

## Osmund Iron in the Gdansk Museum

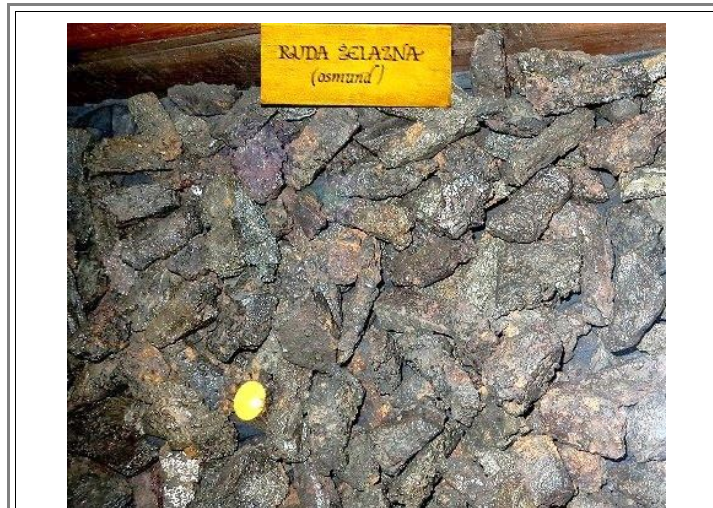
The Maritime Museum of Gdansk contains whatever had been dug up of the "Copper Ship" in 1969. The copper ship was a freight boat dating to 1450 -1500 that contained copper ingots and about 100 barrels of trade goodies including the **Osmund iron** or actually Osmund *steel*. The museum used to display the Osmund steel labeled as "iron ore" in a barrel as [shown in the backbone](#).

[Buchwald](#) must have taken the barrel picture well before 2008. Now we have 2014 - let's see how the museum has dealt with the topic by now. The very newest information<sup>1)</sup> about osmund in general and the osmund iron in Gdansk is given by Peter Crew, well known to us [from before](#).

- The Osmund steel is no longer in a barrel but in a box in front of some of the barrels:

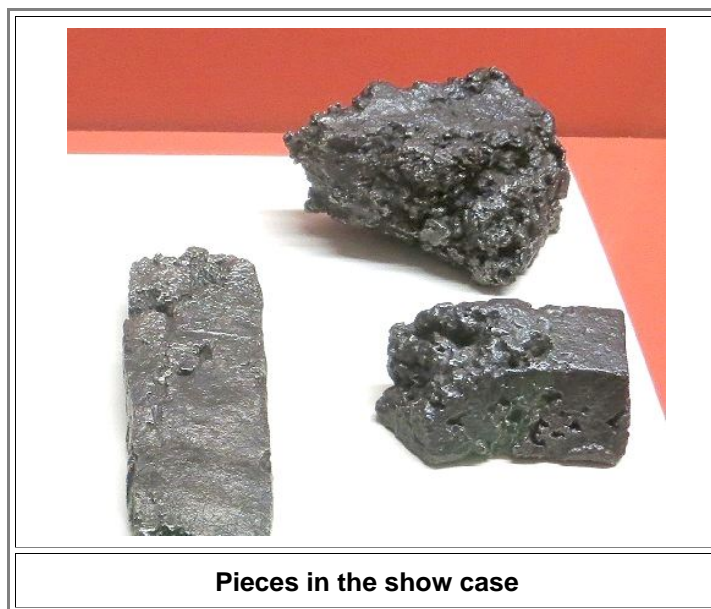


Barrels from the copper ship" and the box of "Rudna Zelazna (Osmund)"



Content of the (badly lit) box

- The Osmund is no longer in a barrel but in a box. Some pieces have been cleaned and cut and are on display in a show case:



So the museum got it right by now? Well - almost:

**5** The load of the *Copper ship*. In the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century, the harbours of Flanders were well-known recipients of goods similar to those transported by the *Copper ship*. It is also proved by an incident from 1386 when a Prussian holic was stopped in Sluis next to Bruges, and its skipper was imprisoned. After being released, the skipper described the losses in the cargo, among others: 18 barrels of osmund (Swedish iron ore), 12 bundles of iron rods, 15 barrels of tar, 6 barrels of potassium hydroxide, 200 oaken staves, 700 pieces of woodblocks, 100 tunnenholtes (barrel staves). The skipper himself had his own goods, including: 11 pieces of wax, 20 barrels of tar, 20 rolls of rope and golden coins.

The diversified load of the *Copper ship* has a profound scientific meaning. It consisted of: oaken staves, tar in barrels, wax in lumps, potassium hydroxide (its traces were found on the ship), iron ore transported in barrels – osmund, casts of copper of various diameter, bars of iron transported

**What is Osmund?**

It is easy to get a bit confused about Osmund iron. Is it ore or steel? And how does it relate to the osemund iron / steel from the German Sauerland / Siegerland region?

- Not at all, in fact. **Osemund** iron / steel is a local speciality where pig iron was fined and collected at the end of on iron bar:

**Osemund iron (plus a lump of puddle iron on a special wagon for transport)**

Source. Photographed a the Castle museum in Altena / Sauerland / Germany

- Osemund was optimized for the local speciality: steel [wire making](#).

- 1) **Peter Crew**: "Osmund from the perspective of the English sources"; From Berglund, B. (ed) **2015**, Järnet och Sveriges medeltida modernisering (Jernkontorets bergshistoriska skriftserie 48), pp. 151 - 189