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## The Cessation or Viking-Age Dirham Imports into Poland and Polabia

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**The Cessation of Viking-Age Dirham Imports  
into Poland and Polabia**

Zanik napływu dirhemów na ziemię Polski i Polabian w czasach Wikinǒw

During the ninth and tenth centuries, millions of Islamic silver coins or dirhams were exported from the Near East and Central Asia to European Russia. Many of these dirhams were then re-exported from European Russia to the lands bordering the Baltic Sea. This massive import of Islamic silver was unquestionably one of the most important developments in the economic history of the early medieval Baltic. While a few scholars attribute the influx of dirhams into the Baltic to such factors as Viking raids in Russia,<sup>1</sup> most believe that the dirhams found in the Baltic were primarily the result of commerce. Since there are very few written sources for the eastern trade of the Baltic in the Viking Age, and the value of most of these sources has been seriously questioned, e.g., the Norse sagas, the dirhams deposited in the Baltic lands constitute our best source of information on Baltic trade with European Russia in the ninth and tenth centuries. Unfortunately, the dirham finds from the Baltic have not yet been systematically and thoroughly studied in terms of this eastern trade. Thus, over the past few years, I have begun to explore what the hoards of dirhams found in the lands along the Baltic can tell us about Russian-Baltic trade in the Viking Age. It is a pleasure, in this *festschrift* honoring my friend and colleague Professor Józef Szymański, to examine one of the fundamental

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<sup>1</sup> Sawyer, 124-126. For a critique of Sawyer's thesis see Noonan, in the press.

problems regarding the place of Poland and Polabia in this commerce. Over the years, Professor Szymański's many efforts to facilitate my study of the dirham hoards from Poland have been greatly appreciated.

The import of Islamic dirhams into European Russia declined sharply starting around the 980s.<sup>2</sup> This development suggests that the export of dirhams from European Russia to the Baltic should have declined about the same time, i.e., there were fewer and fewer new dirhams available in European Russia for export to the Baltic starting around the 980s. To test this hypothesis, I analyzed thirty-nine dirham hoards, each containing twenty or more datable coins, deposited in Sweden during the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>3</sup> Surprisingly, this analysis indicated that there was a clear decline in dirham exports from European Russia to Sweden starting in the 940s. In other words, something had caused a significant decrease in Russian dirham exports to Sweden long before the supply of new dirhams reaching Russia from the Islamic world was reduced. We can thus conclude that the trade of European Russia with Sweden had already begun to experience severe difficulties by the mid-tenth century. But, were these difficulties confined to Russian-Swedish trade or did a more general crisis develop in European Russia's commerce with the Baltic starting in the mid-tenth century? To answer this key question, it is necessary to examine the many dirham hoards deposited along the southern coasts of the Baltic in both Poland and Polabia. If dirhams were still being exported into Poland and Polabia up till ca 980, then the problems in European Russia's dirham exports would appear to have been confined to its Swedish or Viking trade. If, however, dirham imports into Poland and Polabia had declined markedly by the mid-tenth century, then it would appear that a more general crisis began to disrupt European Russia's commerce with the entire Baltic already ca 950.

The issue posed in this brief study also has ramifications for the problem of how dirhams reached Poland and Polabia from European Russia. Many scholars both in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe posit the existence of direct trade ties between Poland/Polabia and European Russia in which the Vikings had little or no role. On the other hand, Franciszek Kmietowicz has argued that islamic dirhams were brought to Poland and Polabia by Swedish/Viking merchants who exchanged them there for food.<sup>4</sup> If Kmietowicz is correct, then dirham imports into Poland and Polabia should

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<sup>2</sup> Noonan, 1988 Tables 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> Noonan, 1989.

<sup>4</sup> F. Kmietowicz, 1968, which also discusses the various theories on the routes by which dirhams reached Poland and Polabia. Also see F. Kmietowicz, 1972.

have decreased notably starting around the mid-tenth century. But, if dirhams were brought directly from European Russia to Poland and Polabia by Slavic merchants, then dirham imports into this area would probably have continued until the 980s or so. Thus, the problem of when dirham imports into Poland and Polabia ceased is closely connected with the question of which routes were used in this trade and the "nationality" of the merchants who were involved.

