scheme was the translation of the *Cura Pastoralis* of Gregory the Great. Toward the end of his Preface, Alfred addresses each recipient of a copy of the

codex on a special plan to bring great attention to this newly English'd book:

> Siððan ic hie ða geliornod hæfde • swæ swæ ic hie forstod • 7 swa ic hie andgitfullicost areccean meahte, Ic hie ón Englisc awende. Ond to ælcum biscepstole ón minum rice wille ane onsendan • 7 ón ælcre bið án æstel • se bið ón fiftegum mancessan; Ond ic bebiode ón Godes naman ðæt nan món ðone æstel from ðære bec ne dó • ne ða bóc from ðæm mynstre. Uncuð hu longe ðær swæ gelærede biscepas sien • swæ swæ nu gode ðonc wel hwær siendon; Forðy ic wolde ðætte hie ealneg æt ðære stowe wæren • buton se biscep hie mid him habban wille • oððe hio hwær to læne sie • oððe hwa oðre biwrite.[8]

The word *æstel*, which is used twice in this passage, occurs nowhere else in the corpus of Old English prose and appears only once in the glosses. The best evidence for establishing the meaning of the word is, therefore, this passage in which it occurs. From Alfred's Preface itself one can deduce several facts about the *æstel* even if the full meaning of the word is not clear.

First, the *æstel* was not unique; it could be and was duplicated. If Alfred intends "to ælcum biscepstole ón minum rice . . . ane onsendan" and if "ón ælcre bið án æstel", then there were several *æstels* made. F.P. Magoun has argued that, in all probability, copies of Gregory, with one *æstel* on each, went to as many as nine sees, that is, all the episcopal centres "in Wessex and English Mercia": Canterbury, Dorchester, Exeter, Hereford, Lichfield, London, Rochester, Sherborne, Worcester. While only the copies for Sherborne and Worcester survive, the "edition may well have run to a dozen or more copies".[9] Wanley saw copies which were later destroyed in the Cotton fire and records that one was intended for Bishop Heahstan in London and transcribes a note which indicated that copies had been sent to Plegmund (at Canterbury), to Swiðulf (at Rochester), and to Wærferth (at Worcester).[10]

Second, the *æstel* was extremely valuable. The only solid fact Alfred openly gives us about the *æstel* is "se bið ón fiftegum mancessa". This phrase is usually translated 'it is worth fifty mancuses', although the preposition "on" gives pause. The concept of 'worth' is a good deal for such a function word to bear alone. The Will of Ælfgar, however, provides analogous phraseology which is helpful. Ælfgar's first bequest, to the king, is two armlets: "tueye bege ayther of fifti mancusas goldes".[11] The arm bracelets were gold and were worth, in cost and weight, the equivalent of these money units; possibly they were actually made from fifty gold mancuses.[12] An immediately subsequent reference speaks of a sword "þat Eadmund king me selde on hundtuelftian mancusas goldes".[13] The preposition "on" must convey the sense of worth, since one cannot infer that a hundred and twenty mancuses are 'in' this object, the sword.[14] These two references in Ælfgar's will document the use of both 'of' and 'on' to introduce statements of monetary worth; other references also support the clear suggestion of value with the

use of 'on' and the even closer connection of coin gold with other more decorative uses when 'of' is the operative preposition. While the exact worth of fifty mancuses is not easy to understand, the great value of the sum is clear. Alfred himself is impressed with the cost and he emphasizes this characteristic above all others.

Third, the *æstel* was attached to the manuscript, and the attachment was intended to be permanent, not temporary. One cannot be sure just how it was attached, but Alfred says an *æstel* was "ǒn ælcre" copy of the book. The preposition 'on' has a wide spectrum of function meanings and easily comprehends all uses of Modern English 'on' or 'in'. And in such a situation the word 'on' could mean 'on top of', 'inside of', 'tied to', or other relationships. But the words 'wiǒ' or 'mid' were not chosen and the meaning is clearly not 'alongside' or 'accompanying'.

Fourth, the *æstel* could be removed from the book. Alfred is explicit in commanding "ǒn Godes naman ǒæt nan mǒn ǒone æstel from ǒære bēc ne dǒ". The rhetoric of the command suggests not only that the *æstel* could be taken from the book but that it was likely that such removal would prove tempting. And Alfred's choice of words carried even further implications: "nan mǒn ǒone æstel from ǒære bēc ne dǒ · ne ǒa bōc from ǒæm mynstre". Alfred seems to suggest that while taking the *æstel* from the book is a real and present danger, the removal cannot be accomplished without some effort. The very verb chosen, 'don' (to do, make, cause), implies activity, not passive acceptance. And while, presumably, the *æstel* could be removed without destroying the book, the *æstel* is still very much a part of the book, so much so that removal of book and *æstel* together is an immediate alternative to removal of the *æstel* alone.

In this connection it is important to note that when Alfred speaks against taking the book from the minster, he makes three specific exceptions: if the bishop wants to have it with him, if it be somewhere on loan, or if someone be making another copy from it. These occasions which Alfred prescribes for legitimate removal of the manuscript from the minster are all connected with learning, either for private study by the bishop himself or for planned work in a scriptorium, whether the local one or one farther away. Other reasons are, thus, disallowed, for the sake of the security of the manuscript and, by extension, the *æstel*.

Fifth, the *æstel* not only was valuable but looked valuable. King Alfred makes this characteristic clear by acknowledging the likelihood that the *æstel* could inspire theft or re-use.

And sixth, there probably could have been, but were not, more than one *æstel* on each book. King Alfred first says "ǎn æstel", that is '*one* æstel'; only then does he refer to "ǒone æstel", i.e. '*the* æstel'.

Thus, the *æstel* is replicable, valuable, attached, removable (when Alfred's intention is thwarted), obvious in its great worth, and single by Alfred's decision, not by necessity or perhaps even by tradition.

Alfred is precise about the value of the *æstel*: fifty mancuses. The rhetorical force of the passage makes clear that the king wants the value to be known. Even the ignorant will be able to recognize that the king means business with his manuscript and its message because he attaches an object of such obvious worth and then states the value precisely.

