

Viking Metal Art

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Metal Art in Viking Culture

- ▶ They began making metal art well before 300CE
- ▶ They had advanced metalworking techniques for the time
- ▶ Types of metal jewelry they wore signified their social status
- ▶ Blacksmiths held high social standings
- ▶ Many of the techniques they used are still in use today



Cultural Importance of Metal Art

- ▶ Ships and armor were engraved
- ▶ Everyday items were engraved
- ▶ Showed social status
- ▶ Ornamentation was an important part of European culture



Social Status of Blacksmiths

- ▶ Most owned land
 - ▶ Slaves and serfs could become blacksmiths if they were talented enough
- ▶ Iron was thought to be connected to the supernatural
- ▶ Blacksmiths were often featured in mythology
- ▶ Women could not become blacksmiths because they were thought to ruin the final product



Metalworking Steps



Start with a model



Make a mould based on the model



Bake mould



Pour iron into the mould



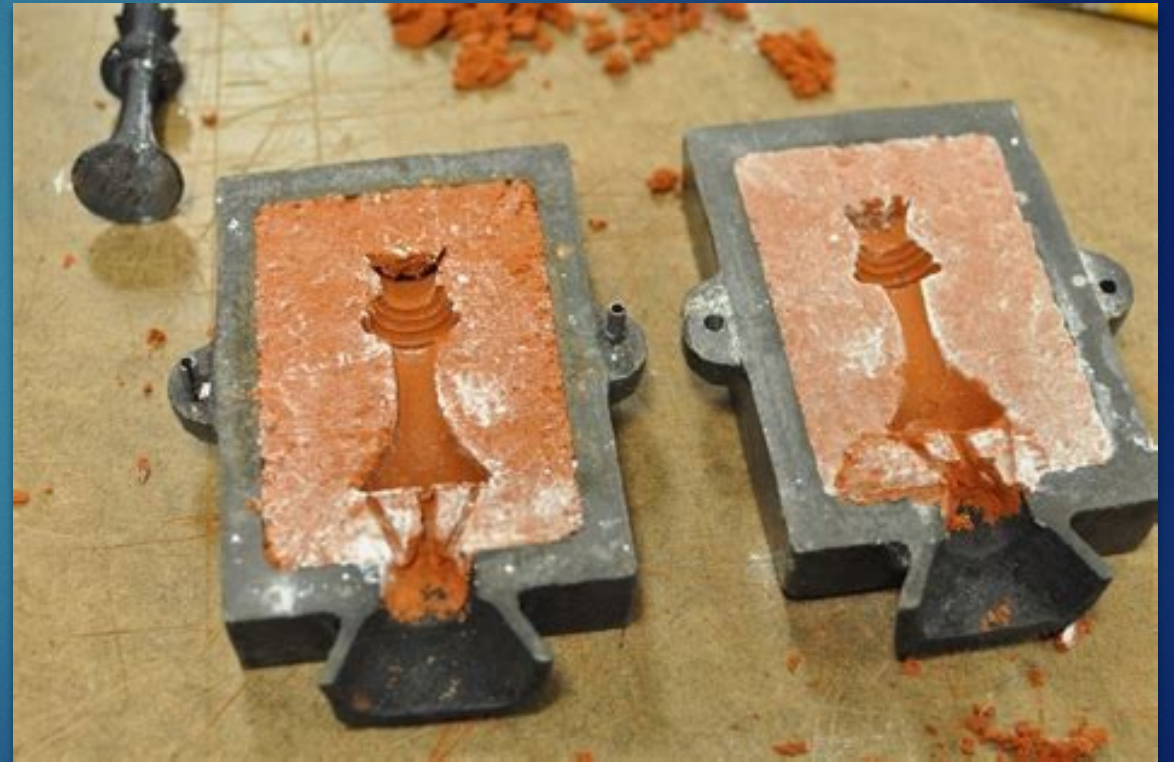
Receive item that was casted

Step 1: the Model

- ▶ Could be made of beeswax, an antler, or an existing item
 - ▶ Existing items were the most common
 - ▶ This was easiest
 - ▶ Allowed for the most detail
 - ▶ Sometimes beeswax or antlers were shaped or carved
- ▶ Wax models are still common in metal sculpting today

Step 2: Creating the Mould

- ▶ The model was greased in animal fat
 - ▶ Then pressed into a clay and charcoal mixture
 - ▶ Fabric and wax were inserted after the model was removed to preserve shape
- ▶ A hole was cut in the top to allow for metal to flow into the mould
- ▶ The mould had a top and bottom piece that fit together



Step 3: Baking the Mould

- ▶ Heated for 15 hours
- ▶ Used a simple fire pit with hot coals
- ▶ Moulds were heated to 900°F
- ▶ Moulds could break during this stage due to inaccuracies in the clay to charcoal ratio





Step 4: Pouring Metal into The Mould



Step 5:
Remove
Product
from the
Mould

Conclusion

- ▶ Metal art was important to Viking culture
 - ▶ Everyday items featured intricate metal designs
 - ▶ The types of metal jewelry worn signified social status
- ▶ Blacksmiths held high social standings
- ▶ Many of the same techniques used by Vikings are still used today

Sources

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