At first, I expected that this study would simply require a very basic and straight-forward chronological analysis of the dirhams in Polish and Polabian hoards deposited during the tenth and eleventh centuries. I also anticipated that this analysis would produce a fairly clear-cut answer to our question. Such hopes were soon shattered! The dirhams in Polish and Polabian Viking-Age hoards overwhelmingly consist of fragments and often these fragments are merely very tiny pieces. There are relatively few whole dirhams. It is difficult and frequently impossible to identify the dynasty of small fragments. It is even more difficult to determine the year when such coin pieces were struck. Consequently, most Polish and Polabian dirham hoards had to be excluded from our study because only a few of their coins could be dated and it is impossible to determine if these dates are representative of the hoard as a whole. And, even in the hoards utilized, i.e., those with ten or more datable dirhams, only a small percentage of the total dirhams were included in our data.

Two examples should suffice to illustrate the difficulty presented by so many small fragments. A hoard including 182 Islamic dirhams was found at Maurzyce-Ruszków in Mazovia.<sup>5</sup> Of these 182 dirhams, only two were whole and one hundred eighty were fragments (2 + 180). However, precise dates were determined for only 28 coins or 15.4% of the dirhams in the hoard. In fact, the dynasty of 96 dirhams (52.7%) could not be established. At Alexanderhof in Germany, a large hoard was discovered which included nine whole dirhams, forty-two dirham fragments, and 845g of tiny pieces of dirhams (9 + 42 + 845g).<sup>6</sup> Assuming that an average whole dirham weighed ca. 3.0g, then the tiny pieces represented almost 300 whole dirhams. Only 18 dirhams or ca. 6% could be precisely dated from this hoard which contained the equivalent of some 300 dirhams. One cannot have too much confidence in data based on only 5%–15% of the total evidence.

In addition to the serious problems presented by numerous dirham fragments and tiny pieces, there are a significant number of dirham hoards

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<sup>5</sup> Gupieniec and Kiersnowscy, No. 57, pp. 36–37.

<sup>6</sup> Kiersnowscy, No. 1, pp. 27–28.

from Poland and Polabia whose contents were either never studied or from which only a few coins survived. The hoard from Jezierzycze, for example, contained 48 + 49 Islamic coins, none of which were identified.<sup>7</sup> The hoard from Kolobrzeg most likely consisted of ca 700 Islamic coins, none of which were identified.<sup>8</sup> Finally, the hoard from Kolobrzeg-Okolica contained "a large number of Islamic coins" none of which were identified.<sup>9</sup> These few examples taken from many illustrate why a large number of the hoards with Islamic dirhams found in Poland and Polabia have been completely lost to scientific study.

Any detailed study of tenth and eleventh century Polish/Polabian dirham hoards rests, of necessity, on a very limited data base. In the hoards which have been studied, relatively few dirhams can be fully identified while many other hoards have perished completely. It is therefore impossible to examine the Polish/Polabian hoards with the same precision that is found when dealing with the Russian and especially the Swedish hoards.

Table 1 shows the chronological distribution of the dirhams in Polish and Polabian hoards of the tenth-eleventh centuries. In order to maximize our sample, hoards with at least ten datable dirhams have been included. By way of contrast, my analysis of the hoards from Sweden and European Russia only used hoards with at least 20-40 datable dirhams. Because there are so few coins from some Polish/Polabian hoards, the reader must realize that the chance survival of one or two dirhams from any given decade would easily distort the chronological distribution of an entire hoard. Even with the reduced level of ten datable dirhams, only twenty-one hoards can be included in our data base. Furthermore, the two hoards with the largest number of datable dirhams, Klukowicze and Opalenie, both date from the early tenth century and thus do not help us to answer the major question raised in this study.

In order to provide some initial basis for comparison, Table 2 shows the chronological distribution of the dirhams in hoards deposited after 940 in Sweden, European Russia, and Poland/Polabia. Table 2 clearly demonstrates the great difference between the hoards from Sweden and European Russia. The Russian hoards concealed after 940 contain significant percentages of dirhams struck after 939. In other words, large numbers of new dirhams were being imported from the Islamic world into Russia up to the 980s. While Russian-Islamic trade was therefore active until the 980s,

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 58, p. 52.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 75, p. 58.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 76, p. 58.

