

Some oriental finds from the port of trade at Janów Pomorski (Truso), Poland

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Fig. 1. Reconstruction of hydrography around 1200 BP and the localization of Janów Pomorski (Truso) (Kasprzycka 1999).

The contacts between Scandinavian and Eastern societies have always been an important part of Ingmar Jansson's research. In particular, he has focused his attention on the relations between Scandinavia and Russia and between Scandinavia and the Oriental cultures in the Viking Age (Jansson 1978:383–420, 1985:179–192, 1986:77–108, 1988:564–647, 1989:43ff, 1999:116–124). There is no doubt that thanks to Jansson's studies our knowledge has increased considerably where contacts between the North and the East in the Viking Age are concerned. This field of research is strongly connected with the issue of long-distance trade, as well as the functioning of 'Ports of Trade' and early towns in Northern Europe. In my paper, I will address some issues that I believe are very close to Jansson's research. I will therefore analyse a few oriental¹ finds from the settlement at Janów Pomorski, comm. Elbląg, prov. warmińsko-mazurskie, Poland.² This has been identified as the town of Truso, which was described by Wulfstan around AD 880. The aim of this article is to analyse the oriental finds from Truso and to discuss their significance not just to this settlement, but to the south-eastern Baltic coasts, as well.

¹ I understand the term 'orient' according to the definition by Arne (1912:5) and Jansson (1988:566f). It includes not only the Arabia, Middle Asian and Far East states, but also the east European ones, such as Khazar Khaganate, Volga-Bulgarians, the steppe nomads, etc.

² I would like to thank Dr. Marek F. Jagodziński from the Museum of Elbląg, who has kindly supported my interest in Truso and provided me with all the necessary information about his excavations. I am most grateful for his permission to publish the finds.

^{3–11} Notes 3–11, see page 134.

The settlement at Janów Pomorski (Truso)

Truso has been the subject of scientific interest for a long time. The first attempts to localize Truso were undertaken as early as the 16th century. During the following centuries it was believed to be located in various places, from Elbing in the south to Trosa, Sweden, in the north. More recently, in 1982, a very large settlement from the Viking Age was found near Lake Drużno, near the modern village of Janów Pomorski. Today there is no doubt that this settlement is indeed Wulfstan's Truso. The large settlement of about 15 ha is situated on the east bank of Lake Drużno on the flood terrace (fig. 1). It lies partly on the lower part of the Żuławy depression area and partly on the more elevated transition grounds between Żuławy and Elbing highlands (fig. 2). Excavations were conducted from 1982 to 1991 and were directed by the finder, Dr Marek F. Jagodziński (1988, 1991:136–155, 1997:96ff, no 231, 2000a:41–56, 2000b:170ff; Jagodziński & Kasprzycka 1990:9–48, 1991:696–715; Stasielowicz 2003:245–260). A new excavation campaign began in 2000 and is ongoing (Jagodziński 2001:7ff, 2004).

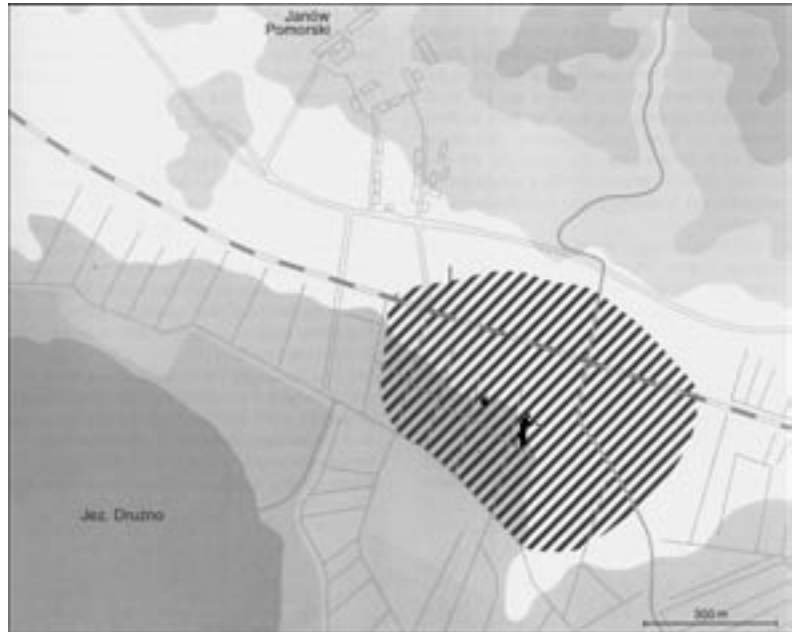
The settlement was established directly on the bank of the former bay and was probably surrounded by a semi-circular rampart. A little stream was flowing through the centre of the settlement. The buildings were built in various construction techniques such as wattle, palisade, and horizontal log technique. The majority of the buildings were divided into three sections. Secondary buildings were often adjoining the main one, forming isolated cottages. Houses in Truso were built according to a regular plan, with arranged streets. During the excavations some ditches situated in regular intervals were found, and these separated the neighbouring cottages (fig. 3). The shoreline in Truso probably did not have a harbour constructions. Ships visiting the town simply landed directly on the sand³, just as in the earliest phase in Dorestad. The remains of several ships were found lying directly on the sand. The problem of the function of the town rampart requires additional research before the question can be answered. On the basis of different kinds of data, we can now reconstruct the picture enough to know that Truso had been surrounded by a semi-circular rampart, which was very similar to the one at Hedeby. The possible tower discovered in one of the trenches could be a trace of this rampart – it had a width of 10 m. A sword pommel of JP X type was found inside this tower. An analysis of 19th century maps has also shown that during the construction of the railway, which today crosses the settlement, the other part of the Viking-Age rampart was destroyed. Aerial photographs suggest that there might also have been a moat or defensive ditch surrounding Truso.

