

Viking Doll



My doll is a copy of the “Bishop of Baffin.” The doll was found in a thirteenth or fourteenth century Thule Inute site on the southern Baffin Island. It “depicts an individual wearing a long split-fronted robe or tunic with edge trim that closely resembles Norse clothing of the period.” (Sutherland, p.238.) I saw the doll in the Minneapolis Science Museum with the Smithsonian’s traveling Viking Exhibit. The doll is 5.4 cm wide and made of wood. My doll is about 5 cm wide and made from poplar. He is finished with olive oil, so he can be played with. Experiments with small children indicate that they like to hold his head and chew on his feet. He also makes a very satisfying sound when he walks.



The Gotland Tool Chest was found while plowing a field in Mastermyr in October 1936. The contents have been kept intact. Scholars feel the tool chest belonged to a blacksmith who had carpentry skills. It is even possible that the owner may have been a boat-builder. The tools which interested me were the ones related to carpentry. They include 2 axes, 2 adzes (used to smooth plank-ing) , 2 saws (one of which is an unusual hand saw) a large collection of spoon-augers (used to drill holes), gouge (used with mortise and tenon joints) , chisel, 2 rasps and 4 files (generally considered smithing tools), and a small whet-stone. It is difficult to date the find because carpentry tools do not tend to have stylistic characteristics. “However, cer-

tain tool types and technical features in the Mastermyr find to suggest a date in the late Viking Age or possibly the early medieval period, although a later date cannot definitely be ruled out.” (Arwidsson and Berg, p.37.)

I took a roughly square block of wood and shaped it with a (band) saw. I then attacked the rough shape with files, a knife and finally my dremel tool. Once the shape had begun to take human form I used a pocket knife to do the final carving and smoothing. I did not realize that if you just use a knife to carve with it is unnecessary to use sandpaper. The next time I make a toy I will do it this way. The detailing lines were applied with a knife.



The files no. 32-34, and the rasp no. 38.