Table 1. The chronological distribution in percentages of the dirhams in Polish and Polabian hoards of the tenth and eleventh centuries with ten or more datable dirhams

Find-spot, approximate date of deposit, number of datable dirhams	Pre-										Post-		
	890	890s	900s	910s	920s	930s	940s	950s	960s	970s	980s	990s	1000
Klukowice, 901/02-(838)	9.3	40.8	49.9										
Opalenie, 917/18-(159)	61.6	8.2	15.7	14.5									
Łabędzie II, 932-(53)	9.4	15.1	35.8	24.5	11.3	3.8							
Ochle, 936/37 -(21)			19.0	19.0	9.5	52.4							
Pomorze XII, 946/47-(56)	5.4	14.3	37.5	32.1	3.6	1.8	5.4						
Oliwa II, 951/52-(11)	45.5	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1		9.1	9.1					
Łądek, 952/53-(34)			2.9	8.8	5.9	17.6	38.2	26.5					
Tuchola, 952/53-(17)		5.9	17.6	5.9	17.6	35.3	11.8	5.9					
Kowalewo, 954/55-(45)		4.4	2.2	13.3	2.2	6.7	24.4	46.7					
Trezebianowo, 955/56-(63)	7.9	4.8	7.9	9.5	7.9	12.7	33.3	15.9					
Puck, 965-(25)		4.0	4.0	8.0	4.0	24.0	24.0	16.0	16.0				
Kostomłoty I, 970/71-(13)		7.7		7.7	15.4	15.4	7.7	7.7	30.8	7.7			
Maurzyce-Ruszków, 971/72-(28)			7.1		7.1	14.3	32.1	3.6	25.0	10.7			
Świątki II-III, 978-(12)	8.3	8.3		8.3	25.0		33.3	16.7					
Sieroszewice, 980-(50)	2.0	8.0	14.0		8.0	28.0	8.0	20.0	12.0				
Zalesia, 985-(130)	3.1		1.5	3.1	6.2	13.1	20.0	16.9	20.8	15.4			
Alexanderhof, 999-(18)	5.6			5.6		16.7	22.2	33.3	16.7				
Bogucino, 999-(26)	7.7	15.4	30.8	15.4	11.5			7.7		3.8	7.7		
Radzików I, 999-(19)	5.3	5.3		10.5	31.6		21.1	15.8	10.5				
Lisówek, 1020-(17)	11.8	5.9	5.9	11.8		35.3	17.6	5.9					5.9
Starydworek, 1025-(12)	25.0	16.7			16.7	16.7	8.3				16.7		
Bierzgłowo, 1031-(11)		18.2	27.3	9.1		9.1		9.1	9.1				18.2

Table 2. The chronological distribution in percentages of the dirhams found in hoards deposited after 940

	Pre-900	900s	910s	920s	930s	940s	950s
Swedish	11.0	22.8	26.0	13.7	12.6	6.5	6.4
Russian	4.1	6.1	7.6	5.1	10.4	11.1	12.1
Polish/Polabian	10.2	9.5	9.0	7.7	13.5	19.3	16.0

  

	960s	970s	980s	990s	1000s	1010s
Swedish	0.4	0.2		0.3	0.1	
Russian	21.6	13.9	6.4	0.8	0.6	0.2
Polish/Polabian	9.4	4.3	0.3	0.3	0.5	

Swedish-Russian trade declined in the 940s and 950s and ceased almost entirely starting in the 960s. The sharp decrease in this trade explains why so few of the new dirhams being imported into European Russia after 939 ever reached Sweden.

The data from Poland/Polabia in Table 2 does not readily fit either the Swedish or the Russian pattern. The Polish/Polabian hoards, for instance, include relatively more older, pre-940, dirhams than the hoards from European Russia (49.9% vs. 33.3%). At the same time, the Polish/Polabian hoards contain many more newer, pre-940, dirhams than the Swedish hoards (50.1% vs. 13.9%). It would appear that Russian trade with Poland/Polabia remained fairly active through the 960s, declined in the 970s, and came to an end during the 980s. If there was a general crisis in the eastern trade of the Baltic, it affected Poland/Polabia some two decades later than Sweden, i.e., Russia's commerce with all parts of the Baltic did not decrease simultaneously.