The meaning of the cost of the *æstel* can be assessed in pre-Conquest terms. A gold mancus was worth thirty silver pence.[15] One mancus would buy one ox; five pence would buy one sheep. Thus, an *æstel* cost as much as 50 oxen or 300 sheep.[16] A single mancus each was a significant legacy for several persons in the Will of Wynflæd.[17] Ealdorman Æthelmær had bought thirteen hides of land (a substantial tract) for 120 mancuses.[18] The rich widow Æthelgifu began her immense list of legacies with a generous but perhaps required bequest of 30 mancuses to the king and another 30 to the queen.[19] Notable endowments for religious institutions were set up with one hundred mancuses.[20] But the value of sheep and oxen, legacies, and endowments are imprecise, not only because we cannot assess what particular sums of money could accomplish in the tenth century, but because the place of sheep and oxen was more crucial in Alfred's society than it is in our own. But even in those terms, the cost of an *æstel* is still impressive. In 1916 E.J. Thomas calculated the value at £900.[21] In 1948, F.P. Magoun computed the value conservatively at $20,000.[22] In 1970 I attempted a comparative valuation.[23] At that time, in rural areas south of Rochester, New York, sheep farmers would be paid fifty to fifty-five dollars per sheep by the county government for the average ordinary unfattened sheep which happened to be killed by wild dogs. At this rate, the cost of an *æstel* would have been equivalent to between $15,000 and $16,000. If moved ahead with inflation that sum would be worth up around $50,000 or £35,000 in 1984.

But Magoun's method yields an even more astounding result if pursued today. Magoun recorded the weight of the gold mancus at 70 grains and the measurement of 27 grains to the ounce.[24] Thus, one mancus would weigh 2.6 ounces. Then, Magoun computed the value of fifty gold mancuses (each 2.6 ounces) at the 1948 price of gold, $35 an ounce, to get his estimate of $4,050. If one were to use today's price of gold, around $400 an ounce,[25] one mancus would be worth over $1000 and fifty would be worth about $52,000, not far from the estimate derived from sheep and the vagaries of inflation. Magoun goes on, however, to discuss the conversion rate for so considerable an amount of gold and the price of artistry and concludes that the *æstel* could easily have been worth the equivalent of "$200,000 or more"[26] (nearly £143,000). We should remember that this estimate is for 1948 and for only one *æstel* of probably nine or more. The process of exact assessment of value is extremely difficult and fraught with all sorts of dangers.[27] But one conclusion is certain: the *æstel* was extremely valuable. Alfred knew it, approved it, and wanted everyone else to know it.

The chances are great that the decorative parts of the *æstel* were made largely, if not entirely, from gold. Two reasons support this. The cost could not easily be achieved by less valuable

metals. Even jewels, because less readily related to coinage and perhaps because less easily measured, were less steady in value. And second, in some surviving Anglo-Saxon documents, the mancus seems to be recognized as a unit of gold. The Will of Wynflæd speaks of "anne mancus" and "mancos go[ld]es" as virtually interchangeable terms,[28] while "mancussum reades . . . goldes" seems to designate a slightly higher quality.[29]

Thus, the nine or more *æstels* were highly visible items, largely gold, which clearly marked (indeed made) the manuscripts objects of wide public interest. Their very value and prominence made them candidates for theft, either by removal of the *æstel* from the codex or by theft of the codex as a whole.

While the text of Alfred's Preface is, unquestionably, the best piece of evidence we have for understanding just what an *æstel* was, there are, fortunately, other sources as well. Other evidence exists in the surviving Old English glosses, in the probable etymological relatives of the word itself, and in the known facts about book manufacture and distribution, and about the general character of King Alfred.

In addition to Alfred's Preface, the Old English word *æstel* survives in only one place; Ælfric's tenth-century Glossary. In a list of words referring to church buildings, books, church furniture, and ecclesiastical equipment, the Latin word *indicatorium* is glossed by the word *æstel*.[30] Alas for those who want to know what an *æstel* is, *indicatorium* is also a rare word, apparently unknown outside of this glossary, and it cannot supply a secure definition of King Alfred's expensive attachment.[31] The Latin word seems clearly related to *indicator*, an agent which shows, points out, makes clear, or even accuses. If the *-ium* ending follows other patterns of word formation, *indicatorium* probably suggests an object which makes some quality or value or other object clear to viewers or hearers. The *indicatorium* calls attention to something but one cannot be sure exactly how or to what.

In addition, the word *æstel* in the manuscript of Alfred's Preface at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is glossed *festuca* in the 'tremulous' thirteenth-century hand associated with Worcester.[32] At least *festuca* is a known word, although its meanings, 'a stalk, straw' or 'a ram, . . . pile-driver' or 'a ceremonial rod' (as in the manumission of slaves), do not offer any interpretation which immediately clarifies the meaning of *æstel*. Perhaps of greater significance is the choice of *æstel* for a thirteenth-century glossator's attention when not many words are marked. It already seems to have needed explanation.

MS Hatton 20 also preserves some sixteenth-century glosses, most surely by John Joscelyn, the antiquary most learned at that time about things Anglo-Saxon. The first occurrence of *æstel* is glossed "indicatorium, festuca" and the second, immediately after, simply "festuca". These glosses seem clearly derived from those of Ælfric's Glossary and of MS CCCC 12 but were probably no more revealing to Joscelyn than they are to us. As Howlett has indicated,[33] unless Joscelyn had seen an actual *æstel* these glosses could mean little more than carefully collated words.

The efforts to find linguistic relatives of *æstel* have been fruitful, but a definitive etymology is still elusive.

The Middle English *astel, astelle*, 'a billet or shingle . . . firewood . . . splint' seems to be a clearly identifiable descendant of the Old English form.[34] The German *Ast* 'bough, limb, branch' is substantiated in Middle High German, Old High German, Middle Low German,[35] as well as in the Gothic *asts* 'Ast . . . Palmzweig . . . Streu'.[36] Kluge connects this form to a Primitive Germanic form **asta-* and, with Greek ὄζος (**ósdos*) to an Indo-European form **ŏzdos*; he also adds the meaning 'hump, mound' to the semantic spread.[37] Several Latin words have long been identified as relatives of *æstel*: *assula* (*astula*), *astella*; and *hastula*, 'splinter, shaving, chip . . . shingle; a little spear, a little branch'; this last being the diminutive of *hasta* or *asta* 'spear . . . lance, pike, javelin'.[38] The French *astele*, or in later times *attelle* 'eclat de bois . . . planchette', is a clear offspring from the Latin.[39] Apparent cognates in Celtic include Welsh *astell* 'plank, . . . ledge, shelf'[40] and Irish *astul* 'a lath, a chip, a splinter . . . a book-mark (*obs.* in this sense)'.[41]

In addition to these etymological kinships, D.R. Howlett has presented thirteen passages from six early medieval Latin writers: Isidore of Seville, Paulinus of Nola, Adamnan, Bede, Einhard, Gregory of Tours (many of which were known by Du Cange), which show a precise use of the Latin *astula, astella, hastula*, and *astile* in contexts which suggest that "the only sense intelligible in all these quotations is a 'small fragment of wood cut from a larger piece'".[42] Just how "small" and how much "larger" is not determined. There is, it should be noted, just as much force from the etymological analogues which emphasize flatness as from those which emphasize roundness or spear-like qualities. These various cognates, singly and in several groupings, have been advanced in support of each proposed identification of the *æstel*.[43]

The opinions about what the *æstel* is are almost as numerous as those students who have considered the subject carefully. Everything conceivably associated with an important manuscript has been suggested: a handle to carry it, a decoration on the cover of the book, the binding, the cover, the clasp, a bookmark, a lectern, a page weight, a reliquary, a mounted fragment of the True Cross, a pointer for making reading easier, and a wax tablet for taking notes. The bookmark and the pointer have seemed, in recent years, to enjoy widest support. Each is easily separable from the book and, thus, could be lost (as all *æstels* are).

Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, seems to have been responsible for the first modern English translation of *æstel*: as an adjunct to his edition of Asser's *Alfredi Regis Rex Gestae* (1574), Parker published Alfred's Preface to Gregory and *æstel* was translated "stile" or "style", a direct creation from the Middle English word for 'stake or handle'.[44] Parker followed this form in his Latin translations as well, using "stylum".[45] Presumably, the attraction to this word was its similarity to the Old English word without the initial vowel. This translation was followed exactly in a text published by Vulcanius de Smet of Bruges (known as

'Bonaventura') twenty-three years later[46] and then again by William Camden in 1602.[47] The same influence is clear in the parallel-column Latin translation of John Spelman published in 1678[48] and indeed in the modern English translation published by Hearne in 1709.[49]

Hearne is distinguished, however, as the first serious scholar of the *æstel*. His essay, "De voce Anglo-Saxonica Æstel Dissertatio", signed from The Bodleian Library on 17 June 1709, was published as a part of *The Itinerary of John Leland* along with additional commentary on the *æstel* by Hearne.[50] He identifies the *æstel* with Chaucer's *stele*,[51] being (in spite of the overtones Chaucer achieves) the rod or handle by which the book was held, but allows that it could also be the case or cover of the book.[52] In his commentary, published in 1711, he quotes from a letter of 7 July 1709 by Henry Dodwell, "the learned Mr. Dodwell", which advised him that the identification with *stele* seemed weak because of the absence of the first syllable and because Hearne's identification with the *sittybæ* or 'cover' was better. He mentions the likely kinship with Latin *astula* or *hastula* and cites Du Cange for the definition as "a *Chip* or *Segment* of Wood cut off from a greater Piece".[53] Dodwell's own sense of matters was that the piece of wood known as an *æstel* was "indented in the Cover of the Book".[54]

In 1693 the Alfred Jewel was discovered at North Petherton, near Athelney, Somerset.[55] Excitement over the beauty of this exquisite artifact was immediate and has continued unabated ever since. The first notices in print by Musgrave and Hickes[56] included descriptions and drawings, but it was to be seventy-two years before the suggestion was made and recorded that the Jewel might have something to do with the *æstel*. On 10 January 1765 Samuel Pegge offered to the Society of Antiquaries a number of objections to earlier opinions by William Lisle, Christopher Wase, Thomas Hearne, and Francis Wise. Wise had continued Parker's translation of the word *æstel* as *stylus* (meaning 'a handle') which Hearne had considered but rejected in forming his own opinions. Pegge, concentrating on errors about coinage and money values, notes Wise's suggestion that the Alfred Jewel could have been the 'handle' to a *stylus*, reiterates the identification of *æstel* as *stele*, and concludes that it would have been "no great absurdity" if the Alfred Jewel were identified with the *stylus* which "the king sent along with his translation of Gregory's pastoral".[57] While Pegge makes no assertion, he is the first actually to link Jewel with *stylus* with *æstel*. His conjectures were dismissed by Dr. Jeremiah Milles on 17 May 1765 as having no other ground than that the Jewel and the *æstel* were "both the property of the same king".[58] Far more important for Milles were the differences between what we know about the *æstel* and what we know about the Jewel - weight, shape and design, purpose, place of discovery - all of which persuaded him that there was no relationship between the *æstel* (whatever that might be) and the Jewel.

Humphrey Wanley's great catalogue in 1705 publishes descriptions of the Cotton manuscripts which contained Alfred's preface and his translation of Gregory, Cot. Otho B II and Cot. Tiberius B

XI.[59] The Tiberius codex (Ker 195) survived the great fire in 1731 but with considerable damage. Fortunately the manuscript had been copied by Junius in the seventeenth century because even the parts that survived the Cotton fire were burned at a bookbindery in 1864.[61] MS Cot. Otho B II (Ker 175) was greatly damaged in the Cotton fire but Wanley's entry and Junius's copy indicate that this manuscript was one intended by Alfred for Heahstan, Bishop of London.[62] At no point does Wanley suggest that either of these two manuscripts preserved any characteristic which would provide any clue to the identification of the *æstel*.

Later in the century, Owen Manning published his edition of Edward Lye's *Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum*, itself largely based on Junius's work. The dictionary attempts to define *æstel* and quotes extensively from Alfred's Preface to support the notion that the word means a bookmark, richly ornamented to be sure. Lye's definition rests in important ways on his identification of *indicatorium* (the word *æstel* glossed in the tenth century) with *index*, "that which . . . points out . . . indicator . . . guide . . . A title, superscription", and moves to identify the *æstel* as a bookmark with an expensive headband of gold and purple.[63]

Nineteenth-century interpretations were parts of the translation in editions by Wright (1842),[64] Giles (1848),[65] and Behnsch (1853),[66] but in each instance *stele* or *stile* was maintained. In Henry Sweet's great scholarly edition of Alfred's translation and Preface (1871-2) *æstel* is translated as "clasp"[67] but a learned note warns that this is "purely conjectural". He cites the definition in Lye's dictionary (1772) but gives it no authority.[68]

In 1877, the Rt. Rev. W.J.H. Clifford, Roman Catholic Bishop of Clifton, was elected President of the Somersetshire Archaeological & Natural History Society and gave as his inaugural address a learned and ingenious discussion of the Isle of Athelney, dealing in particular with the identification of the Alfred Jewel, discovered there nearly two hundred years earlier.[69] From careful observation of the construction of the Jewel, he observes that it probably was not suspended on anything, probably (because of the arrangement of the writing) was regularly regarded from the round end, and probably held a staff of perishable material; he states that *æstel* means "staff" and that the Jewel is the head of one: "it is the handle of a book-staff or pointer which . . . was made of horn (which has perished), the handle itself being of precious and durable materials".[70] The Jewel is then identified as the *æstel* sent by Alfred to John, Abbot of Athelney, in which monastery it stayed until dissolution, when it was buried until its discovery centuries later.[71]

When Henry Sweet first published his *Anglo-Saxon Reader* in 1876, the word *æstel* received little comment, merely a definition in the glossary as "book-mark", as a "*diminutive of* æst 'branch', 'twig'".[72] By the fourth edition (1888), however, Sweet had changed the etymology to the Low-Latin *astula = assula*, a diminutive of *assis*, 'shaving' or 'shingle of wood'.[73] He goes on to note that "Prof. Skeat suggests that it here means the boards in which the books were bound; but as it is in the singular, it seems more

probable that it is a plate of metal used as a book-mark".[74]

