

Rachel's Rune-Spear

by Danr Bjornsson
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This project is not particularly authentic, but was inspired by two things: Odin's spear Gungnir, a fabled weapon said to be carved with magical runes to give it great power, and my friend Rachel's casual comment one evening around a campfire that started with "wouldn't it be great if..." She was speaking of a friend who carried a tall walking stick carved with runes, which spelled out a humorous phrase about her husband's height, and expressed that she might like a similar walking stick. This conversation took place when Rachel was Princess of Atlantia for the second time, so I decided to make something for her in the same spirit as but superior to her friend's walking stick, something that would befit a princess or queen.

I had a very nice hand-forged spear head that I had bought previously. I was using it with a heavy 6 foot shaft, a Norse "live steel" weapon with which to pull guard duty. I decided to put it on a new longer shaft that would fit the needs of the project.



I was unable to find a single shaft of suitably strong wood of the necessary length (Janos is 6' 4") so I joined two maple dowels together with a sheath made from copper pipe of the same outside diameter.



I planed down the shaft ends where they would insert into the copper pipe, until I had a tight fit. I set the copper pipe at a height where it would make a good grip for the spear when carried with the point upward. As a result, it is not mounted in the center of the shaft, but the end result is aesthetically pleasing. I did not assemble the shaft at this time, however, as it was easier to work with in two pieces for a while longer.

To protect the bottom of the shaft, I added a copper pipe end cap. It is a bit larger than the new spear shaft, which had to match the pipe's diameter. Nonetheless it looks fine.



Fitting the spear shaft into the spear head was the most difficult part. Because the head is hand-forged, the inside of the socket is not quite uniform in shape or size. Repeatedly, I cut the shaft down a bit, test-fit the spear head socket, take it off again, and carefully shaved down the area where the socket had rubbed the wood. Eventually I got a nice fit. Before mounting it, however, I cut a piece of copper pipe into a thin ring. I mounted it where it would mark a height of 6 feet 4 inches when the spear was held upright, to mark Janos' height. After shaving the shaft to slip the ring into place, I mounted it and the spear head with a bit of melted resin and secured them with a small nail for each. I then put the two shaft pieces into the copper sleeve and secured them in place with a small brass-plated nail at each end, completing assembly of the spear.



Finally, it was time to carve the runes. I could have done this before assembling the spear, but chose instead to stain the finished spear, then carve the runes, then ink the runes. This way, the oil in the stain would help prevent the ink from seeping out of the runes. The result turned out very well.



We gifted the spear to then-countess Rachel at her coronation to the throne of Atlantia in September 2005. Lady Cwenhild of Cyddlain Downs made a leather cover for the blade, on which is carved and painted Rachel's arms on one side and Janos' arms on the other. Rachel liked the spear a lot, and actually carries it more often than she allows her guards to carry it.