

Metal Hairpin with Cast Pewter Head

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<http://www.james-gang.org/wolfpack/Giliana/index.html>

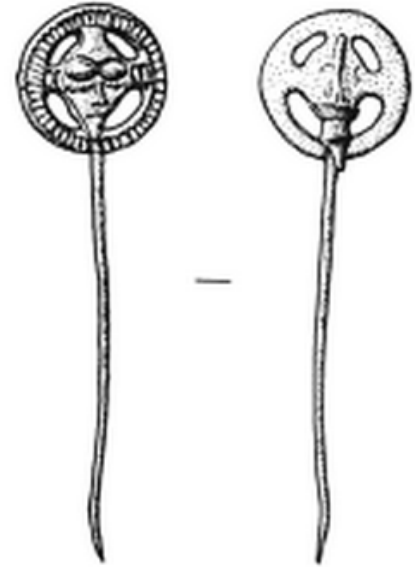
Materials:

- Brass rod (K&S 3/64" X 12" Solid Metal Brass Rod)
- Pewter (R98 pewter alloy from Rotometals.com)
- Flux (Harris Stay-Clean Liquid Flux)
- Two-piece registered mold (Soapstone)

Process:

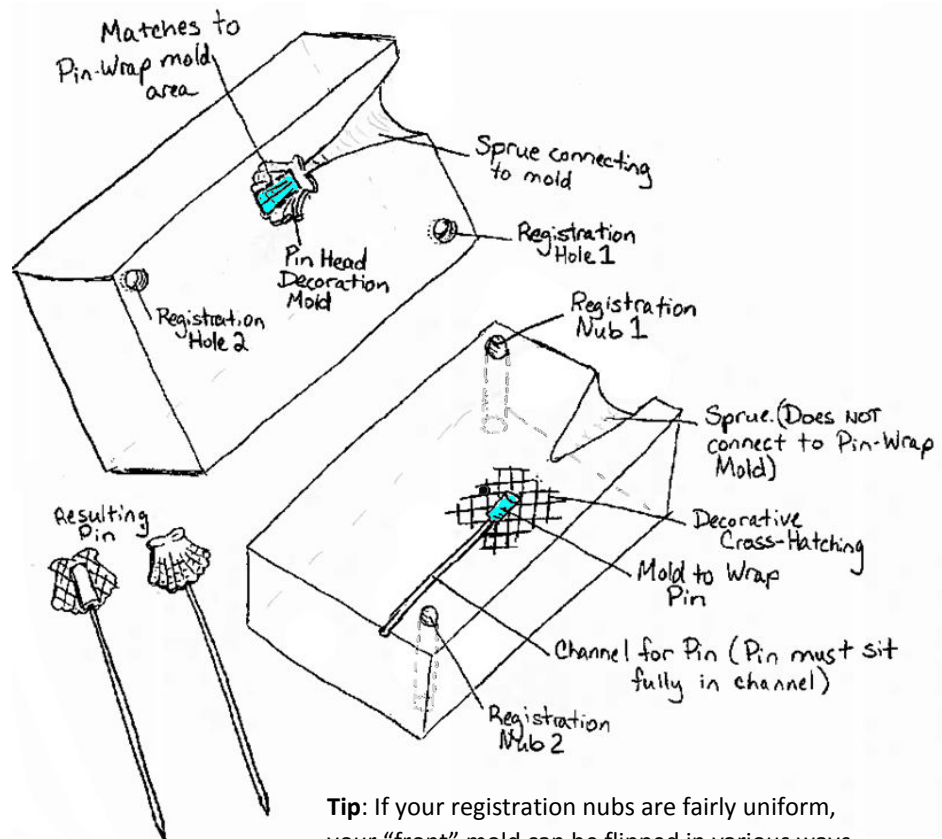
- Prepare the pins:
 - Cut the brass rods to length (I prefer 3" each)
 - Dip one end of the rod into the flux (should cover about 1/4")
 - Contact the pin with molten pewter until the tip of the brass is silver. (This process is called "tinning" and will allow the pewter to adhere during the cast.)
- Create a two-sided, registered mold such as below. The mold includes:
 - A groove on the "back" side where the pin will sit in during the pour. The groove MUST be deep enough for the pin to sit in entirely or else the mold will not close entirely.
 - A spot on the "back" side where the tinned tip of the pin will sit. This spot must be significantly deeper and wider than the pin so that the pewter will "wrap" around the pin during the pour.
 - A design on the "front" side that matches up in position to the pin-wrap spot on the "back" side.
 - Adequate air venting and pouring sprues.