In the settlement at Janów Pomorski (Truso) many traces of craft production activities and workshops have been discovered. The most important of these seems to be the blacksmiths. Numerous iron bars, partially made objects and finished products were found (Wieczorek & Hinz 2000:89). There are evidences of very intensive amber-

working. To date, more than 10 kg of unworked, partially made or finished amber objects (beads, amulets, hnefi game stones, etc.) have been found (Wieczorek & Hinz 2000:102ff, 176). Horn manufacture (combs), glass manufacture, weaving, boat building (hundreds of iron nails, rivets and padding were found) also played an important role. Of no less importance were the goldsmiths. A great variety of tools, such as small hammers, anvils, gravers and files have been unearthed, as were melting pots (one with a few half melted dirhams), clay moulds (for oval brooches), partially made objects, production refuse and finished ornaments of mainly Scandinavian type. Evidence of active trade may be seen in the c. 300 weights of different types and fragments of both balances and c. 350 coins.

The analysis of the finds showed that the settlement at Janów Pomorski (Truso) could be dated from the end of the 8th to the beginning of the 11th centuries, but the majority of finds (apart from the coins) date to the 9th and 10th centuries. A comparison between the chronological analysis of the finds with the stratigraphy shows that the beginning of Truso is older than the finds indicate. Layer 1 contains a few traces of buildings, but is without rich metal finds. This could be interpreted as the first phase of occupation in this area. The Scandinavian settlers then arrived and arranged the whole site into parcels probably. In my opinion the beginning of Truso should be dated to the fourth quarter of the 8th century. The objects from the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th century were brought to the settlement in the first decades of the 9th century, when it was already a well-established port of trade.

Leaving aside the question of periodisation of Truso in the 9th and 10th centuries, it is nonetheless important to consider that the end of Truso as a port of trade should be dated to the middle or third quarter of the 10th century. Only a few finds (some combs, weights, and one spur) can be dated to the beginning of the 11th century. In the middle of the 10th century a strong political power, probably of Piast origin, was present in the delta of the Vistula river in the vicinity of Gdańsk. It is quite possible that they sent warriors to try to take control of Truso and, when it turned out to be impossible, destroyed the town and re-directed the main trade routes to Gdańsk. At the end of



the 10th and beginning of the 11th centuries there were still some people living in Truso, but the town had by this time lost its international importance and commercial function (Bogucki 2004:112ff).

The majority of the finds from Janów Pomorski (Truso) are of Scandinavian origin.⁴ Fragments of oriental coins are very common as well. In the so-called ships' wreck-age-place, a hoard of 16 coins was found in one of the boats: it contained 2 Sassanian drachms, and 14 Abbasid dirhams. The youngest coin in this hoard was a dirham of al-Mā'mūn struck in Madīnat as-Salām in 815/16 (Czapkiewicz, Jagodziński & Kmietowicz, 1988:165ff). Of the approximately 330 single coins found in Truso to date only 194 pieces have been identified. Among them there are 2 whole Sassanian drachms of Khusro I and II and a lot of fragments of both Sassanian and Arabic coins. The latest oriental coin is a fragment of an al-Mutawakkil 'alā Allah dirham struck in 850/1 – 854/5 in aš-Šaš. The rest of the oriental the coins are mainly small fragments of

Fig. 2. The settlement at Janów Pomorski (Truso) (Jagodziński 2000).

