



# Insights into Understanding Aiglet Types and Manufacturing Techniques.

With a focus on aiglets from the post medieval era.

This presentation is based on information from  
"Aiglets: Medieval, Post Medieval, and Modern".

Presenter: Gerald A. Livings

- **Aiglet Types**  
(With proposed additions to the system of classification)
- **How were aiglets manufactured?**

# What Are Aiglets?

Aiglets are used to finish the ends of laces, thongs, and cords.



# When And How Were Aiglets Used?

- From approximately the 9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, these were used to help hold clothing together.
- An aiglet was placed on both ends of a cord to make what is called a "point".



# The Current Definition Of Aiglet Types

Examples are found in huge numbers in late and medieval and early post-medieval contexts. The typology used here follows (and extends) Oakley 1979a, 262-3.

Type 1 is of slightly tapering form with the lace secured by a transverse rivet at the top, and the edges overlapping only at the base (according to Oakley, mainly 15th century, with some of 16th and 17th-century date).

Type 2 is cylindrical in form, securing the lace along its length, with both edges folding inward to grip the lace (according to Oakley, mainly 16th and 17th centuries).

Type 3 (not Oakley) is cylindrical with edges overlapping along its entire length and is much less common.

# Type 1, 2, And 3 Simplified Definitions

- **Type 1** aiglets have a seam defined by the edge of the metal butting against each other along the majority of the seam. The edges may overlap for a short distance at the base and/or the top of the aiglet.
- **Type 2** aiglets have both sides of the seam folding inward to grip the cord or lace along the majority (75% or more) of the seam.
- **Type 3** aiglets have an overlapping seam where one side of the aiglet overlaps the other side along the majority (75% or more) of the seam. One side of the seam may, or may not, be bent in to hold the cord or lace.

# Additions To The System Of Classification

- **Type 4** aiglets are cast, forged, or are made from solid metallic materials other than sheet.
- **Type 5** aiglets are manufactured from non-metallic materials. (bone, horn, stone, pottery, amber, etc.)
- **Type 6** aiglets are purely decorative and are not functional. They may be similar to any other style of aiglet in manufacturing.

# Making Tools For Aiglets

- Burnisher, mandrels, hammers, pliers, an anvil with rounded grooves, shears and polishing marking supplies.
- With only a couple of specialized tools, most jewelry shops can make aiglets with the tools they have on hand.
- Jewelers already have the technical skills needed to manufacture aiglets.

# Rediscovering The Techniques Needed To Manufacture Aiglets

- Difficulties of reconstructing how they were manufactured.
- Modern reconstruction can help rediscover medieval methods. (experimental archaeology)
- The type of aiglet being made dictates the process.

# Manufacturing Type 1 Aiglets

- **Type 1** aiglets have a seam defined by the edge of the metal butting against each other along the majority of the seam. The edges may overlap for a short distance at the base and/or the top of the aiglet.



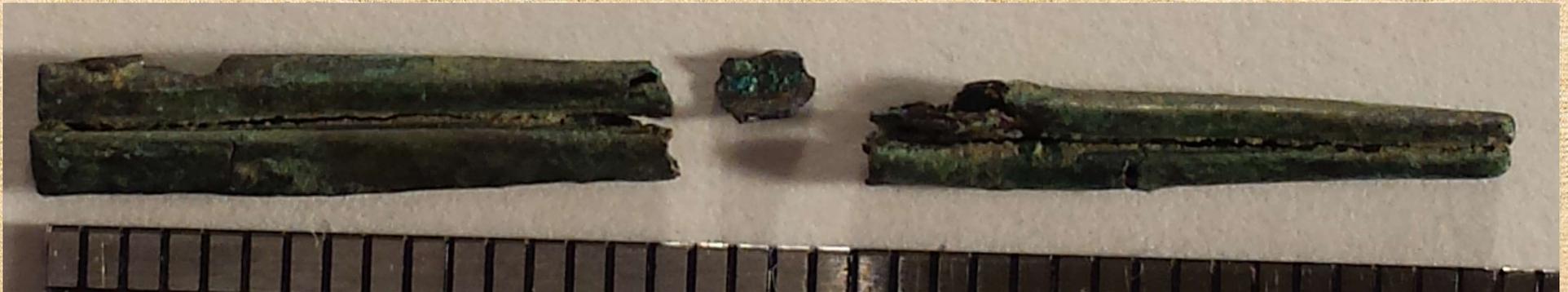
# Manufacturing Type 1 Aiglets

- Type 1 aiglets can be made with a mandrel and a burnisher.
- They are made before attaching to a cord.



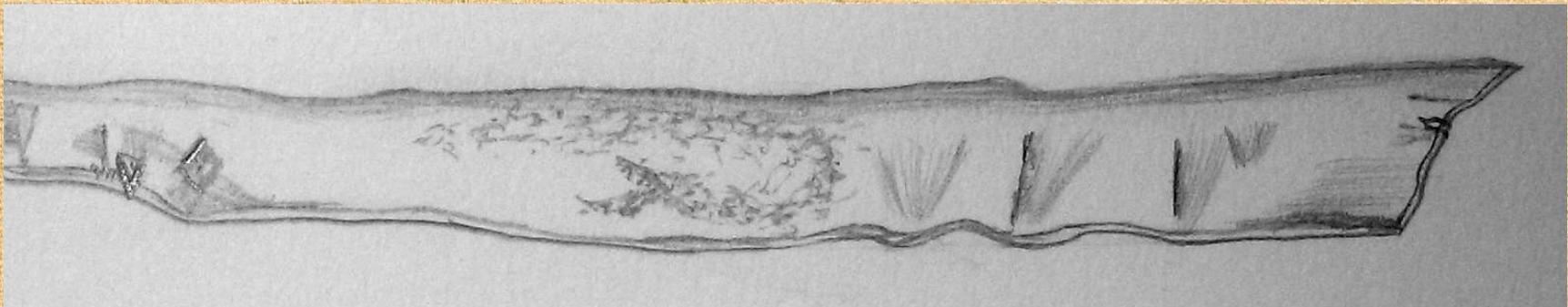
# Manufacturing Type 2 Aiglets

- **Type 2** aiglets have both sides of the seam folding inward to grip the cord or lace along the majority (75% or more) of the seam.