Also in 1876, Julius Zupitza published his *Altenglisches Übungsbuch*, a series of readings for students of Old English. His note on *æstel* in Alfred's Preface suggests "Lesezeichen" ('book-mark') but questions it.[75] In 1880 Karl Korner published his reader and included Alfred's Preface and a facing-page translation into Modern German. The word *æstel* is translated "Lesezeichen" but Korner's commentary, which cites both Sweet and Zupitza, shows considerable doubt.[76]

The great *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* published in 1898 by Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, moved in an altogether different direction. There, *æstel* is defined as "*a tablet, a table for notes, a waxed tablet*; indicatorium, astula, pugillaris".[77] The entry cites Du Cange's equation of *astula* and *tabula sectilis* "referring to pugillares . . . It is most probable then that Alfred's æstel consisted of two waxed tablets, joined together by a hinge, and framed or covered with gold to the value of fifty mancuses. When these waxed tablets were closed, being framed or covered with gold, they would have a splendid and costly appearance, worthy of the gift of a king".[78] This definition represents a considerable change from Bosworth's earlier attempt: "*An index, or table of contents ranged in columns, a label, guide, a stile, or division in wainscotting, a handle*".[79]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, opinions about the *æstel* were already fully diverse and diffuse. There was not even an effort toward consensus. E.J. Thomas of the Cambridge University Library gave a paper on the *æstel* to the Cambridge Philological Society on May 11, 1916, but he never published the essay. From the one-page summary which was made an official record, it is clear that he advanced the explanation of *æstel* as "the board of a book, and especially the upper cover, being the side often ornamented with gems and precious metals"[80] and cites a number of elaborately adorned upper boards which are now lost (Book of Kells, Book of Durrow and others). Thomas's paper, recorded only in synopsis, had little influence.

By 1938, T.D. Kendrick was able, without stated reasons, not only to identify the *æstel* as "a page weight for the heavy vellum leaves of the manuscript"[81] but also to indicate that the Alfred Jewel in the Ashmolean Museum "is supposed to have been" one.

Ten years later, the most thorough studies ever undertaken of Alfred's Preface were published by Francis P. Magoun, Jr.[82] He comes forth with no dramatic identification of the *æstel* but he was much taken with the brief record of Thomas's paper and thought "that the odds are greatly in favor of a most elaborate gold case or binding for the book".[83]

But when Dorothy Whitelock published her translation of Alfred's Preface in 1955 she traced *æstel* to "*hastula* 'a little spear'" and identified it as "a pointer to keep the reader's eyes on the line he was reading", recording at the end of her note that an "alternative view takes it to be the binding of the book",[84] probably reflecting Magoun's pleasure with Thomas's conclusion.

Two important essays on the *æstel* in recent years were published in 1974 and 1975 by Bruce Harbert[85] and D.R. Howlett[86] and present learned, ingenious, and striking suggestions. Harbert identifies the *æstel* as a fragment of the True Cross which is mounted in a reliquary of gold on the cover of the volume; the reliquary is worth (or consists of) fifty mancuses of gold. Harbert examines the etymological possibilities for *æstel* and prefers to see the word as a diminutive of an unrecorded Old English cognate to Gothic *asts* and German *Ast*. With this origin, and with the Middle English word *astele*, the word could mean 'small branch'; since some of the German cognates were used to describe the cross, *æstel* "could have the special meaning 'fragment of the cross'".[87] Because the mancus can also refer to the amount of gold which equals the coin, Harbert reads the *æstel* as a piece of wood (i.e., the True Cross) which is mounted on the top board of a book in a reliquary worth fifty mancuses.[88] Evidence of books which had relics mounted on the top board and of King Alfred's having received a fragment of the True Cross in 883 from the Pope are also advanced in support.[89] Harbert suggests that those who received manuscripts from King Alfred would have known about his having received the sacred wood and would have needed no more explanation.

Howlett, following in the tradition first suggested by Samuel Pegge but established by Bishop Clifford, identifies the *æstel* with the Alfred Jewel. From thorough etymological studies, he concludes that an *æstel* is "a little rod" or "small slip of wood".[90] He then sees this rod as a likely thing to have fitted in to the open socket of the Alfred Jewel. Since the use of the Alfred Jewel and the Minster Lovell Jewel had not been conclusively identified, they were suitable candidates for the mysterious *æstel*.[91] And, so fitted with a rod of perishable material (wood or horn), they would serve as bookmarks when the book is closed or as pointers when it is open and being read. Howlett finds this identification of these two, *æstel* and Jewel, congruent; "all available evidence coheres. No other theory can comprehend so much".[92] Both of these recent suggestions are attractive, not only because they are presented with learning, intelligence, and tact, but because they include so much of the available evidence. They are not altogether satisfying, however.

The suggestion that an *æstel* is a fragment of the True Cross runs into problems, I think, when one reads Alfred's Preface in this light and then considers it in the context of Alfred's character. Of all English kings, Alfred was the most scholarly and one of the most religious. He would have valued a piece of the True Cross in the highest terms and he certainly would have wished his subjects to honour it. He also would have ordered a suitable reliquary for it. But would he have divided it into nine or more pieces? Would he have sent most of these pieces into situations where they could easily be stolen, and stolen for the sake of a reliquary constructed at his own command? Would he not have said more - at least one or two words - about the precious relic, or at least called it 'halig'?[93] Furthermore, reliquaries on books seem to have been uncommon, and separate elaborate reliquaries are well documented.[94]

Because of the great waves of destruction at the hands of the Danes and in the course of the dissolution of the monasteries, our knowledge of late ninth-century bookbinding is limited. Even the remnants of Anglo-Saxon bookbinding make clear, however, not only that bookbinding was an elaborate craft but that costly and decorative bindings were known and admired. Recent historians of bindings have demonstrated that highly ornate and extremely valuable bookbindings were regular parts of Anglo-Saxon society. These so-called treasure bindings were, in a monastic establishment, more regularly parts of the treasury than of the library.[95] While original bindings from pre-Conquest England are extremely rare, while original Anglo-Saxon treasure bindings are even rarer,[96] and while none of the surviving Anglo-Saxon bindings is on a book written in the vernacular, the number of references to such bindings, including that in Riddle 26,[97] makes clear that they were once numerous; Ely Cathedral still had fourteen "after all the losses it had suffered at the Conquest".[98] In addition, ivory bindings which survive in much greater numbers, give additional ideas about those which were executed in gold.[99] The use of gold, other precious metals, and stones to adorn the boards - particularly the upper boards - of books was a widely-recognized vehicle for lavish artistic display.

