

# The Iconography of the Alfred Jewel

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**M**OST scholars have believed separate parts of the Alfred Jewel to bear symbolic or allegorical significance or to derive from separate decorative motives on enamelled bowls, tapestries, silver brooches, and illuminated manuscripts.\* The most recent publication about the jewel, accepting the figure on the obverse as 'a symbolic representation of Sight, one of the Five Senses',<sup>1</sup> suggests that the reverse design and animal head terminal are merely decorative. I would suggest that the iconography of the jewel is coherent and partly dependent upon literary models, that the man on the obverse represents Christ, the Wisdom and Word of God, the tree on the reverse signifies Wisdom, the Tree of Life, and the animal head terminal depicts the perverted cunning of Satan.

### *The Obverse*

In Exodus 28 :4 the Lord gave Moses explicit instructions about priestly vesture. Aaron was to wear a *rationale et superhumerales, tunicam et lineam strictam, cidarim et balteum*. The *rationale* was a breastplate of judgement which bore the enigmatic urim and thummim. These obscure Hebrew words were rendered *δήλωσις καὶ ἀλήθεια* in the Septuagint, *doctrina et veritas* in the Vulgate, and 'lar ond soþfæstnys' in Ælfric's Heptateuch (Leviticus 8 :8). From Exodus 28 : 30 one can infer only that the *rationale* was associated with wisdom for righteous judgement :

Pones autem in rationali iudicii Doctrinam et Veritatem, quae erunt in pectore Aaron, quando ingrediatur coram Domino : et gestabit iudicium filiorum Israel in pectore suo, in conspectu Domini semper.

As all Biblical allusions to the urim and thummim are vague, many have identified them with that more famous device, Aaron's rod, which flowered in the Tabernacle (Numbers 17 :8) :

sequenti die regressus invenit germinasse virgam Aaron in domo Levi : et turgentibus gemmis eruperant flores, qui, foliis dilatatis, in amygdalas deformati sunt ;

'ond eode on ærne merien in to ðam getelde ond efne ða wæs growende Aarones gyrd on blostmum ond on leafum on hnutbeames wisan' (Ælfric).

The golden flowers with brown centres which spring from a blue bulb may represent the *rationale* with its urim and thummim, signifying 'lar ond soþfæstnes', portrayed as Aaron's flowering rod. The man holding the flowers wears a green V-necked

\* I owe thanks to Mr. B. Harbert for drawing my attention to the passage in the *Psychomachia*, to Mr. C. P. Wormald for suggesting Grimbald's association with the *Psychomachia* manuscript, to Mr. E. Carrigan for noting the pun in 'The Husband's Message', and to Mr. D. A. Hinton for discussing the Alfred Jewel.

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Clarke and D. A. Hinton, *The Alfred and Minster Lovell Jewels* (1971), 5-6.

vestment (*superhumerales*) over an undergarment (*tunica*) visible at the neck. Both garments are bound (*stricta*) by a reddish-brown belt (*balteum*), which touches the centre of the *rationale*. The gold bands wind through his hair like a fillet or turban (*cidaris*).

St. Paul wrote of Christ as *Dei Sapientiam* (I Corinthians 1 :24). Origen, developing an idea from I Corinthians 4 :21, elaborated the allegorical connexion of Aaron and his rod with Christ :<sup>2</sup>

Omnis ergo princeps tribuum habeat necesse est virgam suam, sed unus solus est (sicut scriptura refert) pontifex Aaron, cuius virga germinavit. Verum quoniam (ut saepe ostendimus) verus pontifex Christus est, ipse solus est, cuius virga crucis non solum germinavit sed et floruit, et omnes hos credentium populorum attulit fructus.

These ideas were patristic commonplaces, confirmed and transmitted by Bede when he wrote of Exodus 28 :30 :<sup>3</sup>

Ideo doctrina et veritas in rationali iudicii sive litteris impressa seu nominis tantum sacramento erant imposita ut pontifex eadem veste indutus meminisset se studiis doctrinae et veritatis inquirendis, non autem curandis rimandisque saecularibus negotiis per acceptum sacerdotium fuisse consecratum, ut quod exterius typicum in veste praefulgebat intus in corde veraciter expressum curaret. Item doctrina et veritas erant in rationali positae ut aperte figuraretur quia vestis illa non solum legalem induebat pontificem sed evangelicum praenuntiabat vel ipsum videlicet dominum de quo scriptum est, 'Quia lex per Moysen data est, gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est,' vel certe apostolos eius immo omnes eiusdem gratiae et veritatis praecones.