Fig. 3. Buildings at Janów Pomorski (Truso) (according to Jagodziński 2000).

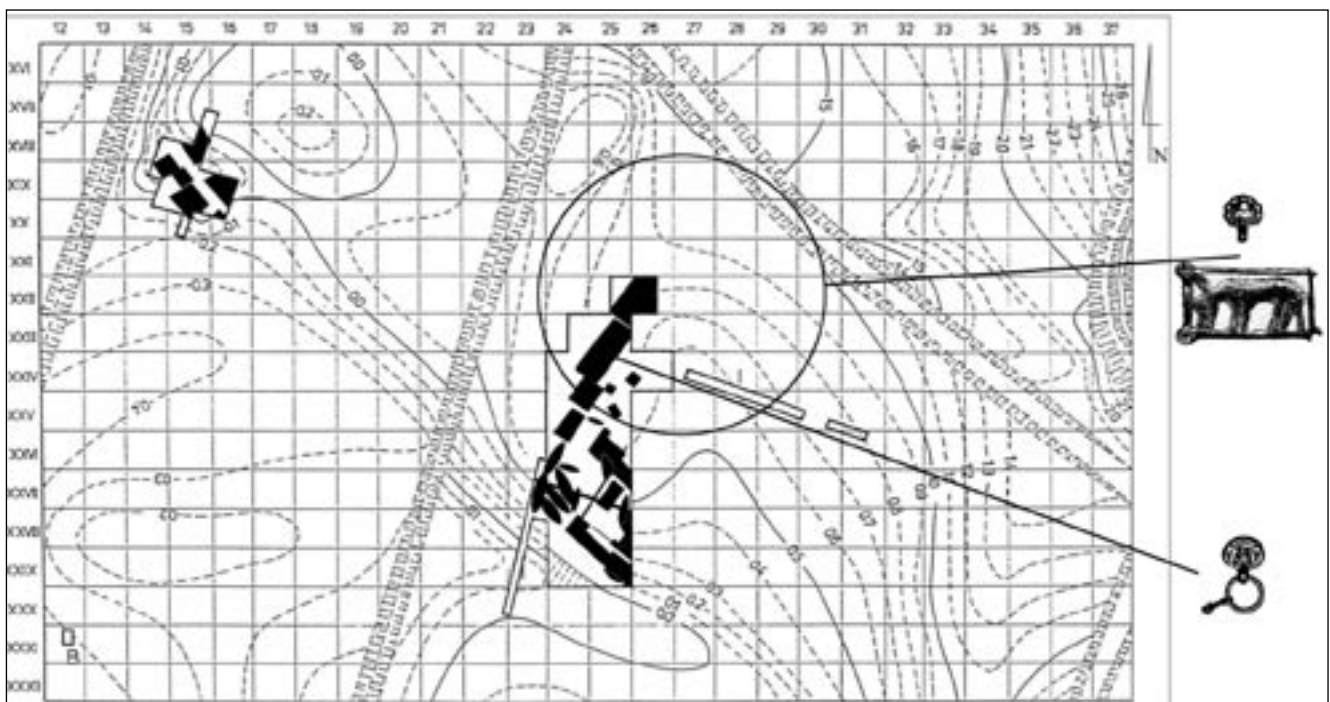




Fig. 4. Gilded bronze plaque from Janów Pomorski (Truso) (Photo Bogucki).

Omajjad and °Abbasid dirhams and their imitations. Only four western European coins have been found, all dating to the 8th and 9th centuries: one Frisian sceatta of the Wodan/Monster type with a loop, two Hedeby denars of KG3 and KG4 type and one penny of Æthelwulf, king of Wessex (839–58), struck in Rochester. The coins from Truso and the south-eastern Baltic area have already been discussed in detail elsewhere (about Truso finds see: Czapkiewicz, Jagodziński & Kmietowicz 1988; Suchodolski 1989:425ff; Bartzczak, Jagodziński & Suchodolski 2003; about south-eastern Baltic finds see: Noonan 1982:220–244; Bartzczak 1997:227–239; Brath-er 1999:179–197).