# Were Pliers Used To Make Aiglets?

- This aiglet fragment is from the aiglet depicted in Figure 30.65 of Cunningham, C. M., & Drury, P. J. (1985), figure 30.65.
- The edge has a pattern of bends suggesting it was folded over the lace, then crimped several times along its length by a small set of needle nose pliers.



# Manufacturing Type 2 Aiglets

- Type 2 aiglets are made around the cord during the manufacturing process. They can be straight or tapered.



# Manufacturing Type 3 Aiglets

**Type 3** aiglets have an overlapping seam where one side of the aiglet overlaps the other side along the majority (75% or more) of the seam. One side of the seam may, or may not, be bent in to hold the cord or lace.



# Manufacturing Type 3 Aiglets

- These can be as large as the one pictured, 28 mm or as small as a pin, depending on the cord size.



# Manufacturing Type 4 Aiglets

**Type 4** aiglets are cast, forged, or are made from solid metallic materials other than sheet.



# Manufacturing Type 5 Aiglets

- Type 5 aiglets are manufactured from non-metallic materials, such as bone, horn, stone, pottery, amber, etc.
- At this point, these are a proposed type only. I have yet to document any extant examples.



# Manufacturing Type 6 Aiglets

**Type 6** aiglets are purely decorative and are not functional. They may be similar to any other style of aiglet in manufacturing technique.



# Manufacturing Type 6 Aiglets

The pattern on these are loosely based on several examples in the British Museum.



# Some Aiglets Are Functional And Decorative

Many aiglets were decorated with simple designs. Stamped, punched, and repousse are all common techniques.



# Compressing The Tops Of Aiglets To Secure Them To Cords

A proposed tool based on the illustration of page 286 of "Dress Accessories".

With a bit of adhesive, this is a very reliable method to secure aiglets to cords.



# Faceting The Tops Of Aiglets To Secure Them To Cords

Several aiglets have had the tops filed to appear faceted. Is this a method to attach them or is it purely decorative?



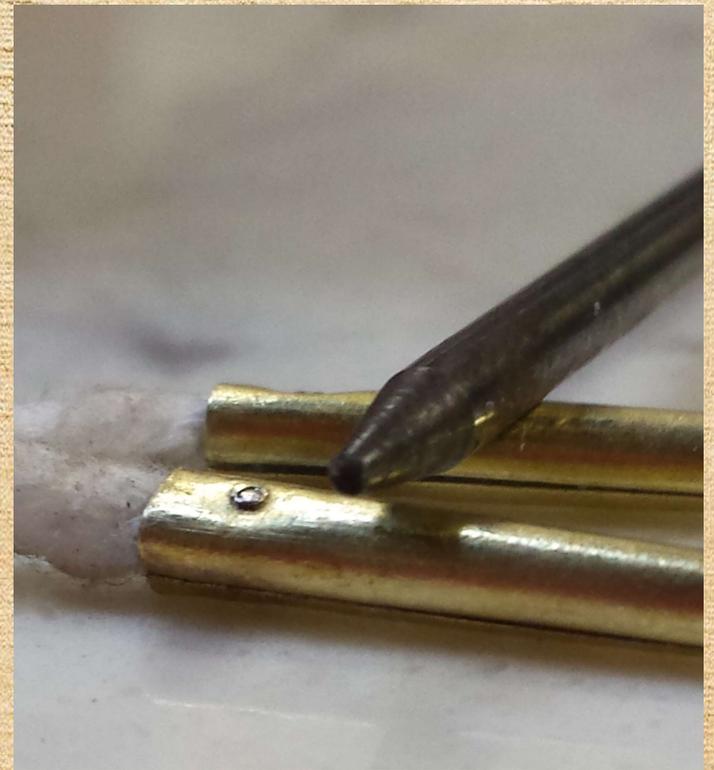
# Tabs As A Method Of Attaching Aiglets To Cords

- There are many extant examples of tabs that were used to secure aiglets to cords. This method works extremely well.



# Using Rivets To Secure aiglets To Cords

- Rivets were used on all types of aiglets. Sometimes in conjunction with other attachment methods.



# Summary

- Aiglets: A small item, they were common then and now.
- There are six types of aiglets. Five are in the historical record, with one proposed type yet to be recorded.
- The tools and techniques to make aiglets are very similar to those used by jewelers of the past and today.

**Download this presentation, the paper  
"Aiglets: Medieval, Post Medieval, and Modern."  
and additional resources by visiting this webpage:**

**[www.livingstonjewelers.com/aiglets.html](http://www.livingstonjewelers.com/aiglets.html)**

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Gerald A. Livings  
[glivings@livingstonjewelers.com](mailto:glivings@livingstonjewelers.com)