

Child's Toy Doll of the 1520's



The clothing on this doll is based on a painting by Albrecht Durer, *Portrait of a Young Venetian Lady*. It is considered the oldest known painting from his second stay in Venice. I was unable to see most of the detailing on the rest of the dress, so I chose a simple skirt and plain cuffs, that would have been correct for the time period .



What makes an expensive doll dressed in the fashions of the beginning of the 16th century, into a toy 20 years

later? Is the fact that by 1520's those fashions are now out of date and the doll is beginning to show signs of wear, so she could be given to a child as a play thing. The theory is that this doll began her life as an expensive fashion plate, used to show wealthy women how clothes would look on a body with the new styles of the era. She has been redressed a number of times over the years and has served her purpose well.

We know that dolls have been around for thousands of years, although few have survived the riggers of childhood. We see doll's in numerous painting and a very few museums. Anybody



who has a child will understand that all children play with dolls, as they begin to learn about the world around them and begin to develop an imagination. Doll's for very young children can be made from just about anything that has a head and eyes and will not break. Dolls for older children need to be a bit more realistic. My research indicated that late period dolls were very detailed and realistically dressed. My doll has on the proper number of foundation garments, a hair style which is more current than her hand sewn dress. I have been unable to make myself give her to my son so she has a proper patina of age. I have made her for an example to use at University for a talk on the history of toys.

Daiken, Leslie. Children's Toys throughout the Ages, Batsford, 1953.

Faggin, Giorgio. Art History Museum Vienna. New York: Newsweek, 1969.

Fraser, Antonia. A History of Toys. New York: Spring Books, 1966.