



An ancient timber house reconstructed in Sweden

I recently wrote to Tomas Johannsen of the Institutet for Forntida Teknik in Sweden. He publishes a journal on experimental archaeology and reconstruction (in Swedish). While many of the reconstructions date from the bronze age, my research suggests that structures such as the one above continued in similar form well into the medieval period. I think the expertise and techniques of Johannsen and his associates can benefit all of us tremendously. He has graciously given me permission to reprint a few things in *Sacred Spaces*, including this article. Look for more interesting pieces from *Forntida Teknik* in the near future.

Rock Carving Museum at Vitlicke

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Translated by Rachel Christ

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The Rock Carving Museum at Vitlicke, a daughter museum to the Bohusläns museum, lies in the middle of one of the country's townships richest in ancient finds. Nearly all archaeological eras are represented, from the oldest stone age to modern times . . .

The reason for choosing this house as a model, and not the more well preserved finds in Skåne and Denmark, is very practical. The size, 9.6 x 6 meters, was appropriate for our resources, and we also believe that the cultural and ecological similarities with Norway were greater than with Skåne or Denmark.

We have been accurate with our choice of material and work methods. Every variety of wood found in Bohuslän during the Bronze Age has been used, and every building technique was first tested with bronze and flint tools before we continued construction with modern tools.

ACTIVITIES

We do not view the house in and of itself the most important part of the exhibition, an entity isolated from the activity around it. During the museum's open hours, there is always at least one archaeologist present working with some technique, such as flint napping, bronze casting, ceramics, curing skins, or something more down-to-earth, such as tending crops sown from primitive seed types, making food, etc.

In addition, there is always someone the visitor can approach with any questions. We see this as one of the



Photo by Jan Mellring

most important elements of an outdoor exhibition of this type: *There is always someone working on something.*

. . . As a positive outcome of this project, a great deal of research can be pursued, particularly in the area of prehistoric technology, which is incidentally written in the museum's operational plan.



My special thanks to Rachel Christ for translating this article. She has promised to do others for us in the near future!-Editor.



Above left: Constructional sketch of a bronze age house. Apart from the rafters, the material used is oak. We tried two different types of wall construction: woven (twigs) and simple stave construction.