- Pour the pin (Following all appropriate safety practices!!)
 - Lay the "back" side of the mold down and place the pin in the pin-groove with the tinned end in the pin-wrap area. (You may wish for another piece of rock in place at the bottom of the mold to keep the pin in place until the mold is closed.)
 - Put the "front" mold piece on top of the "back" piece.
 - Lift up the closed mold. (You may need to use a pinky to hold against the protruding pin to keep it from simply falling out when the mold is lifted!)
 - Pour the pewter into the mold
- Finish the pins (easiest done after the head is poured since you will have something to grip!)
 - Use a grinder, belt sander, dremel or hand-file to sharpen the tip.



Headdress pin with pewter head of Christ from Billingsgate, c. 1350-1400

Egan, Geoff. Dress Accessories:
c.1150 - c.1450



Tip: If your registration nubs are fairly uniform, your "front" mold can be flipped in various ways to allow 4 separate pins per stone!

Additional Examples of Decorated Metal Pins

No other examples quite like the pewter head-of-Christ example that we are patterning off of but there are other examples of decorated metal pins, shown below. Examples below can be found at <http://www.larsdatter.com/hairpins.htm>.



Silver hairpin with figure of Venus
Roman Britain, 1st or 2nd century AD
Venus, a goddess often venerated by women, is shown here in this tiny silver casting. She stands on a small Corinthian capital in a classic pose, leaning on a pillar while fastening her sandal.



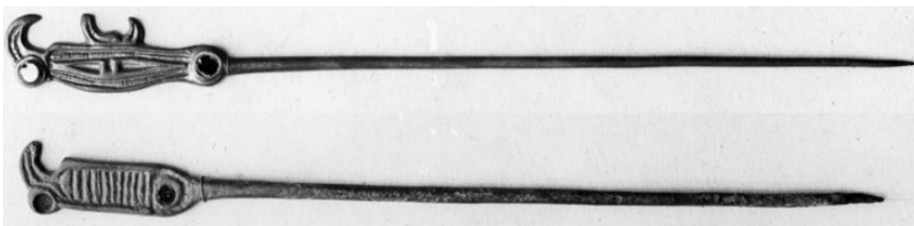
Silver hairpin with hand
Roman Britain, 2nd century AD from London
The terminal of this silver hairpin is shaped as a hand holding a small fruit, probably intended to represent a pomegranate, which had connotations of fertility and good fortune.



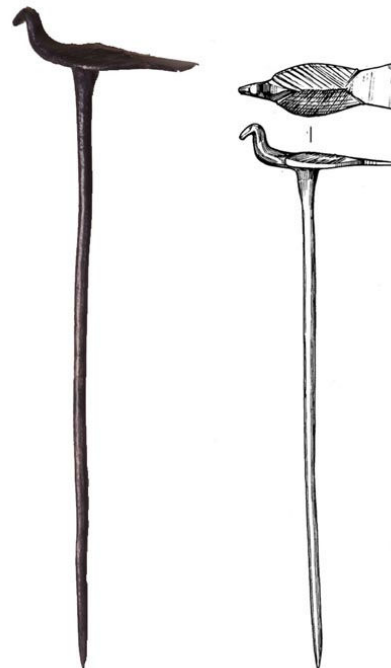
Hairpin with a bird's head from a Frankish tomb, partially-gilt silver with a garnet, 6th century



Hair Pin - Silver with gold foil and garnets
This long pin terminates in a stylized bird. Such cloisonné bird pins were developed in southern Russia about AD 400 and were carried westward with the migrating peoples. They are found most often in northeastern France and the Rhineland, where they were popular until the second half of the 6th century.



Two Frankish hairpins with birds, c. 401-775



Silver hairpin with duck
Roman, 4th or early 5th century

Found during excavations by Winchester Museums Service Archaeology Section at St Martin's Close, Winnall, Winchester in 1984-5

This beautiful hairpin, its head shaped like a swimming duck was found in the grave of a child of about seven years old. It was discovered just to the right of the child's head, suggesting that it had been worn in the hair at burial. Distinguishing between male and female in children's bones is usually impossible without DNA analysis, but the hairpin tells us that this was probably a girl.

Length 63mm