Bede's work, completed between 720 and 725, may have influenced the Acts of the Council of Clofesho of 747, which may in turn have influenced Alfred's Preface to *Pastoral Care*.<sup>4</sup>

The association of Wisdom with Aaron's rod was common in literary as well as theological works. Aurelius Prudentius Clemens (d. ca. 405) supplied *Sapientia* with a sceptre like Aaron's rod in his *Psychomachia* (lines 875-887) :

Hoc residet solio pollens Sapientia et omne  
consilium regni celsa disponit ab aula,  
tutandique Hominis leges sub corde retractat.  
In manibus dominae sceptrum non arte politum  
sed ligno vivum viridi est, quod stirpe reciso  
quamvis nullus alat terreni caespitis umor  
fronde tamen viret incolumi, tum sanguine tinctis  
intertexta rosis candentia lilia miscet  
nescia marcenti florem submittere collo.  
Huius forma fuit sceptri gestamen Aaron

<sup>2</sup> *Super Leviticum Homilia vi* ; cf. *Homilia vii* and *Super Numeros Homiliae ix, x*.

<sup>3</sup> *De Tabernaculo et Vasis eius ac Vestibus Sacerdotium*.

<sup>4</sup> D. Whitelock (ed.), *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader*, 15th edn. (1970), 5, 224, citing a *saecularibus negotiis causisque in quantum praevalent vacare* as a possible source for Alfred's 'ðæt ðu ðe ðissa worulddinga to ðæm geæmetige, swæ ðu oftost mæge'.

floriferum, sicco quod germina cortice trudens  
 explicuit tenerum spe pubescente decorem  
 inque novos subito tumuit virga arida fetus.

Direct citation of this poem in Bede *De Arte Metrica* and apparent echoes of it in the works of Aldhelm and Boniface suggest that it was well known among the English before the ninth century. Alcuin knew of Prudentius' works at York, and four extant manuscripts of the *Psychomachia* were made or glossed in England during the ninth and tenth centuries. If Grierson was correct in suggesting that Grimbald brought one of these manuscripts to England,<sup>5</sup> Alfred may well have known of this very passage.

#### *The Reverse*

On the reverse of the jewel, engraved on a gold plate, is a tree whose central bole and two branches form a cross, reflecting the obverse design of a man holding two flowering rods. Each terminal bears a flower of two petals and a centre. Although Professor Earle believed the motif to be 'a sword with its point buried in a human heart' commending 'compunction for sin',<sup>6</sup> it probably represents the Tree of Life of Genesis 2 :9 and Proverbs 3 :18 :

lignum etiam vitae in medio paradisi, lignumque scientiae boni et mali ;  
 ' eac swylce lifes treow on middan neorxnawange and treow ingehydes godes  
 ond yfeles ' (Ælfric) ;  
 [Sapientia] lignum vitae est his qui apprehenderint eam.

As on the obverse, one may see an emblem of Wisdom and also a prefiguration, of the Cross, the ' Hælendes treow ', ' wudu selesta ', which the author of ' The Dream of the Rood ' saw

' syllicre treow  
 on lyft lædan, leohte bewunden,  
 beama beorhtost. Eall þæt beacen wæs  
 begoten mid golde. '

#### *The Terminal*

Scholars have described the animal head terminal as the head of a serpent, fish, dolphin, eagle, lion, boar, griffin, or fantastic creature.<sup>7</sup> I suggest that the beast is a ' draca ', ' næddre ', ' snæcce ', or ' wyrm '. No other identification makes sense of the scales carefully engraved on the reverse. A ' draca ' or ' wyrm ' beneath the feet of Wisdom would illustrate Psalm 90 :13 :

Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis, et conculcabis leonem et draconem ;  
 ' ofer nædran ond fagwyrms þu gæst ond trides leon ond dracan ' (Junius Psalter).

