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The early-medieval silver hoard from the environs of Gniezno. Islamic coins

In 1960, the Numismatic Cabinet of the National Museum in Krakow obtained coins from the collection of Zygmunt Zakrzewski and among them were items described as found in “an excavation near Gniezno, acquired from the clockmaker Krüger.” As Gumowski noted in 1905, the hoard was found near the town in 1902 and contained 88 complete coins, 119 g of coin fragments, and 50 g of silver jewellery. However, in his publication dated 1953, Gumowski described the same find under the entry Gniezno II and mentioned Polish, German, and Danish coins as well as Arabic “broken and hacked dirham fragments,” putting the *terminus post quem* for the entire hoard in around 1100. J. Slaski and S. Tabaczyński recorded this hoard as Gniezno III. According to the information recorded by Z. Zakrzewski, the hoard was found around the year 1903 and contained 89 complete coins and 119 g of coin fragments (Islamic, English, Danish, German, and Bohemian coins, denars of the so-called cross type), and ca. 50 g of silver jewellery fragments. According to Janusz Reyman the hoard was found at Gniezno around 1910 and contains West-European coins, both complete and fragmented, Islamic coins and fragments of silver jewellery, while the hiding date of the hoard is determined by the fragments of the coins of Vratislav II, Duke of Bohemia and Moravia (1061–1086). The extant Oriental part of the hoard comprises 3 complete coins and 28 dirham fragments of varied size, of a total weight of 32.19 g. An analysis of the preserved material has shown the presence of ‘Abbāsīd (4 pcs), Sāmānīd (19 specimens), and Buyīd (3 pcs) coins, a dirham imitation, and 5 fragments of unspecified dynastic origin. The highest proportion (19 pcs) is represented by dirhams of the Sāmānīd emirs: Aḥmad ibn Ismā‘īl (1 pc), Naṣr ibn Aḥmad (5 pcs), Nūḥ ibn Naṣr (4 pcs), ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Nūḥ (1 pc). The remaining fragments (8 pcs) have been identified as Sāmānīd on the basis of the preserved name of the mint and some typological features characteristic of the coinage of this dynasty.

The condition of the Oriental coins has made it possible to achieve a more precise identification of around 84% of the deposit in analysis. Some of the inscriptions (such as mint names, dates of issue, names of caliphs and emirs) have been reconstructed. Several specimens are slightly deformed, as many as five coins (nos. 7, 8, 10, 21, 28) are pierced (about 2–3 mm from the edge), and one of the coins (no. 28) is pierced twice. A trace of a pendant shows close to the edge of one of the coin fragments (no. 18), perhaps attesting to the use of this coin as a piece of jewellery. The structure of the Oriental part of the hoard indicates that it forms one compact whole in terms of its chronology. With an exception of one fragment of the oldest coin struck no later than in AH 193 (AD 809), the chronological extent of the deposit in question can be estimated at roughly 60 years and could fall within a time-span between ca. AH 280 and 350 (AD 902–961). The youngest precisely datable coin is a dirham of the Buyīd amīr Rukn al-Dawla struck in AH 339 (AD 950/51).