The few surviving examples are illuminating. The elaborate eleventh-century gold covers on the upper boards of Pierpont Morgan Library MSS M708 and M709 were probably commissioned by Judith of Flanders before she left England in 1066 and were certainly costly;[100] fifty mancuses would not be out of line, if indeed it would have been enough. Equally elaborate and of Alfred's own time are both decorated boards of Morgan MS 1.[101] The gold cover for the lower board, gilt silver, enamel, and jewels, is dated from the third quarter of the ninth century and was obviously created for and used on a smaller board and later refitted to the lower board for Morgan 1, a clear re-use of a gold board cover for a manuscript other than the one for which it was intended.[102] The cover for the upper board is dated c.800. While the covers for the boards of Morgan MS 1 are not Anglo-Saxon (the upper is from France; the lower, from south-east Germany),[103] they do let us see something that was known in ecclesiastical circles during and slightly before Alfred's reign. Of much less elaborate form are the twenty-two silver mounts which are part of the eighth-century Anglo-Saxon binding of codex Bonifatianus 1 in the Landesbibliothek at Falda. While these mounts look quite restrained beside the great gold covers on the Morgan manuscripts, they show Anglo-Saxon interlace designs and, without question, constituted what can be recognized as "an important binding for anyone".[104]

The most recent historian of Anglo-Saxon arts and crafts does not identify the *æstel* with any part of the bookbinding, merely citing its identification by others as a pointer, if true, as "yet another instance of Israelite inspiration".[105] The Alfred Jewel and the Minster Lovell Jewel, he adds parenthetically, "were probably originally the precious handles of such pointers".[106] These 'jewels' well may have held some sort of wand in their now vacant sockets, but if the Alfred Jewel were the head of a pointer

used by an individual reader, the image in the crystal would either be upside down for the user or it would have to be held in a strange and awkward position. But, as Bishop Clifford noted when he first linked the identification of the Alfred Jewel as pointer head with the *æstel*, the inscription on the Jewel can only be read in normal order if one looks down at the top of the whole object. Thus, there is a serious conflict between the aspect of the central figure in the crystal and the inscription. One might argue, however, that the image was to have its maximum effect when the pointer was not in use. It could be kept head up along the upper board (perhaps already highly decorated) or used as a bookmark.

But the identification of *æstel* as a bookmark-pointer has other problems. The use of such an item as a jeweled bookmark has no clear precedent in the history of Anglo-Saxon books. No such elaborate bookmark is preserved or described in the surviving literature. The earliest English bookmarks now known are simple thongs of leather tied to the spine.[107] An elaborate head of a bookmark could easily be broken and any kind of impressive shaft could easily be a source of possible damage to the book. The use of pointers for choir books is known, but the identification of *æstel* as a small pointer for an individual reader has little more precedent than Dodwell's view of its possibility as an "Israelite inspiration".[108] The possibility of etymological kinship with *hastula*, 'a small spear', plus the knowledge about large pointers, plus the temptingly empty sockets of the two Jewels has made for an identification which is not really very compelling.

The Alfred Jewel is a beautiful thing and was indeed costly, but it probably was not nearly so costly as Alfred's *æstel*. For one thing, the Alfred Jewel weighs about 1½ ounces while fifty gold mancuses would have weighed six times as much.[109] Its use as a pointer is tempting but not established. Even if the Jewel were proved to have been a pointer, it would probably not have been so easily replicable as the *æstel*. Because of its use free from the book it would not be 'on' the book as the *æstel* was and would be all too easily removed. Is there any evidence that pointers for individual readers were ever attached to codices? Furthermore, the costliness of the Jewel would not be so obvious to viewers as Alfred's Preface makes clear is the case for the *æstel*.

While it is tempting to solve two puzzles at once - the Alfred Jewel and the *æstel* - it is more satisfying, I think, to see the *æstel* as the board (for Alfred's translation, the upper board) of the binding for a major codex. The board was, in the best Anglo-Saxon tradition, highly adorned with gold - fifty mancuses' worth - quite well enough to hold its own among other lavish examples of that time. The gold was on the board in such a pattern and design that it could be duplicated (albeit at great cost) on nine or more copies. The gold-encased board was firmly attached but could be removed by vandals. The gold cover could be removed from the board, by a careful removal of metal pins, for re-use on another book or for many less admirable uses. The decorated board was showy and obvious in its great worth and only one (the upper) of the two boards was decorated, even though the lower could have been

adorned also had Alfred so decided.

Since no one is really sure what *indicatorium* means, a board of a book, particularly an ornately decorated upper board, is surely a viable candidate for something which shows or points out something, in this case an important book underneath. The later gloss, *festuca*, can attach to the idea of ceremonial wood and may reflect more the strong need to define *æstel* in the thirteenth century than any precise meaning given it. The full etymological spread suggested for *æstel* offers ample support for its definition as the board of a book. Latin *astela, assula* means 'shingle' or 'chip'; French *astele* means 'planchette'; Welsh *astell*, 'plank'; Irish *astul*, 'lath'. (Even the obsolete sense, 'book-mark', for *astul* could be compatible if the bookmark were marking the importance of a book, not a reader's place.) The Middle English *astele*, 'billet . . . shingle', fits very well as the legitimate descendant of Old English *æstel*. Indeed, all the etymological cousins are compatible if one emphasizes the common element of wood. Only the stress on long, round, narrow twigs, branches, and rods is unproductive. The main line of kinship is flat, sturdy, and protective.

The identification of the *æstel* with the board of a bookbinding is also satisfying because it is not advanced without long preparation by scholars.[110] Hearne himself noted that an *æstel* could be a cover for a book. While Sweet identified *æstel* as a bookmark, he settled on an etymological relationship with *assula*, 'shingle of wood', and noted Skeat's identification with "the boards in which the books were bound". E.J. Thomas made the first steady case of the identification of Alfred's *æstel* with the upper board of a book, but only a highly abbreviated version of his essay was ever published. A.J. Wyatt incorporated favourable notice of Thomas into his notes for his *Anglo-Saxon Reader* but made no case for its acceptance.[111] Nearly thirty years later, F.P. Magoun, Jr., also admired but did not champion Thomas's idea. The closest this identification of *æstel* has ever come to wide acceptance is in A. Campbell's recent supplement to the Bosworth-Toller *Dictionary*. There, he defines *æstel* as a "*bookmark* or *binding of a book*".[112] Although the "*binding of a book*" clearly owes much to the tradition of Hearne, Skeat, and Thomas, the precise words chosen, strangely enough, obscure the meaning of the Old English word. A "*binding*" is a good deal less precise than the boards of a bookbinding and does not make ready sense in terms of Alfred's Preface. An entire binding probably could not be easily removed from a book and the removal would probably cause substantial damage to the codex. Furthermore, there never could be more than one binding at a time. A single board (one of two), however, could be cut free with some ease. The metal decorative case for the board could probably even be removed without any other damage to the book. Furthermore, the upper board of some important Anglo-Saxon books is a specific object-class which is well documented to have existed in the precise conditions which Alfred ascribes to the *æstel*. And the conditions which Alfred prescribed for the use of the book could prove to be more appropriate for one in the treasury than for one in the library (see p.47 above).