The Ruthwell and Bewcastle Crosses portray *bestiae et dracones* beneath Christ's feet.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> J. D. A. Ogilvy, *Books Known to the English, 597-1066* (1967), 231. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MSS 23 and 223 ; Durham Cathedral Library, MS B.IV.9 ; British Museum, Cotton MS Cleopatra C viii. P. Grierson, ' Grimbald of St. Bertin's ', *English Historical Review*, LV (1940), 553.

<sup>6</sup> J. Earle, *The Alfred Jewel : An Historical Essay* (1901), 81-82.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-52. Clarke and Hinton, *op. cit.*, 6.

<sup>8</sup> G. Baldwin Brown, *The Arts in Early England*, Vol. v (1921), Pl. xvii.

Identification of this beast as a 'draca' or 'wyrn' would unify the iconography of the upper parts of the jewel, for Aaron's rod, represented on the obverse, once became a serpent (Exodus 7 :12), and a serpent tempted Eve to eat from the tree depicted on the reverse. The Ancient Enemy himself is a type of perverted wisdom (Genesis 3 :1) :

Sed et serpens erat callidior cunctis animantibus terrae ;  
' eac swylce seo næddre wæs geapre ðonne ealle ða oðre nytenu ' (Ælfric).

When Christ sent the Twelve to preach, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils, He warned them (Matthew 10 :16) :

Ecce ego mitto vos sicut oves in medio luporum ; estote ergo prudentes (*sapientes* in the *Vetus Latina*) sicut serpentes et simplices sicut columbae.

One West Saxon Gospel, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 140, renders this :

' Nu ic eow sende swa sceap gemang wulfas ; beoþ eornustlice gleaw swa næddran ond bylwite swa culfran. '

Other Old English versions render *sapientes* or *prudentes* as ' snottre ' or ' hogo '. The association of serpent with wisdom is clear from both Old and New Testaments.

The Corpus manuscript further translates *sapientia* as ' wisdom ' ten times, *doctrina* as ' lar ' fifteen times, and *veritas* ' soþfæstnes ' twenty-seven times. But even if no English version of the Bible were available to Alfred, he probably understood these passages exactly as the translators did. Alfred's own prefaces and the literary works associated with his name preserve the diction cited above, and passages concerning ' wisdom, lar ond soþfæstnes ' show free adaptation from their sources to make the translations conform with ideas derived from the Bible and depicted on the Alfred Jewel.

#### *Evidence in Alfred's Literary Works*

In his Preface to the translation of *Pastoral Care* Alfred wrote chiefly of wisdom, its former cultivation in England, and the best means of encouraging its pursuit :

' . . . hu him ða speow ægðer ge mid wige ge mid wisdome ond . . . hu giorne hie wæron ægðer ge ymb lare ge ymb liornunga . . . ond hu man utanbordes wisdom ond lare hieder on lond sohte . . . . Ure ieldran, ða ðe ðas stowa ær hioldon, hie lufodon wisdom . . . ac we him ne cunnon æfter spyrigean. For ðæm we habbað nu ægðer forlæten ge ðone welan ge ðone wisdom . . . . Hie ne wendon ðætte æfre menn sceolden swæ reccelease weorðan ond sio lar swæ oðfeallan : for ðære wilnunga hie hit forleton, ond woldon ðæt her ðy mara wisdom on londe wære ðy we ma geðeoda cuðon. '

One sentence in this Preface is particularly striking :

Geðenc hwelc witu us ða becomon for ðisse worulde, ða ða we hit [i.e. wisdom] nohwæðer ne selfe ne lufedon, ne eac oðrum monnum ne lefdon ; ðone naman ænne we hæfdon ðætte we Cristne wæron, ond swiðe feawa ða ðeawas.

The love of Wisdom for its own sake and the communication of Wisdom to others can be specifically Christian virtues only if one identifies Wisdom as Christ.

At the end of the Preface Alfred wrote that he would send an ' æstel ' with every

copy of the book. Since 1877 no one has proposed a theory more reasonable than Bishop Clifford's,<sup>9</sup> that the Alfred Jewel is the head of an 'æstel', a pointer-book mark which was wrought at the king's order and inserted into a presentation copy of *Pastoral Care*. Jewel, Preface, and text alike commend Wisdom, Doctrine, and Truth.