Fig. 5. An animal on a bronze plaque from a reliquary of Pincenum (Schulze-Dörrlamm 2002).

ity of squares XXII–XXIV/24–25, where building no. 2 ‘long house – hall’ was found. The flat, rectangular plaque is 3.7 cm x 2.1 cm x 2.05 mm. There are loops for iron rivets, of which two are preserved, in the corners. On the plaque there is an animal,⁵ depicted with its head turned to the left and bowed low, near the ground (fig. 4). Perhaps the artist wanted to show the animal near a waterhole? On the surface of the plaque there are traces of thick fire gilding.⁶ I have not been able to find a direct analogy for this find. However, we can determine the cultural region where it was made. This kind of plaque with animals was very common in both Scandinavian and continental societies, where they were mainly used as belt mounts. These usually have rivets directly on the back, unlike the exam-

The oriental belt mount with a quadruped

In the whole collection of finds from Truso only a few can be designated as having an oriental origin. Firstly, there is a gilded bronze plaque found on the surface of the site in the proxim-

ple from Truso, which has the rivets in the corners. Maybe the plaque from Truso was made as an ornament for a box or chest? Similar examples are known from reliquaries (fig. 5), but even there the animals have their origin in oriental art (Schulze-Dörrlamm 2002:336). While the last suggestion is possible, the best analogies are still the belt mounts, and it has tentatively been identified as such.

The closest parallel in northern Europe is the belt mount found in Drente in Holland. On this mount there is a lion bending his head and a floral motif. While the bent head is similar to the Truso example, the overall style is completely different, and the ornamentation on the Drente mount is of Carolingian origin. It is very similar to the ornamentation of the trefoil brooch from the Hon hoard, Norway, deposited around middle of the 9th century. However, the lion motif is, according to H. Arbman, of oriental origin (Arbman 1937:166, Taf. 48:2a–b). A very similar belt mount with an animal turned to the right and a floral ornamentation was found in Birka, in grave 550. It is dated to the beginning of the 9th century (Arbman 1940: Taf. 83:8a–b). The tradition of depicting animals on these kinds of plaques in Scandinavian art is much older. In Skedemosse, in the province of Öland in Sweden, a 4th-century silver brooch was found with a deer representation on it (Hagberg 1961:123–133, fig. 3). It is necessary to point out that its style is totally different from the Truso plaque. A good analogy to the latter is the one discovered in grave 140 in the Latvian cemetery in Ludzas (Ciglis & Rādiņš 2003:60, 191, att. 69:12). It is a depiction of a horse turned to the right on a square belt mount. It is characteristic that other finds from this grave, such as heart-shaped belt mounts and buckles, are of oriental origin. Similar plaques with horses are known from other sites in Latvia (Urtāns 1974:216, pl. 10:7, 8). They all vary in style, and are dated to the 12th–13th centuries. In grave 4 of barrow 10 in the Bavarian district of Schnaitheim there was a brooch in the shape of a horse. A very similar item was found in Lavoye in Lotharingien. This type of brooch is dated to the 6th century (Leinthal 2003:27).

Belt mounts decorated with animals were very common in the steppe societies from ancient to modern times (Artamonov 1962:175f; Pletneva 1981: ryc. 15:86, 20:18, 23:6, 37:83, 86, 60:107; Bálint 1989: Abb. 5:5, 19:1, 56:7, 73:3,6,12, 115:2). They were very popular among all the nomadic people. A very close analogy to the plaque from Truso is a belt buckle found in a grave on the cemetery in Suuk-Su in Crimea, Ukraine (fig. 6). On the tin plate holding the buckle frame, there is an added plaque with a lion turned to the left. This type is dated to the 6th and 7th centuries (Pudovin 1961:178–185). The belt buckle and mounts are so common they are virtually obligatory in any Avar male grave, but the items are practically the only ones made in openwork and there is always a griffin on them (Rosner 1999: Taf. 76:9, 77:2, 4, 10). Gilded mounts with animals are typical of Great Moravian art, but they were produced in a different style and the iconography was different, too (Benda 1966:59f). The Hungarian items have similarities with the plaque from Truso. They differ from other steppe objects in the fact that they are almost never open-worked, but are very often gilded (Benepuszta type). The main feature that separates them from the Truso items is their shape – one of the extremities is almost always semi-circular and the border is decorated with pellets (fig. 7). On the Hungarian belt mount the most common depiction is of dogs, although they are portrayed in a different style (Arne 1912:199f; Fettich 1937: Taf. II:4, X:7, XXXII, XCIII:10–11; Fodor 1996:154, fig. 6:238, fig. 3). Belt buckles and mounts with animals were furthermore very common in the Byzantine world. On a buckle from c. A.D. 600 Jesus Christ is depicted while arriving in Jerusalem on a