In considering the data from Table 2, several considerations need to be kept in mind. First, there are far fewer dirhams reflected in the Polish/Polabian data (587) than in the data from European Russia (3330) and Sweden (7132). The Swedish and Russian patterns are thus better documented by much larger numbers of dirhams. The Polish/Polabian pattern, on the other hand, does not rest on such a solid foundation. We can only hope that the comparatively few dirhams in Polish/Polabian hoards which have been dated reflect accurately the chronology of dirham imports into these areas.

Another factor to consider in evaluating the data in Table 2 is the great variations in the Polish/Polabian hoards. Table 1 shows, for instance, five hoards deposited in the 950s. The percentage of brand new dirhams from the 950s in these hoards ranges from 6% to 47%. Similarly, the two hoards deposited in the early 970s contain many dirhams from the 960s and 970s

Table 3. The distribution by reign of the Sāmānid dirhams in Polish and Polabian hoards deposited after 930 with ten or more determinable dirhams (in percentages)

Find-spot, approximate date of deposit, number of Sāmānid dirhams datable by reign	Manṣūr II, 997-999	Nūh II, 976-997	Manṣūr I, 961-976	ʿAbd al-Malik I, 954-961	Nūh I, 943-954	Naṣr II, 914-943	Aḥmad II, 907-914	Ismaʿīl I, 892-907
Łabędzie II, 932-(110)	38.2	22.7	39.1					
Ochle, 936/37-(53)	9.4	5.7	84.9					
Pomorze XII, 946/47-(95)	42.1	22.1	33.7	2.1				
Łądek, 952/53-(35)	2.9	5.7	34.3	57.1				
Tuchola, 952/53-(14)	21.4		64.3	14.3				
Kowalewo, 954/55-(41)	4.9	2.4	26.8	61.0	4.9			
Trezebianowo, 955/56-(111)	7.2	5.4	57.7	28.	0.9			
Sośnica, 958-(10)	10.0		40.0	40.0	10.0			
Piaski-Dramino, 959-(14)	7.1	7.1	28.6	57.1				
Puck, 965-(19)	5.3	10.5	31.6	36.8	5.3	10.5		
Meschwitz, 968-(34)	2.9	11.8	47.1	35.3	2.9			
Kostomłoty I, 970/71-(10)			40.0	10.0		50.0		
Maurzyce-Ruszków, 971/72-(67)	1.5	3.0	37.3	23.9	3.0	31.3		
Świątki, 978-(13)	7.7		61.5	30.8				
Sieroszewice, 980-(46)	13.0		37.0	21.7	17.4	10.9		
Obrzycko, 980-(51)	7.8	7.8	35.3	25.5	13.7	9.8		
Zalesia, 985-(257)	1.9	3.1	28.8	21.8	13.6	29.6	1.2	
Reetzow, 987-(24)		4.2	50.0	37.5		4.2	4.2	
Moskorze, 993-(46)	10.9	10.9	47.8	30.4				
Widuchowa, 993-(11)	18.2	27.3	18.2	18.2		18.2		
Uśc I, 998-(29)			31.0	24.1	3.4	---	37.9- ---	3.4
Gralewo II, 999-(53)	7.5	7.5	28.3	30.2	13.2	13.2		
Alexanderhof, 999-(32)	9.4		43.8	21.9	9.4	15.6		
Bogucino, 999-(14)	57.1	7.1	28.6	7.1				
Radzików I, 999-(15)	6.7	13.3	33.3	33.3	13.3			
Dorow, 1005-(26)			30.8	53.8	7.7	3.8	3.8	
Kowale, 1008-(11)				9.1	90.9			
Lisówek, 1020-(21)	9.5	4.8	52.4	23.8		9.5		
Thurow, 1062-(17)	5.9		41.2	23.5	17.6	11.8		

Table 4. The distribution by reign (in percentages) of Sāmānid dirhams in Polish/Polabian hoards deposited after 940

	892-907	907-914	914-943	943-954
Poland/Polabia	9.0	6.1	37.0	26.6
	954-961	961-976	976-997	997-999
Poland/Polabia	7.7	13.0	0.5	0.1

while several later hoards have few if any dirhams from these decades. The 1025 Starydworek hoard has many very old coins (pre-900), a significant percentage of very new dirhams (990s), but no dirhams whatsoever from the 900s-910s and the 950s-980s. In short, it is difficult to find much consistency in the data from the Polish/Polabian hoards as reflected in Table 1. These variations suggest that the data for some Polish/Polabian hoards may not be completely reliable.