An *æstel* was a board of an Anglo-Saxon bookbinding. It could be, and often was, elaborately decorated with precious metals, stones, or ivories; when only one *æstel* of a book was adorned, it was the upper. King Alfred ordered one each for the several copies of his Old English translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*. He was eager to impress his subjects with the importance of the book by attaching an *æstel* of obvious value; each was worth fifty mancuses. Naturally, he feared that the *æstel* would be removed for other uses, so he prescribed the proper locations for the book. Alas, in the fullness of time, all of King Alfred's *æstels* (indeed many if not most of his books) have disappeared. We can get an idea of what his gift copies of the Old English *Pastoral Care* looked like from isolated treasures now preserved in a few great libraries. And I suspect we can see Aldred's *æstel* more nearly in the elaborate gold work on the upper boards of Morgan MSS 708 and 709 than in the silver mounts of Codex Bonifatianus 1.

NOTES

1 The most thoughtful analysis of the production of multiple copies of King Alfred's translation is that of Kenneth Sisam, "The Publication of Alfred's *Pastoral Care*", in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953) pp.140-7. Sisam's thoughtful suggestion on the need for a critical text has not yet, to my knowledge, stimulated new editorial work.

2 The standard edition of Alfred's Preface is still Henry Sweet's edition of the entire Old English translation of the *Cura Pastoralis, King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, EETS OS 45, 50 (London, 1871-2).

3 Bruce Harbert, "King Alfred's *æstel*", *Anglo-Saxon England* 3 (1974) pp.103-10.

4 D.R. Howlett, "Alfred's Æstel", *English Philological Studies* 14 (1975) pp.65-74.

5 It has always been included in Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, the most widely used beginning anthology in Britain, and *Bright's . . . Reader*, the most widely used in America. It has also regularly been selected for anthologies published in Germany.

6 These addresses are outlined in great detail by F.P. Magoun, Jr., "Some Notes on King Alfred's Circular Letter on Educational Policy Addressed to His Bishops", *Medieval Studies* 10 (1948) p.104.

7 See Sisam for details.

8 This text is my transcription of Bodleian Library MS Hatton 20, f.2v. Capitalization and punctuation (including accents) reflect the original; attempts by later scribes to change the text or any of its features are ignored. Alfred's Preface survives in several forms, but Hatton 20 (Ker 324) is the only complete surviving manuscript. British Library MS Cot. Otho B. II and some leaves from B.X (Ker 175), badly damaged in the fire, preserve well over half of another original text. Brit. Lib. MS Cot. Tiberius B. XI (Ker 195), shows a third, but it is now, after two fires, only a few fragments; the transcript which Junius did of this manuscript before the fires (Bodl. Lib. MS Jun. 53) preserves a full text and gives a good idea of the original. Sweet, *op.cit.*, prints the Junius transcript facing the text of Hatton 20.

MS Cambridge Corpus Christi College 12 (Ker 30) was probably an early copy of Cot. Tib. B. XI. MS Cambridge University Library Ii. 2. 4 (Ker 19) was derived from the copy sent to Wulfsige at Sherborne. The texts of Alfred's letter in these two Cambridge manuscripts were published by Francis P. Magoun, Jr., "King Alfred's Letter on Educational Policy According to the Cambridge Manuscripts", *Medieval Studies* 11 (1949) pp.113-22. MS Cambridge Trinity College R. 5. 22 (717) (Ker 87) does not include the King's preface.

Bodl. Lib. MS Hatton 20 is reproduced in facsimile in *The Pastoral Care*, edited by N.R. Ker, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile VI (Copenhagen, 1956).

9 Magoun (1948), p.104.

10 Humphrey Wanley, *Antiquæ Literaturæ Septentrionalis Liber Alter* (Oxford, 1705) p.217, col. 2. Wanley's catalogue is published as the second volume of George Hickes, *Linguarum Vett. Septentrionalium Thesaurus Grammatico-Criticus et Archæologicus*.

11 Dorothy Whitelock, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge, 1930) p.6.

12 In this regard, one should consider the instruction to Wulfwynn by the testatrix Æthelgifu (Dorothy Whitelock *et al.*, ed., *The Will of Æthelgifu* (Oxford, 1968) pp.12-13). A sumptuous gold headband is to be divided among Wulfwynn and five other legatees and the method of division is by cutting five mancuses for each from her "bend": "7 ceorfe man of hire bende witsige v mancessas . . .". Nor was this sort of division unique; see also Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, pp.26-9, where a gold headband is divided in two for heirs of Brihtric and Ælfswith, and pp.62-5, where Wulfwaru instructs that "anes bendes on twentigum mancussum goldes" be divided among four servants.

13 Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, p.6.

14 *Ibid.* In the Will of Wynflæd, the preposition "an" conveys the idea of worth in connection with cups and "anon punde" (p.12, l.16) and later with a brooch and "VI mancussum" (p.14, l.12). In the Will of Ælfgifu, the preposition "ón" suggests both the possible source of value and the resultant worth in regard to two armlets and "hundtuælftigum mancussum" (p.20, l.18), a necklace and "hundtweltifgum mancussum" (p.20, l.22), and an armlet and "þritegum mancussum" (p.20, ll.22-3). In the Will of Ealdorman Æthelmær, the preposition "on" suggests both the possible source of value and the resultant worth for four armlets and "ðrym hund mancesum goldes" (p.26, l.2). In the Will of Brihtric and Ælfswith, the preposition "on" similarly joins an armlet and "ðryttigan mancysan goldes" (p.26, ll.20-1), a necklace and "XL mancysan" (p.26, l.25) and another necklace and "LXXX mancys" (p.28, l.2). In the Will of Æthelflæd, the preposition "on" links four armlets with the incredible sum, "twam hund mancys goldes" (p.34, l.15). See also Harbert, pp.106-7.

15 Whitelock, *ibid.*, p.100.

16 Dorothy Whitelock, ed. and trans., *English Historical Documents c.500-1042* (London, 1955) p.819.

17 Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, p.11.

18 *Ibid.*, p.25; what seems to have been a lifetime lease of seven and a half hides of land seems to have been worth five pounds and fifty mancuses of gold, p.53; Bosworth-Toller defines hide: "as much land as will support one family".

19 Whitelock, *Æthelgifu*, pp.6-7.

20 Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, p.25.