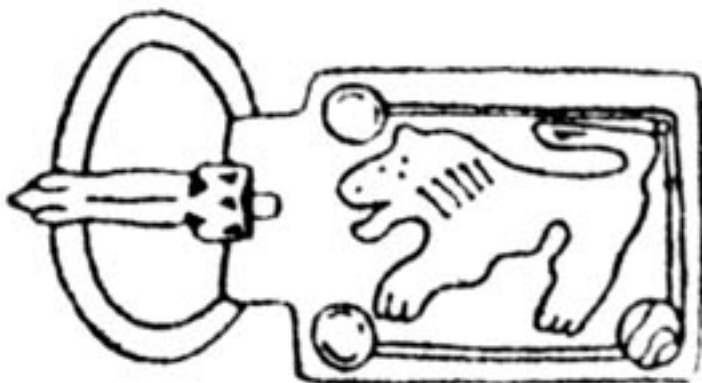


Fig. 6. Buckle from Suuk-Su on Crimea (Pudovin 1961).

donkey (Roth 1981:600ff, Taf. 34:b). The closest analogical items are those with lions that came from Asia Minor. They were very often imported to the Pannonian Valley and used by Hungarians, as well as other nomads (Davidson 1952:268, 273, pl. 115:2213-2215, 2220).

As demonstrated above, belt buckles and mounts with depictions of animals were very common in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. However, I could not find any direct parallel for the plaque from Janów Pomorski (Truso). If consider the wolf interpretation (see note 5), we should search for the origin of this kind of image in the Volga-Kama Lambatovskaja culture, where wolf figures were very common (Smirnov 1952:174–189). Furthermore, the Hungarian mounts should be mentioned. If we take the donkey interpretation, it is necessary to point out that I have never come across a motif with this animal in oriental art. One frequently finds horses, but they are usually saddled; if there is no rider, the horse is almost always depicted in a gallop, holding his head high. Figures of horses holding their heads low are very rare. I believe that this unusual pose of a drinking animal could point to the real region of provenience for the Truso plaque. One of the oldest analogies are horses represented on the handles of the mirrors from the Scythian barrows, dated to the turn of the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. (Kubarev 1996:319–345, Abb. 7-9). In spite of the significant chronological difference, I think that it shows that both finds are manifestations of the same eastern European, Middle Asian traditions. Similar figures are known from the Saltovo-Majacka culture and are attributed to Khazars (Pletneva 1967:177; *Put' iz Varjag...* 1996:72, no 573) and from the Volga-Kama region (Smirnov 1952:174–189; Golubeva 1966:80–98). The figure of the horse at the waterhole is known from one of the silver lamps from the Turyszevo hoard (fig. 8) found near Kirov, on the shore of the river Vjatka, the right branch of the Kama river (Darkievič 1976:10ff, no 7, Table 9:7). The hoard contained a silver bucket, two Sassanian bowls, two Byzantine bowls and two silver neck rings of the Permian/Glazova type. The complete hoard has been dated to the end of the 9th century. The lamp with the figure of the drinking horse has been dated to between the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th centuries. It was made somewhere in Middle Asia, probably in Sogdiana.

V. P. Darkievič connects the figures from this lamp to the fertility cult characteristic of the Mediterranean, Iran and Chinese societies. The figure of the horse is associated by him to the mythic Pegasus – the horse born near the spring of the ocean (Greek; *pēgē* – spring). By striking with his hoof he created a surge of water, a holy spring (*Hippokrēnē*). The idea of Pegasus was known in vast areas of Eurasia and the nomadic world (Darkievič 1976:11f; Bálint 1989:41f, Abb. 17:2). Also the donkey had a chthonic character and was perceived as an animal symbol of fertility, death and wisdom. If we choose the wolf interpretation, we should emphasize its militaristic symbolism connected to war, initiation and chieftain functions.