The *Consolation of Philosophy* might have provided Alfred with an alternative model for Wisdom, in which case the two flowering rods on the obverse might represent  $\theta$  and  $\pi$ , for *θεωρητική* and *πρακτική*, speculative and active philosophy. But the Alfredian translation changes the nature and gender of Boethius' *Philosophia* and rearranges the text :

' . . . þa com þær gan in to me *heofencund Wisdom* ond þæt min murnende mod mid *his* wordum gegrette ond þus cwæð, 'Hu ne eart ðu se mon þe on minre scole wære afed ond gelæred?''

Boethius' description of the  $\theta$  and  $\pi$ , the *litteras in scalarum modum, libellos, sceptrum*, and torn *vestes* is cut from the Alfredian translation, which reads,

'þæt wæs *se Wisdom* ðe hit lange ær tyde ond lærde. Ac hit ongeat *his* lare swiðe totorenne ond swiðe tobrocene . . . . Ða andwyrde *se Wisdom* him ond sæde þæt *his* gingran hæfdon *hine* swa totorenne . . . .'

This material from Prosa i has been placed after material from Prosa ii of Boethius in the Alfredian Prose iii, revised to conform with the Biblical model for Wisdom. Boethius' Prosa vi, moreover, offers no source for the sentence

'Leorniað forðæm wisdom ond þonne ge hine geleornod hæbben ne forhycgað hine þonne,'

which appears in the corresponding Alfredian Prose xvi. It probably derives from another book of wisdom already cited, Proverbs 4 :5 :

Posside sapientiam, posside prudentiam. Ne obliviscaris neque declines a verbis oris mei.

Twice in the Alfredian Prose xxxv 'lar ond soðfæstnes' occur together, once in a passage from Boethius' Book III Metra xi :

Haeret profecto semen introrsum veri  
Quod excitatur ventilante doctrina ;

'ond þeah bið simle corn þære soðfæstnesse sæd on þære sawle wunigende þa hwile þe sio sawl ond se lichoma gederode bioð ; þæt corn sceal bion aweht mid ascunga ond mid lare gif hit growan sceal ;

and again from Boethius' Book III Prosa xii :

Quod si rationes quoque non extra petitas sed intra rei quam tractabamus ambitum collocatas agitavimus, nihil est quod admirere, cum Platone sanciente didiceris cognatos de quibus loquuntur rebus oportere esse sermones ;

' . . . we woldon mid gebecnan þa soðfæstnesse ond woldon ðæt hit wurde to nytte ðam geherendum. Ic gemunde nu ryhte þæs wisan Platones lara suma, hu he cwæð ðæt . . . .'

<sup>9</sup> W. H. Clifford, 'President's Address', *Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society's Proceedings*, xxiii (1877), 23-24. I have considered the linguistic evidence for the nature of the king's gift in 'Alfred's Æstel', *English Philological Studies* (October 1974).

Probably Alfred's last literary work was the translation of St. Augustine's *Soliloquies*, which he divided into two books called ' *Blostman* ', perhaps to recall the blossoms of ' *lar ond soþfæstnes* ' for the pursuit of ' *wisdom* '. The symbolism of Alfred's remarkable Preface is similar to that of his earlier works and to that of the Alfred Jewel :

' Gaderode me þonne kigclas and stuþansceaftas and lohsceaftas and hylfa to ælcum þara tola þe ic mid wircan cuðe and bohtimbru and bolttimbru and, to ælcum þara weorca þe ic wyrcan cuðe, þa wlitogostan treowo be þam dele ðe ic aberan meihte ; ne com ic naþer mid anre byrðene ham þe me ne lyste ealne þane wude ham brengan, gif ic hyne ealne aberan neihte ; on ælcum treowo ic geseah hwæthwugu þæs þe ic æt ham beþorfte. Forþam ic lære ælcne ðara þe maga si and manigne wæn hæbbe, þæt he menige to þam ilcan wuda þar ic ðas stuðansceaftas cearf, fetige hym þar ma and gefeðrige hys wænas mid fegrum gerdum, þæt he mage windan manigne smicerne wah, and manig ænlic hus settan, and fegerne tun timbrian, and þær murge and softe mid mæge on-eardian ægðer ge wintras ge sumeras, swa swa ic nu ne gyt ne dyde. Ac se þe me lærde, þam se wudu licode, se mæg gedon þæt ic softor eardian mæge ægðer ge on ðisum lænan stoclife be þis wæge ða while þe ic on þisse weorulde beo, ge eac on þam ecan hame ðe he us gehaten hefð þurh sanctus Augustinus ond sanctus Gregorius ond sanctus Ieronimus, ond þurh manege oððre halie fædras. '

