



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".

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- **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 9th to 17th 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.



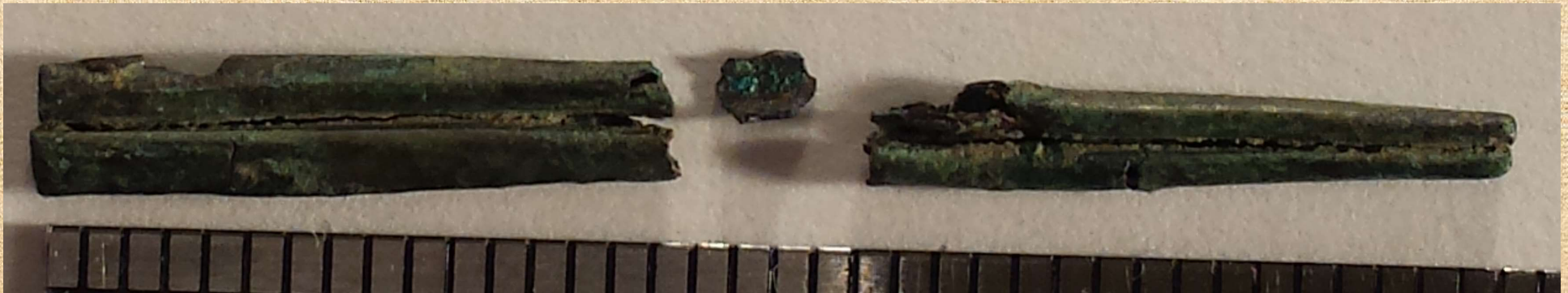
Manufacturing Type 1 Aiglets

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



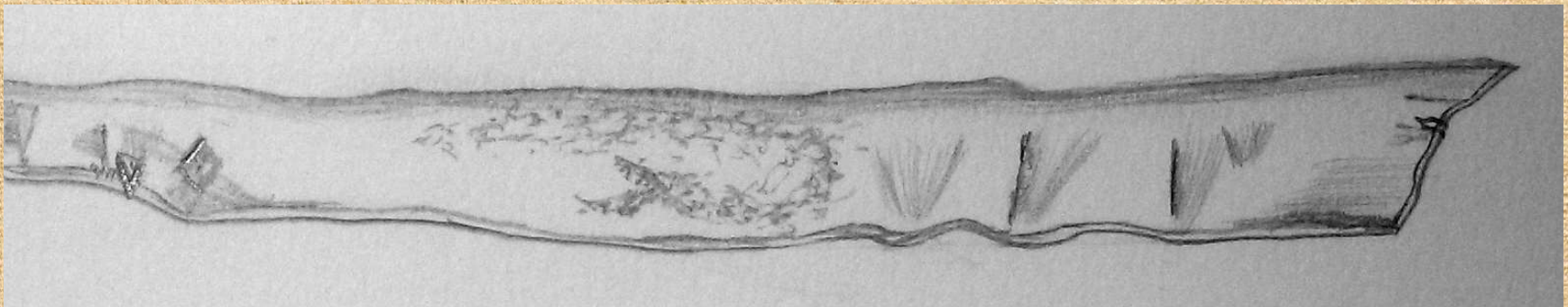
Manufacturing Type 2 Aiglets