Analyses of the plaque found in Janów Pomorski (Truso) show that in this small object there are mixed influences from different cultures. The motif of an animal at the waterhole comes in general from the Mediterranean (Greek-Byzantine) area. The technique of gilding and the shape of the plaque is quite different from the Byzantine and the Far East (Chinese) objects (Bálint 2000:99–162). Rather, it suggests the steppe and the Middle Asian region. It is necessary to stress that this plaque is also different from the ones discovered in the Saltovo-Majack culture and should not, therefore, be connected directly to the Khazars. Even if I cannot show exact analogies, I think that this plaque could have been made in the Volga-Bul-

garian state, somewhere in the Kama region, and should be dated in broad frames between the 6th and the 9th centuries.

Khazarian belt mounts

Another type of objects that have oriental origins are round belt mounts with loops, decorated with a floral ornament. The plate is decorated with a picture of the lotus flower. Two of these items were found at Janów Pomorski (Truso) type (fig. 9, 10), one made of bronze, and the second of silver.⁷ The bronze one is 13 cm broad and 1.6 cm high. It was discovered on the surface of the settlement close to where the animal plaque was found (squares XXII-XXIV/24-25). The silver item was found in trench XXIII/25, inside the house no. 2 'long house – hall'. The mount is 1.4 cm broad and 3.5 cm high, the diameter of the ring is 1.3 cm, the diameter of the chain rod is 0.15 cm, and the whole mount weighs 2.58 g.

This type of belt mount is characteristic of the Saltovo-Majack culture. The majority of them are known from the cemetery in Verchnije Saltovo, near Charkov (Fettich



Fig. 7. A belt mount of Hungarian type – unknown find (Fodor 1996).

Fig. 8. Lamp from the Turyszevo hoard (Darkievič 1976).



1937: Taf. XVI, Artamonov 1962:297; Pletneva 1967:165, 1981: ryc. 61:19, 1989:161). This type of belt mount is often found in the Viking-Age graves from the 9th century in Sweden (mainly Birka) and southern Finland (Arbman 1940: Taf. 95, 96:7-20; Kivikoski 1951: no. 910-920). They are usually interpreted as imports from the Khazar territory (Arbman 1940: Taf. 95, 96:7-20; Arne 1914:119ff; Jansson 1986:83ff, 1988:610, Abb. 23:3).

Belt mounts decorated with floral motifs were analysed by N. A. Fonyakova (1986:36–47). She isolated 35 types of different ornaments with the lotus flower. Analysing their coexistence in graves, she grouped them into three main stylistic phases. Each of them has a different chronology. Ornaments from phase I and II were produced under Middle Asian influences and have been dated between the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 9th centuries. The later ones, from phase III, are of local stylistic origin and have been dated to the middle of the 9th century (Fonyakova 1986:44f, ryc. 4). This type of Saltovo-Majack belt mount was also used later (Fettich 1937: Taf. XIV:3-4). A warrior was buried in the cemetery in Bolšie-Tigani, in the Kama region, in grave no. 6 dated to the



Fig. 9. Bronze belt mount from Janów Pomorski (Truso) (Photo Bogucki).



Fig. 10. Silver belt mount from Janów Pomorski (Truso) (Photo Bogucki).

middle of the 9th century. His belt was decorated with this kind of mounts, with figures of lions and a griffin (Halikova 1976:163). The grave of the 'Hungarian family' buried on the bank of river Ingul (the right tributary of the Dniepr) has been dated to the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 10th century. The

man was buried with his horse, and the grave was richly furnished with riding equipment, vessels, ornaments and splendidly decorated belts. Two of the seven mounts found here belonged to the Saltovo-Majack type, but they were decorated with figures of humans in a ritual dance (Bokj & Pletneva 1988:99–115).

The silver belt mount from Janów Pomorski (Truso) was of type 6 according to Fonyakova. The marking of the division of the leaves in the central part of the flower is characteristic for this type. It belongs to the second stylistic group, which is distinctive of phase III of Saltovo-Majack decoration art. This phase is dated by Fonyakova to the middle of the 9th century. The bronze belt mount from Truso has a simpler decoration, but it belongs to the same stylistic group and it should also be dated to the middle of the 9th century.

In addition, the settlement at Janów Pomorski (Truso) produced c. 1000 glass, carnelian, and rock crystal beads, and some of glass cullet were found (fig. 11). Some of these objects are of oriental origin. In the group of weights there were also a few spherical items with imitations of Arabic inscriptions. These types of objects have very often been found around the Baltic Sea (Stattler 1966:242–248; Jansson 1988:564ff; Duczko 1998:107–115). Complete specialist analyses of these finds are eagerly anticipated and will be published elsewhere in due course.