Given the fairly limited data on dirhams with precise dates from Polish/Polabian hoards, I decided to try another approach. There are a goodly number of Sāmānid dirhams which can be attributed by reign if not by exact date. Thus, Table 3 shows the distribution by reign of the Sāmānid dirhams in Polish/Polabian hoards deposited after 930. This approach has several serious shortcomings, the most obvious of which is the fact that all non-Sāmānid dirhams are excluded. Nevertheless, this approach allows us to utilize a much larger number of coins (1116 vs. 587) from a greater number of hoards. Table 3 clearly demonstrates that relatively large numbers of Sāmānid dirhams struck between 943 and 954 were imported into Poland/Polabia. It is also significant that these dirhams are present in every Polish/Polabian hoard deposited after 940. Table 3 also indicates that some hoards contained relatively large percentages of Sāmānid dirhams struck between 954-961 and even between 961-976. For the sake of consistency, I have translated this data into a form comparable to that found in Table 2. Table 4 shows that a very significant percentage of Sāmānid dirhams reached Poland/Polabia between 943-954 while a goodly number of these dirhams were also imported between 954-961 and 961-976. In general, Table 4 supports the conclusion that Russian trade with Poland and Polabia remained very active till the mid-950s, declined somewhat between the mid-950s and the mid-970s, and then came to an end.

Finally, as part of our analysis, I have enumerated all the Islamic dirhams struck after 960 which have been reported from Poland and Polabia. This data is shown in Table 5. While this data is somewhat impressionistic by nature, it does show that a variety of Islamic coins

Tab. 5. The islamic dirhams struck after 960 found in Polish and Polabian hoards and finds

Find-spot, approximate date of deposit, number of identified islamic dirhams	S=Sāmānid; H=Ḥamdānid; B=Ḥuḡayd; BW=Bāwanid; A=ʿAbbāsīd; U=ʿUqaylid; Z=Ziyārīd; Q=Qarakhānid; M=Marwānid; SU=Spanish Umayyad; F= Faṭīmid; AA=Amirs of Andarābah
Puck, 965-(32)	S=962/63, 965; H=963/64
Poznań I, 969-(14)	S=961-76; B=945-67(2)
Kostomłoty I, 970/71-(16)	S=965(2), 967/68(2), 970/71
Maurzyce-Ruszków, 971/72-(86)	S=961-76(21); H=944-67; B=950-67; BW=964/65
Kraków, 973/74-(1)	B=973/74
Sieroszewice, 980-(70)	S=961-76(5); H=929-67(2); B=968/69
Obrzycko, 980-(95)	S=961-76(5); B=945-67(4), 946-74(6), 977-82(3); A=946-74(6)
Zalesia, 985-(340)	S=961-76(76), 976-97(3); H=968/69; B=969-70; Z=967-976(8)
Reetzow, 987-(41)	S=961-76, 976-97
Moskorze, 993-(63)	B=946-74(2), 977-82
Widuchowa, 993-(11)	S=961-76(2)
Slupsk, 993-(3)	A=974
Ldzań, 998-(4)	U=996-1000
Uśc I, 998-(54)	S=961-76(11), 997-99; B=950-77
Wicimice, 999-(13+)	B=946-67, 965, 977-82
Gralewo II, 999-(62)	S=961-76(7); B=932-67, 949-82
Alexanderhof, 999-(51)	S=961-76(5); B=977-82(2)
Bogucino, 999-(26)	B=979/80(2); Z=974/75
Radzików I, 999-(27)	S=960/61
Pałczyn-Zdroje, 999-(8)	B=949-82; Z=940-76
Poznań, 999-(1)	BW=946-81
Ołobok II, 1000-(13)	H=971?; B=977-82; Z=975-76
Murczyn, 1001-(?)	H=944-67; B=977-82
Dorow, 1005-(34)	S=961-76, 976-97; B=932-67(2), 932-76, 997-1021
Serock, 1006-(1)	Q=1005/06
Jarocin, 1008-(9)	S=965, 961-76(3), 976-97; B=960/61, 969/70; Z=967-76
Gębice, 1010-(6)	Q=999-1010
Płock IV, 1018-(1)	S=976
Dobra, 1019(?)	U=?; M=?
Lisówek, 1020-(43)	S=964, 961-76; H=944-67(4); B=945-67; A=946-74; U=1000; M=996-1011(2)
Starydworek, 1025-(21)	A=991-1031; M=996-1000; SU=976-1013; ?=990-97
Poznań VI, 1025-(4)	U=1000-1003
Quilitz, 1026-(15)	S=961-76, 976-97; B=946-76(2), 960s, 977-82
Bierzgłowo, 1031-(13)	B=965; U=999/1000; Q=1002/03(2)
Luzino, 1050-(1)	F=1007/08
Mikolajewice, 1062-(3)	AA=986-99?
Thurów, 1062-(24)	B=991-1031; Z=935-67; M=1011-61; Z=935-67
Siemyśl, 1069-(2)	M=990-99
Gdańsk-Ujeścisko, 1079-(5)	M=990-97(5)