The ' *wlitogostan treowo* ' are trees of wisdom, the wisdom of the Fathers, from whose works extracts instruct readers in the faith. Alfred plays on the word ' *treow* ', which means both ' *tree* ' and ' *faith* '. The same pun recurs in ' *The Husband's Message* ' and in the ' *Maxims* ' of the *Exeter Book* :

' Ic gehatan dear  
þæt þu þær tinfæste treowe findest ;  
' *treo sceolon brædan ond treow weaxan.* '

Alfred means that the Christian builds his house of faith, his ' *ænlic hus* ', his ' *feger tun* ', from the Tree of Wisdom and lives in it preparing for his ' *ece ham* '. The same idea recurs in ' *The Phoenix* ' (652-661) :

' Swa se fugel swetum his fipru tu  
ond wynsumum wyrtum gefylleð,  
fægum fold-wæstmum, þonne afysed bið,  
þæt sindon þa word (swa us gewritu secgað)  
hleoþor haligra, þe him to heofonum bið  
to þam mildan Gode mod afysed  
in dreama dream, þær hi Dryhtne to giefc  
worda ond weorca wynsumne stenc  
in þa mæran gesceaft Meotude bringað  
in þæt leohte lif. '

The ' *halie fædras* ' cited are exactly those from whom Alfred derived his conceptions of ' *wisdom, lar ond soþfæstnes* '. The text of the ' *Blostman* ' commends ' *lar (ða*

cwæð ic, ' Ic do swa ðu me lærst ' ) ' until the inquirer understand that God is ' seo hehstan soðfestnesse ' and ' se hehstan wysdom '.

In summary one may note first, that the Biblical texts upon which the argument rests have always been the most familiar : the Pentateuch, Psalms, Proverbs, Gospel, and Epistles ; second, that the allegorical connexions of Aaron and his rod with the priesthood and Cross of Christ, of the Tree of Life with the Cross, and of the serpent with wisdom were all commonplaces of theological and literary traditions ; and third, that the Preface to *Pastoral Care*, which is certainly Alfred's work, suggests the most plausible function of the Alfred Jewel, which was discovered near the king's monastery at Athelney and which bears the inscription

+ ÆLFRED MEC HEHT GEWYRCAN.

The Preface to the ' *Blostman* ' illustrates Alfred's fondness for symbolism, and Asser attests the king's delight in supervising his artisans : *aurifices et artifices suos omnes . . . docere . . . non desinebat*.<sup>10</sup> One might therefore understand the Alfred Jewel as an illustration of a conception of Wisdom derived from the Bible and the Fathers and consistently maintained in King Alfred's literary works.

#### Iconographic Analogues

E. Bakka has suggested that the figure on the obverse is Sight and claimed the Fuller Brooch as an analogue.<sup>11</sup> The brooch, of unknown provenance, depicts a man with large eyes holding two horns which contain stylized plants. One knows him to represent Sight chiefly because he is surrounded by four other figures who clearly represent Taste, Smell, Touch, and Hearing. On the outer rim sixteen figures represent the four types of life : Man, Beast, Bird, and Plant. Sight is part of a comprehensive design on the Fuller Brooch, but not on the Alfred Jewel. Sight, moreover, has little relevance to the text from which Alfred forbade his ' æstel ' to be removed. The designs of the brooch and the jewel are different ; the heads tilt in opposite directions, the eyes and facial features are distinct, and the flowers, vestments, colours, and media are all dissimilar.