Concluding discussion

It is interesting that the chronology of oriental finds from Truso is similar to the chronology of the coins. Nothing of oriental origin from the 10th century has been found in Truso, as is true of almost all Prussian territories. In the surrounding regions there are a lot of these kind of finds,

especially coins, dated to the 10th century. Almost all silver hoards from Prussian lands are very early and contain Arabic dirhams from the first wave of the inflow of the oriental silver, dated between the 780s and the 830s. There are very few later hoards, which contain almost only the local ornaments and silver bars that are unusual in the surrounding territories. From the early 11th century there are just 4 small hoards of western European coins on record (Bartczak, Jagodziński & Suchodolski 2004; Bogucki 2003:182ff). This situation is curious, because during the 9th–11th centuries the Prussian lands were a place of great interest to the Scandinavian and Slavonic merchants and pirates. Their presence is well demonstrated in both archaeological and written sources.⁸ Despite those strong connections with the Baltic world, the Prussians accumulated what can only be described as an insignificant quantity of Arabic silver and other oriental imports. So far, no one can explain this so-called 'Prussian phenomenon' in a satisfying way. Why were Prussians, who were taking a part in the international trade and the piracy, uninterested in the silver? Why were the Viking-Age Prussian tribes immune to the influences of the Baltic silver economy? The answer does not appear to be a matter of isolation of Prussians, because there are a lot of other 10th and 11th century, mainly Scandinavian, finds from Janów Pomorski (Truso), Wiskiauten/Mohovoe and many other sites. Perhaps the reason instead has something to do with local beliefs and customs – Adam of Bremen (4:18) noticed that Sembi, or Prussians: *Aureum et argentum pro minimo ducunt* [Gold and silver they hold in very slight esteem] (Tschan 2002 (1959)). Today it is impossible to explain the 'Prussian phenomenon', but future excavations and studies about Prussians will, it is hoped, provide some answers.

Many objects of oriental origin have been found in the regions around the Baltic Sea. Apart from the Sassanian drachms, Arabic and Volga-Bulgarian dirhams and other oriental coins⁹, metal and glass vessels, ornaments, textiles and other objects have been discovered. However, their number is relatively small in comparison with the considerable import of coins. Nevertheless, oriental objects are notably rare from Truso. In a total number of c. 6000 metal finds, only three can be considered to be of oriental origin and probably one more originates from the Byzantine¹⁰ area, along with a number of beads and weights. Many more finds of this type are known from excavations from other Baltic Ports of Trade (Arbman 1942:303–315). Could these scarce find be the trace of the presence in Truso of merchants from the Khazar Khaganate, Volga-Bulgaria or the 'Abbasid caliphate? In most of the literature about the Viking Age, merchants are described as very mobile, travelling long distances from York to Taškent. There is evidence for this in the archaeological material and in some written sources refers to this kind of travelling.¹¹ However, the analyses and the number of oriental objects in the North other than coins shows that those visits were incidental – the reflection of occasional, single travellers or merchants. Contrary to Sture Bolin's thesis (1959:32f), I think that the majority of exotic goods and oriental coins came to the North not directly from the 'Abbasid caliphate, but by way of a chain of exchange, through middlemen: the Khazar Khaganate, and first of all via Russia (Frye 1979:265ff; Stattler 1966:208–215, 223; Noonan 1987:179–204). The rare oriental finds from Janów Pomorski (Truso) confirm that, when looking for the most important middlemen, we have to pay more attention to the Khazar Khaganate and Volga-Bulgarian State. On the way from Mohammed to Charlemagne, besides Ruric, we should add Almiš, the Volga-Bulgarian King described by Ahmad ibn Fadlān in 921/2 as a very important participant in Viking-Age long distance trade.

Fig. 11. Glass, carnelian and rock crystal beads found at Janów Pomorski (Truso) (Photo Okoński).



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Footnotes

³ In March 2004 S. Brather from the University of Freiburg conducted geophysical research. The results, together with the analysis of aerial photographs indicate that there were port basins for ships in Truso, similar in some ways to those in Ralswiek on Rügen.

⁴ The most important are: sword pommel JP X, arrowheads of Weagraeus A, D, bone combs Ambrosiani A, Vendel Period equal-armed brooch, Viking-Age equal-armed brooch JP 58 (Ljones), JP 66–70, JP 69/70, JP 72 (Öbbestorp), JP 74/76, JP 80 (Tanum type), trefoil brooches JP 92 var., JP 94, oval brooches JP 22 (Berdal D), disc brooches, horseshoe brooches FAC:US, pins JP 238, golden finger rings Stenberger Fr 2, silver Walkiria figure, Hnefi game stones and many others.