21 E.J. Thomas, " . . . a paper on King Alfred's æstels . . .", *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society. CIII-CV. Lent, Easter and Michaelmas Terms, 1916* (London, 1917) p.12.

22 Magoun (1948), p.105, n.29.

23 The occasion was a public lecture, "The Scholarly Commitment of Alfred the Great", at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

24 *Ibid.*, p.105; Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, p.168, n. to l.17.

25 Since the dissociation of the value of the U.S. dollar from a fixed price of gold, the price per ounce has fluctuated as high as one thousand dollars.

26 Magoun (1948), p.105.

27 A table of comparative monetary values across a significant historical span would be of the utmost value to scholars. As it is (and as these various estimates show), the techniques and bases for comparison vary enormously.

28 Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, pp.10-11; see also Harbert, pp.106-7; see also Whitelock, *Æthelgifu*, pp.6-7.

29 Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, pp.12-13.

30 Julius Zupitza, ed., *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar* (Berlin, 1880) p.314. In the category "nomina domorum", the words immediately preceding "*indicatorium* æstel" are "*clausura* loc. *clauis* cǽg. *clauus* nægel. *sera* hæpse. *chorus* chor. *gradus* stæpe". Those immediately following are "*scabellum* scamul. *thus* stôr. *odor* brǽð. *thuribulum* stôrcylle. *legula* sticca. *regula* regolsticca". See also *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, ed. Thomas Wright and R.P. Wülcker, 2 vols. (London, 1884).

31 See Harbert, p.103; see Howlett, p.67.

32 Harbert, pp.103-4, Howlett, pp.71-2; see also N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957) p.42, for the description of MS CCCC 12 (Ker 30). Harbert thinks this gloss is particularly important because in the thirteenth century this glossator may have known the Middle English *astel*, *astelle* as a living word and may also have seen Alfred's æstel on one or more of the books (p.106). Ker lists (p.lvi) seventeen surviving MSS which were glossed by the 'tremulous Worcester hand'; see p.467 for a list of some available facsimiles.

33 Howlett, p.72.

34 *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. Hans Kurath and Sherman M. Kuhn (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1954) p.466; see also Magoun (1948), p.105.

35 Friedrich Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache*, edited by Walther Mitzka (Berlin, 1963) p.34.

36 Sigmund Feist, *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der Gotischen Sprache* (Leiden, 1939) p.60.

37 Kluge, p.34.

38 Egidio Forcellini *et al.*, *Totius Latinitatis Lexicon* (Prati, 1858) I, p.440; see also Carolus Du Fresne (Dominus Du Cange), *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediæ & Infimæ Latinitatis* (Paris, 1678) I, cols. 364-5 and 367, where these words were first explained with ample citations.

39 Oscar Bloch and W. von Wartburg, *Dictionnaire etymologique de la langue française* (Paris, 1964) p.43; see also p.16 for the extremely rare word *ais*, 'planche . . . planchette de bois' which seems surely to be a part of this semantic field. (I am indebted to Professor Ian Short of Birkbeck College, University of London, for knowledge of *ais* and its etymology.)

40 *Y Geiraidur Mawr: the Complete Welsh-English English-Welsh Dictionary*, edited by H. Meurig Evans and W.O. Thomas (Swansea, 1976) p.33.

41 *Foclóir Gaeldige agus Béarla: an Irish-English Dictionary*, edited by the Rev. Patrick S. Dinneen (Dublin, 1927) p.62.

42 Howlett, pp.67-9; quotation from p.68; commentary given here greatly expands the annotations of Du Cange.

43 The fullest discussions of the etymology are Magoun (1948), pp.105-6, who finds the "ultimate" etymology to "Lat. *hastula* 'little spear' almost surely wrong" and that to "VLat. *astula*, var. *astella*, Lat. *assula*, 'splinter' 'chip of wood' almost certainly right"; Howlett, pp.66-7, is more cautious but emphasizes (p.67) that "one can be certain only that all the words cited . . . denote something wooden"; Harbert, pp.104-6, examines all possibilities but prefers the analogue to Go. *asts* and Gmc. *ast*, 'small branch'. F. Holthausen, *Altenglisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1934) p.13, favours Lat. *hastula* but offers no comments. John R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Cambridge, 1894) defines *æstel* as "some thin kind of board?"; the Supplement of 1960 by Herbert D. Meritt moves toward 'bookmark' and cites Max Förster, *Zur Geschichte des Reliquienkultus im Altengland*, Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Munich, 1943) 8, p.11 n.3, who favours etymological descent from *hastula* and finds it supports his definition, "Buchzeichen, Lesezeichen".

44 Matthew Parker, ed., Asser's *Ælfredi Regis Res Gestæ* (London, 1574) p.[43].

45 *Ibid.*, p.[48].

46 ('Bonaventura') Vulcanius de Smet of Bruges, ed., *De Literis & Lingua Getaru, Sive Gothorum* . . . (Leyden, 1597) pp.80 and 86.

47 William Camden, ed., *Anglica, Hibernica, Cambrica, a Veteribus Scripta* (Frankfurt, 1602) pp.26 and 28.

48 John Spelman, ed., *Ælfredi Magni Anglorum Regis Invictissimi Vita* (Oxford, 1678): p.197 for the interlinear Latin translation ascribed to Spelman; p.106 for the Latin translation ascribed to Christopher Wase; see Magoun (1949), pp.114-15.

49 Thomas Hearne, ed., *The Life of Alfred the Great, by Sir John Spelman* (Oxford, 1709) p.143.

50 Thomas Hearne, "The Preface" and "De voce Anglo-Saxonica Æstel Dissertatio" in *The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary* (Oxford, 1710-12) 7, III-XIV and XIX-XXIII; the essay "De voce . . ." of 17 June 1709 was followed by Dodwell's letter of 7 July 1709 which prompted "The Preface" to vol. 7, as published in 1711.

51 Geoffrey Chaucer, *Works* . . . , edited by F.N. Robinson (2nd ed., London, 1957) p.55, "The Miller's Tale", ll.3785-6.

52 Hearne (1711), p.xiii.

53 *Ibid.*; Du Fresne, I, cols. 364-5 and 367.

54 Hearne (1711), p.xiii.

55 Joan R. Clarke and David A. Hinton, *The Alfred and Minster Lovell Jewels* (Oxford, 1971) p.4. Also see the more extended account in David A. Hinton, *A Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 900-1100 . . . Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford, 1974) p.44.

56 Dr William Musgrave, " . . . *a letter . . . to Dr. Sloane; concerning a Piece of Antiquity lately found in* Somersetshire", *Philosophical Transactions* 20, no.247 (December, 1698) p.441; George Hickes, "*A Letter . . . dated May the 22nd*, 1700, *to Dr.* Sloane, *concerning the* Saxon *Antiquity*, mentioned N.247", *ibid.* 22 (1700-1) pp.464-9.