A closer analogue survives on folio 202<sup>v</sup> of the eighth century *Book of Kells*.<sup>12</sup> There a long-faced unbearded young man with fair hair, wearing a V-necked vestment, holds two flowering rods. Other analogues survive in the *Junius Psalter* (ca. 925-950), which is probably related in script and decoration to manuscripts from Winchester.<sup>13</sup> The Psalter contains many illuminated initials of the same shape as the Alfred Jewel, surrounding busts of men wearing V-necked vestments in colours identical with those of the jewel : dark blue, green, reddish-brown, and gold.

The trefoil design of the terminals of the tree on the reverse of the jewel is very common. Analogues exist in the upper corners of folio 202<sup>v</sup> of the *Book of Kells* and throughout the *Junius Psalter*, as well as on a coin from Alfred's reign.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> W. H. Stevenson (ed.), *Asser's Life of King Alfred* (1959), 59.

<sup>11</sup> E. Bakka, ' The Alfred Jewel and Sight ', *Antiq. J.*, XLVI (1966), 277-282.

<sup>12</sup> F. Henry, *Irish Art during the Viking Invasions* (1967), Pl. B following p. 80. Cf. pp. 65-66 and n. 4. For a suggestion that this manuscript is Northumbrian work see T. J. Brown, ' Northumbria and the Book of Kells ', *Anglo-Saxon England*, I (1972), 219-246.

<sup>13</sup> J. J. G. Alexander, *Anglo-Saxon Illumination in Oxford Libraries* (1970), n. 6, Pl. 2.

<sup>14</sup> R. H. M. Dolley (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Coins* (1961), Pl. ix 7.

The 'wyrm' motif is also common, but possible analogues include the interwoven serpents on either side of Christ on the roof of the Temple on the same folio 202<sup>v</sup> and the dragons with scales, ears, and clenched teeth in the *Junius Psalter*, especially on folios 58<sup>r</sup> and 75<sup>v</sup>.

As folio 202<sup>v</sup> of the *Book of Kells* follows Luke's Infancy Gospel and precedes the Temptation narrative, the winged figures near the top of the picture must be the angels who bear Christ lest He dash His foot against a stone (4 :10-11). The black figure on the right is Satan, and the nine men on the left may represent *omnia regna orbis terrae* (4 :5), which Satan offers to the bearded Cross-nimbed Christ on the roof, *super pinnam templi* (4 :9). At the bottom of the picture a younger unbearded nimbed man bearing two flowering rods sits above twenty-five men :

in templo sedentem in medio doctorum audientem illos et interrogantem eos. Stupebant autem omnes qui eum audiebant super prudentia et responsis eius (2 :46-48).

The *Book of Kells*, like the Alfred Jewel, portrays Christ as Wisdom. The principal hindrance to identification of the figure on the Alfred Jewel as Christ is the lack of a nimbus. But the *Book of Kells* contains two portraits of Christ without a nimbus (folios 32<sup>v</sup> and 114<sup>r</sup>), and many Irish High Crosses from the eighth to the tenth centuries portray Christ, without a nimbus, bearing crosses and flowering rods.<sup>15</sup>

In the *Junius Psalter* three pictures of Christ as the Wisdom and Word of God survive on folios 72<sup>v</sup>, 86<sup>r</sup>, and 112<sup>v</sup>, the only nimbed figures extant in the mutilated manuscript. The first, a man inside an oval initial Q, holds a scroll on the right and a rod on the left, illustrating Psalm 72 :11 :

Et dixerunt quomodo sciuit deus. etsi est scientia in excelso.  
' Ond cwædon hu wat god ond gif is wisdom on heanessa. '

The second, a man inside an oval initial Q, holds a book on the left, illustrating Psalm 83 :10 :

Protector noster aspice deus. et respice in faciem christi tui.  
gescildend ure geloca god ond geloca on onsiene cristes ðines.

The third, a man inside an initial C formed from three 'wyrmas', blesses with His right hand and holds a book in His left, illustrating Psalm 106 :20 :

Misit uerbum suum et sanauit eos.  
' sende word his ond gehælde hie '.