⁵ The identification of the breed is problematic. The big ear suggests a donkey. We can suppose that it could be a real donkey (*Equus africanus*), which is common in the Mediterranean area, but it could also be an onager (*Equus hemionus*), which lives in Iran, Mesopotamia, Syria and Northern Arabia. Its big ears are not characteristic of the kiangs (*Equus kiang*), which live in Tibet and Kashmir. In the opinion of archaeozoologist, Prof. Alicja Lasota-Moskalewska additional distinctive features suggest an animal from the canid family (*Canidae*). The bending of the profile, the raised stomach and the thick hanging tail suggest that it could be a wolf (*Canis lupus*). The only feature that cannot be interpreted as belonging to a wolf is the big, pointed ear. But if we take into consideration the fact that the animal on the plaque is roughly drafted and the tradition of depicting

animals in the steppe societies (Pletneva 1981: ryc. 21, 50, 64), it is more likely to be a donkey or even a horse than a wolf. As the jury is still out, I think that it is safest to regard it as a quadruped.

⁶ In the opinion of Jarosław Strobin, the conservator of the plaque and all metal finds from Janów Pomorski.

⁷ The metal analysis was conducted by the Central Laboratory of the Polish Academy of Science in Warsaw: Plate, sample 1 – Ag 93.5%, Cu 2.02%. Plate, sample 2 – Ag 92.17%, Cu 1.98%. Ring – Ag 95.07%, Cu 1.24%. Chain – Ag 94.3%, Cu 1.96%.

⁸ The most important sites are Truso, Wiskiauten/Mohovoe on Samland (v. z. Mühlen 1975:14ff), Linkuhnen in Lithuania (v. z. Mühlen 1975:17ff). Also in the written sources there are information about the Prussian – Scandinavian contacts. Here the works of Adam of Bremen, Saxo Grammaticus (these and other sources are discussed carefully by v. z. Mühlen 1975:1–8), and the runic inscription on a scale box found in Sigtna, Uppland (Arne 1912:64ff) should be mentioned.

⁹ For example, there are a few Indian coins of Samantadeva, Spalapatideva and Waihind (Abels 2001:145–152).

¹⁰ It is a fragment of a leaden round plaque. On front side there is a rosette ornament. The back side is blank. It was found on the surface of the site. A very similar, also leaden item was found in Corinth. On front side there is an Eagle, on the back, a rosette identical to the one on the item from Truso. The borders of the plaque are similarly ornamented. The one from Corinth is dated to the 'Byzantine period' (Davidson 1952:260–261, fig. 60, nr 2105). Other analogies are Byz-

antine leaden frames for mirrors dated to the late Roman and early Byzantine period. A hoard of this kind of mirrors was found in the temple in the fortress of Sucidava in Romania (Tudor 1959:424, pl. 5). Unfortunately the plaque from Janów Pomorski (Truso) is very badly preserved, so it is very hard to identify it correctly. The rosette motif is also universal, so it is possible that this object is from more modern times.

¹¹ We should mention here first of all the Spanish Jews called Radanits (ar-Rāhdāniya). According to Ibn Hurrādābeh and Al-Muqaddasi they traveled through Europe from the west to the east, and then far to Cambodia (Qimār) and China (as-Sīn). Very important is also the description of Ahmad ibn Fadlān from 921/2 about the legation to the Volga-Bulgarian king, Almiš. No less important is the report from the journey of Ibrāhīm ibn Ja'kūb from 966/7. He probably visited Hedeby (Šīšwīk). In other Arabic sources the Baltic Sea was called the Varangian Sea (bahr al-Wārank). Scandinavians are called al-Yadūs and al-Madūs, from the biblical Gog and Magog. Scandinavia was called by Arabs Tūlīja, from ultima Thule. Truso was located on the frontier of Prussia, called al-B.rūs. In Arabic sources we can also find names of a few larger northern towns like Wolin (Lūjānīja), Stettin (Sādžin) and Birka (B.rghādh.mā.). The Arabs knew well the gold of the North – amber. They called it kah-raba. In spite of these information I think that these contacts were mainly indirect. The history of trade contacts between the Arabs and northern Europe in the light of Arabic written sources is presented by L. Richter-Bernburg (1987: 667–685) and A. Nazmi (1998).