- **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

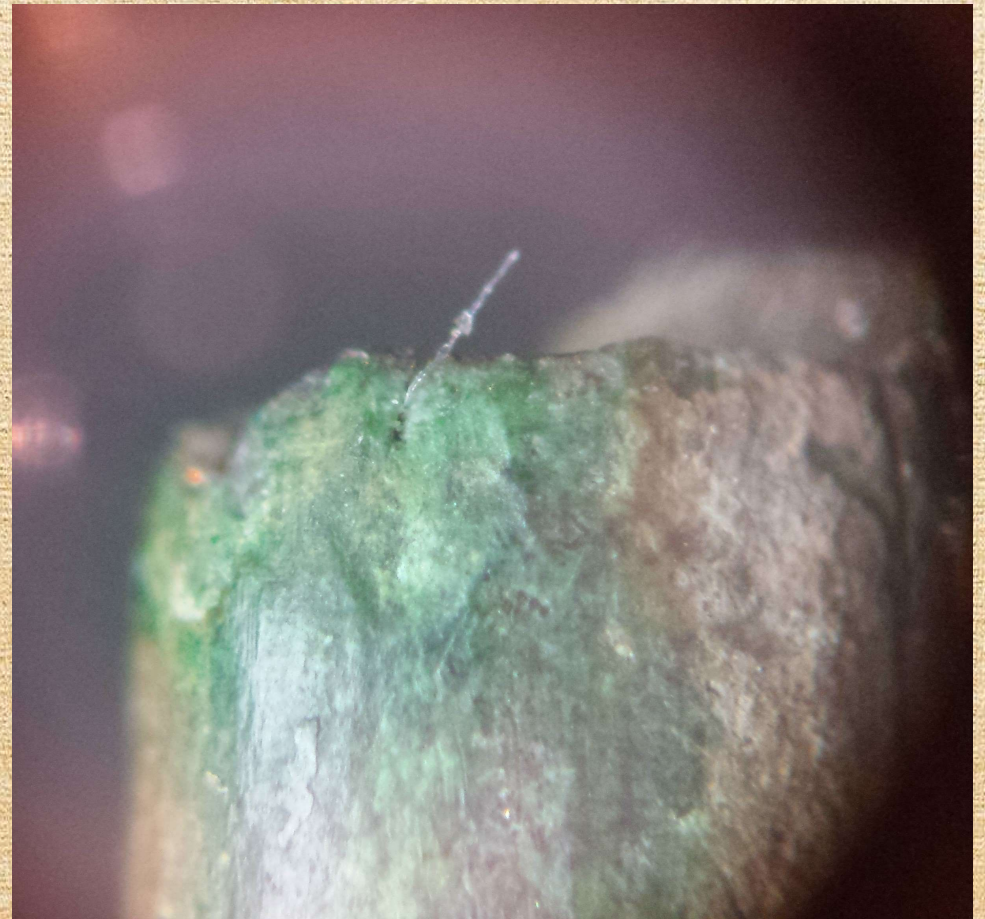
A proposed tool based on the illustration of page 286 of "Dress Accessories".

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?



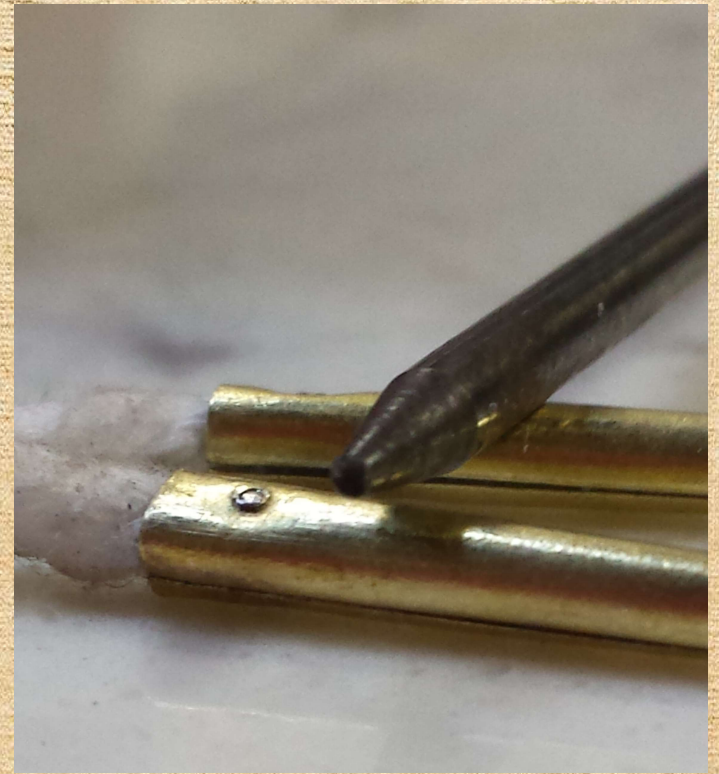
Tabs As A Method Of Attaching Aiglets To Cords

- 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

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