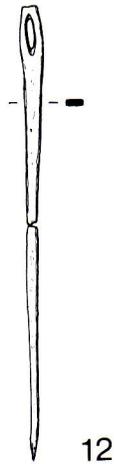


# Needles

## By Baroness Kaleeb the Green Eyed



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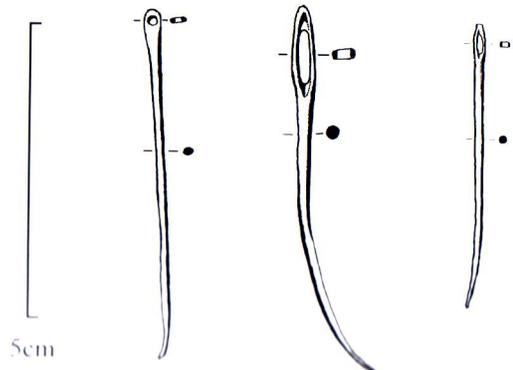
Figure 135: Grave goods 85A cont.

I started trying to figure out how to make a needle for the St. Luke's Artisan Faire Challenge of Needful Things. I did not think it would be a difficult task, as people have been making needles as long as they have been weaving cloth. I was right that it was not a difficult task, after I figured out how to do it. That was the challenging part. I have included my how to article and journal entry (at the end of this page,) which explains each part of the process in a step by step manner.

I began making needles with brass rod, as I had seen needles for sale at Pennsic and they were brass. Then I looked in my archeology books and could not find any brass needles in pre 1000 England, just copper alloy needles or bone. The definition of brass is a yellowish alloy of copper and zinc, usually 2/3 copper. My collection of books does not have a metallurgical break down for the needles. Usually the book just notes a grave number and not illustrated. I have noticed that the books

often include a small section on brass findings or jewelry, leading me to believe that brass was available. If needles were made from brass they have not survived or a copper alloys make a better needle. I have included samples of both copper and brass needles, as the construction techniques are the same.

I find it very interesting that Archeologists use the size of needles to explain how fine cloth could be woven. They look at eye size and overall needle thickness. The argument is that thick or sturdy needles are needed to sew coarse cloth and vice versa for delicate cloth. You will not be very successful if you try to sew fine cloth with a coarse needle or coarse cloth with a delicate needle. The conclusion most archeologists have come to is medieval needles were as delicate as modern sewing needles, as was the thread. With this little bit of information I set out to my shop to make a needle. As you can see I am not yet skilled enough to make a needle fine enough to do very delicate sewing, but I did make needles which can sew a piece of medium weight linen or wool.



Eye Shapes