

***Jómsvíkinga saga* and Archaeology: the Presence of Scandinavians in Wolin as
Source for the Legends
(Abstract)**

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Jómsvíkinga saga is one of the most exciting Scandinavian sagas. It tells the story of the semi-legendary brotherhood of Viking warriors known as the Jomsvíkingar, whose base was at Jómbsborg, at the mouth of the River Oder on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea.

Scholarly attitudes towards *Jómsvíkinga saga* have varied greatly. One school of opinion has treated it as a historical source, while other scholars regard it as merely a historical legend, the culmination of a tradition of imaginative story-telling based on the minimum amount of historical fact. Many scholars have looked for the site of Jómbsborg. One scholar denied its very existence, but most researchers have consistently identified it with the Slavonic Wolin.

New analysis of the results of earlier investigations in Wolin, together with the latest excavations, show that the story of the Jómsvíkingar may have its roots in historical events. The inspiration of the saga could come from the presence of Scandinavians in Wolin in the second half of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century. The action of the saga is supposed to have taken place during the same period. In addition to the theory we can compare the structure of Viking society depicted in the saga with the model of Scandinavian culture created on the base of archaeological artifacts from Wolin.

According to *Jómsvíkinga saga* the Jomsvíkingar lived a semi-monastic type of existence. They were warriors and sailors - members of a social elite living outside Scandinavia. The archaeological investigations in Wolin show a very elite male society of warriors, sailors and craftsmen. The Scandinavian pagan religion was an important part of their life. We can support this correspondence with evidence from artifacts found in Wolin, such as the characteristic oval broaches, a runic inscription on a wooden object, pottery, combs, game pieces, iron ship rivets and remains of a Scandinavian ship, a sun-compass, Thor's hammer amulets and a Viðarr's shoe amulet, iron axes, arrowheads, whetstones and soapstone pots, as well as many other objects that were useful in men's daily lives. Many of them are decorated with ornament typical of the Borre, Mammen and Ringerike styles in Viking art. The Viking objects were found at the harbour in Wolin, in barrow graves and especially during the new excavations at Wolin Gardens.