Within a generation or two of Alfred's death St. Dunstan drew Christ as Wisdom in Bodleian MS Auct. F.4.32, folio 1.<sup>16</sup> Christ's head is tilted to the left, as on the Alfred Jewel. He wears a V-necked vestment and holds a book in His left hand and a rod in His right, which is inscribed *uirga recta est uirga regni tui* and ends in a trefoil. Mlle. M. T. D'Alverny has drawn attention to a miniature in a manuscript of St. Augustine's *Enchiridion* (Trinity College, Cambridge, MS 0.9.22, folio 1<sup>r</sup>), describing

<sup>15</sup> Henry, *op. cit.*, Fig. 23a, Pl. 27, 74, 83, 90, 98, 106, 109, 110. T. D. Kendrick, *Anglo-Saxon Art to A.D. 900* (1938), Pl. xciv, xcvi.

<sup>16</sup> M. T. D'Alverny, 'Le Symbolisme de la Sagesse et le Christ de Saint Dunstan', *Bodleian Library Record*, v (1954-1956), Pl. xiii a.

it as a tenth century portrayal of Christ as Wisdom in an almond-shaped mandorla :<sup>17</sup>  
 tenant un livre ouvert, dans sa main gauche, et serrant, dans sa droite, un  
 sceptre à fleuron largement épanoui. Un moine est prosterné à ses pieds, dans  
 une posture d'humble adoration analogue à celle de s. Dunstan.

The miniature belongs to the late eleventh or early twelfth century not to the tenth, and Christ really blesses with His right hand while holding the open book and flowering sceptre with His left hand, but the miniature does bear some affinity to the Dunstan drawing.

In a fifth century mosaic in Milan<sup>18</sup> *Christus-Philosophus* holds a V-shaped scroll in His left hand while He blesses with His right. In a tenth century English manuscript of Boethius (Trinity College, Cambridge, MS 0.3.7, folio 1<sup>r</sup>)<sup>19</sup> *Philosophia* appears as a woman with the same accoutrements as St. Dunstan's Christ, a book in her right hand and a flowering rod in her left. Two twelfth century illustrations,<sup>20</sup> the Horst Cup and a decorated folio of Herrad of Landsberg's *Hortus Deliciarum*, both show *Philosophia* enshrined and crowned, bearing a V-shaped banner which bends slightly on both sides, similarly to the flowering rods on the Alfred Jewel.

What might have developed as separate iconographic traditions—a masculine Christ as Wisdom from Late Antique Psalters and a feminine *Sapientia* or *Philosophia* from the works of Prudentius and Boethius—converged in several features in the tenth century drawings of St. Dunstan's Class Book and the Trinity Boethius. But even in the ninth century the traditions would not have seemed divergent, since Prudentius' *Sapientia* was related to the Biblical tradition through Aaron's rod, and Boethius' *Philosophia* appeared in the Alfredian translation as divine, 'heofencund'. The Old English translation, moreover, for both *sapientia* and *philosophia* was the masculine noun 'wisdom'. Mlle. D'Alverny has traced the convergence of characteristics of *Sapientia* and *Philosophia* and their association with Christ by the ninth century :<sup>21</sup>

Le culte d'Alcuin pour la sainte Sagesse, attribuit par excellence du Christ, s'est traduit par la rédaction des oraisons de la messe votive que l'on retrouve, à partir du IX<sup>e</sup> siècle, dans un grand nombre de sacramentaires et missels.

The Alfred Jewel is iconographically in the mainstream of representation of Christ as Wisdom. If, as I believe, it is the head of an 'æstel' inserted into copies of *Pastoral Care*, one can associate it with that renaissance of 'wisdom, lar ond soþfæstnes' which Alfred bequeathed to his kingdom.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 243-244, Pl. XII b. M. R. James, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts of Trinity College* (1904), Vol. IV, Pl. XII.

<sup>18</sup> D'Alverny, *art. cit.*, Pl. XII a.

<sup>19</sup> James, *op. cit.*, Pl. x. P. Courcelle, *La Consolation de Philosophie dans la Tradition Littéraire* (1967), Pl. 22.

<sup>20</sup> Courcelle, *op. cit.*, Pl. 23, 24, 25.

<sup>21</sup> D'Alverny, *art. cit.*, 241 n. 2.