57 Samuel Pegge, "*Observations on . . . Mr.* Wise's *Conjecture concerning the famous Jewel of King* Alfred . . ." *Archaeologia* II (1773) pp.68-74; referring to the work of Lisle in *Divers Ancient Monuments* . . . (1638), of Wase in Spelman's *Ælfredi Magni* . . . (1678), of Hearne in his edition of *The Life of Alfred the Great* (1709) and in "The Preface" and "De voce Æstel Dissertatio" in *The Itinerary of John Leland* (1710-11), and of Francis Wise in *Annales Rerum Gestarum Ælfredi Magni* (Oxford, 1722).

58 Dr Jeremiah Milles, "*Observations on the Aestel*", *Archaeologia* II (1773) pp.75-9.

59 Humphrey Wanley, p.217.

60 N.R. Ker, *Catalogue*, pp.257-9, for Ker 195.

61 *Ibid.*

62 Wanley, p.217, and Ker, *Catalogue*, pp.222-3, for Ker 175.

63 Edward Lye, *Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum*, edited by Owen Manning (London, 1772) sig. $E1^{r}$.

64 Thomas Wright, *Biographia Britannia Literaria* (London, 1842) I, p.401.

65 The Rev. J.A. Giles, *The Life and Times of Alfred the Great* (London, 1848) Appendix III, p.34.

66 Ottomar Behnsch, *Geschichte der Englischen Sprache und Literatur . . .* (Breslau, 1853) p.90, col.2.

67 Sweet, pp.6-9.

68 *Ibid.*, p.473.

69 W.J.H. Clifford, "Inaugural Address", *Somersetshire Archaeological & Natural History Society Proceedings . . . 1877* (Taunton and London, 1878) 23 (N.S. vol.III) pp.9-28.

70 *Ibid.*, p.25.

71 *Ibid.*, pp.26-7.

72 Henry Sweet, *An Anglo-Saxon Reader* (Oxford, 1876) pp.7, 188, and 210.

73 Sweet, *Reader* (4th ed., Oxford, 1884) pp.190 and 211. I was not able to examine a copy of the third edition.

74 Sweet, *ibid.*, p.190.

75 Julius Zupitza, *Altenglisches Übungsbuch* (Vienna, 1874) pp.9 and 76.

76 Karl Körner, *Angelsächsische Texte* (Heilbronn, 1880) pp.36-9, 202, 287.

77 Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford, 1898) p.20. According to the *British Library Catalogue of Printed Books* the publication of this work in parts began in 1882.

78 *Ibid.*

79 The Rev. J. Bosworth, *A Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language* (London, 1838) p.40. Neither edition of Bosworth *A Compendious Anglo-Saxon and English Dictionary* (London, 1848 and 1881) contained an entry for *æstel*.

80 E.J. Thomas, p.12.

81 T.D. Kendrick, *Anglo-Saxon Art to A.D. 900* (London, 1938) p.216.

82 Magoun (1948) and (1949).

83 Magoun (1948), p.106.

84 Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, p.819; see also her edition of *Sweet's . . . Reader* (Oxford, 1967) pp.225 and 297.

85 See n.3.

86 See n.4.

87 Harbert, pp.105-6.

88 *Ibid.*, pp.106-8.

89 *Ibid.*, pp.108-9.

90 Howlett, p.72.

91 *Ibid.*, pp.72-4; see also Clarke and Hinton, and Hinton, pp.46-7, n.55 above.

92 Howlett, p.74.

93 In this regard, one should consider carefully the attitudes which Alfred is known to have had toward religious practice; see Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. W.H. Stevenson, with D. Whitelock (Oxford, 1959) section 76, pp.59-62; also *Alfred the Great*, trans. and ed. S. Keynes and M. Lapidge (Harmondsworth, 1983) pp.91-2.

94 C.R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (Manchester, 1982)

pp.11-12, 196-8, 200-1, 207, 231 *et passim*.

[95] Dodwell, p.203.

[96] Dodwell, p.51, discusses the now lost cover for the Lindisfarne Gospels. E.J. Thomas, p.13, mentions others.

[97] George Philip Krapp and Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, ed., *The Exeter Book*, vol. III of *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (New York, 1936) pp.193-4 (Riddle 26).

[98] Dodwell, p.202.

[99] *Ibid.*, p.125, n.25e.

[100] Paul Needham, *Twelve Centuries of Bookbindings 400-1600* (New York, 1979) pp.33-8; Paul Needham, *Bookbindings Before 1600. A Guide and Hand-List to the Exhibition: Twelve Centuries of Bookbindings* (New York, 1979); Dorothy Miner, *The History of Bookbinding 525-1950 A.D.* (Baltimore, 1957) pp.6-8. For a pointed disagreement with the identification of this decorated board as Anglo-Saxon, see Dodwell, pp.108, 201, and 311 (esp. n.136).

[101] Needham, *Twelve Centuries . . .* , pp.24-9; Meta Harrsen, *Central European Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York, 1958) pp.6-10.

[102] Needham, *Twelve Centuries . . .* , p.25.

[103] *Ibid.*, p.22; Harrsen, p.8.

[104] D.M. Wilson, "An Anglo-Saxon Bookbinding at Fulda (Codex Bonifatianus I)", *The Antiquaries' Journal* 41 (1961) pp.199-210. See also Graham Pollard, "Some Anglo-Saxon Bookbindings", *The Book Collector* 24 (1975) pp.130-59.

[105] Dodwell, p.32.

[106] *Ibid.*; see also Hinton, p.46. While the influence of the Old Testament heritage was particularly great, as Dodwell records, in both art and literature, there is almost no surviving evidence that the imitation of Jewish practice went far enough to take in the pointer for use by individual readers in the Anglo-Saxon era.

[107] Graham Pollard, "The Construction of English Twelfth-Century Bindings", *The Library*, Fifth Series, vol.17 (1962) p.16.

[108] Dodwell, p.32.

[109] Hinton, pp.35 and 46-7.

[110] My own determined interest in the *æstel* began during the preparation of a lecture for the University of Missouri in 1970 (see n.23, above). In the audience was Professor Helmut Lehmann-Haupt who began the discussion afterwards with the suggestion that the *æstel*, to which I had referred without an attempt at solution, seemed to him to fit (at least as far as I had described it) the removable gold bindings of Morgan MS 1. In subsequent years, I have rarely met a scholar of Old English who has not taken a turn

at identifying the mysterious Alfredian gift. Among these friends, Professor J.E. Cross was especially generous, for he gave me copies of all his accumulated information.

[111] A.J. Wyatt, *An Anglo-Saxon Reader* (Cambridge, 1919) p.212.

[112] Alistair Campbell, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda to the Supplement* (Oxford, 1972) p.3.