primarily struck in Central Asia and the Near East after 960 were imported into Poland/Polabia. Even though trade ties between Russia and Poland/Polabia almost ceased during this time, some dirhams were still being exported to the latter lands.

In conclusion, our admittedly limited evidence suggests that dirham exports from European Russia to Poland/Polabia were very active till the 960s, i.e., for around two decades after Russian-Swedish trade began to decline. These exports to Poland/Polabia declined in the 970s and almost ceased in the 980s. Russian-Polish/Polabian commerce therefore continued, albeit at reduced levels, for some time after Russian-Swedish commerce had ended. Consequently, the Vikings do not appear to have served as intermediaries in Poland/Polabia's eastern trade during most of the tenth century. To test the preliminary conclusions advanced here, I hope to examine the dirham hoards from Latvia and Estonia to determine if significant quantities of new dirhams were exported to the southeastern Baltic from European Russia after 940. The results of such a study should shed further light on Polish-Russian trade ties in the Baltic during the second-half of the tenth century. Finally, this study is not intended to suggest that dirhams are a perfect indicator of European Russia's commerce with the Baltic during the Viking Age or that dirhams were the only goods involved in this trade. The Baltic trade of early medieval European Russia clearly included much more than dirhams. However, dirham hoards are the only extant source which allow us to gain some understanding of the dynamic, ever-changing nature of this commerce.

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## STRESZCZENIE

Autor reprezentuje stanowisko, że napływ arabskich dirhemów w rejon Bałtyku w IX i X w. był wynikiem handlu między Rusią a leżącymi tam ziemiami. Ponieważ zanik importu tych monet z Bliskiego Wschodu i Środkowej Azji na Ruś rozpoczyna się w latach osiemdziesiątych X w., należałoby przypuszczać, że w tym samym czasie przestały one napływać także w rejon Bałtyku. Analiza skarbu 39 dirhemów pokazała jednak, że zjawisko to rozpoczęło się w Szwecji już w latach czterdziestych X w. Autor w związku z tym formułuje pytanie, czy ogólny kryzys w rozwoju handlu Rusi z ziemiami nad Bałtykiem rozpoczął się rzeczywiście w połowie X w. Odpowiedzi poszukuje w badaniach skarbów dirhemów odnalezionych na ziemiach polskich i połabskich. (Analizowane znaleziska zostały zestawione w odrębnej tabeli.) Autor dostrzega trudności metodyczne związane z identyfikowaniem i datowaniem monet, a ponadto podnosi istotny problem napływu dirhemów na te ziemie (bezpośrednio z Rusi przez kupców słowiańskich lub pośrednio przez kupców ze Skandynawii).

Badanie chronologii monet arabskich dowodzi, że ich napływ z Rusi na ziemie polskie i połabskie był bardzo intensywny do lat sześćdziesiątych X w. Zjawisko to załamało się w latach siedemdziesiątych, a zanikło prawie zupełnie w następnej dekadzie tego stulecia. Handel Rusi z Polską i Słowianami połabskimi trwał jeszcze przez pewien czas po jego ustaniu ze Szwecją w latach czterdziestych. W konsekwencji, w drugiej połowie X w. Wikingów nie należy uważać za pośredników w handlu Rusi z terenami położonymi na południe od Morza Bałtyckiego.