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The burial chapel of Peter Gröning, mayor of Stargard (†1631). Results of archaeological research

Abstract. This paper presents the history and archaeology of the burial chapel of Peter Gröning, mayor of Stargard, and changes to its furnishings. The major part of the paper is devoted to the presentation of the results of archaeological work carried out in the interior of the chapel, where two burial chambers were discovered. In the light of written sources Peter Gröning (†1631) and his first wife Margareta *née* Friedrichs (†1628) were buried there. Peter Gröning is considered to have been the most distinguished mayor of Stargard in the modern period. In his will, *inter alia* he endowed the *Collegium*, which was an academic school in the 18th century and transformed into a classical gymnasium in the 19th century. The burials of Peter and Margareta Gröning took place during a difficult period in the history of Stargard, namely the events of the Thirty Years' War, tragic for the city and for Western Pomerania. The burial place was commemorated with paintings and sculptures no earlier than in 1731 to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the death of Peter Gröning. Archaeological research was carried out in the burial chapel of the Grönings in view of the scheduled conservation work in 2019¹.

Keywords: burial customs, coffin burials, church burials, Pomerania, Early Modern period.

Introduction

St. Mary's Church in Stargard, currently the collegiate church, has been the major place of worship of the town since the end of the 13th century. Its 730th anniversary was celebrated in 2022. The magnificence of its architecture was formally recognised in 2010 when it was declared a historic monument by the

¹ The following individuals took part in the research: Marcin Burdziej, Museum of Archaeology and History in Stargard and Tatiana Balcerzak, architect. Assisting in the research were Barbara Wąsowicz, Institute of General and Molecular Genetics, Faculty of Biology, University of Szczecin; Joanna Rennwanz, Laboratory of Bio and Archeometry of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethology, Polish Academy of Sciences in Poznań. Conservation work on discovered textiles was carried out by Anna Drażkowska, Institute of Archaeology, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.

President of the Republic of Poland. The church was built in the area of the chartered town, on a plot adjoining the main market on the south-east side. The current body of the church is the result of a few reconstruction projects, the most important of which was done at the turn of the 15th century. It is possible that the rebuilding of the eastern part of the church commenced in the 1380s, when an ambulatory chancel and radiating chapels were built. Observations made during archaeological research allow the conclusion that the foundations for the ambulatory walls were made in a wide pit which was designed and dug as a one-time undertaking. At the beginning of the 15th century, St. Mary's Chapel, an axial one, was added to the ambulatory. Before the mid-15th century, the nave had been rebuilt into a basilica, adjusting it to the new ambulatory (Jarzewicz 2019, pp. 391–395).

The chapel from the 14th/15th to the 16th/17th century

The chapel, which became the property of Peter Gröning, the mayor of Stargard was built after 1380 in the new ambulatory. It is located as the second one south from the axial buttress (Fig. 1). Its interior on the irregular rectangular plan measures 4.06 (4.24) by 2.06 (2.08) m, opens to the west through a pointed arch to the ambulatory and was covered with a rib vault with an axial pointed opening located in eastern

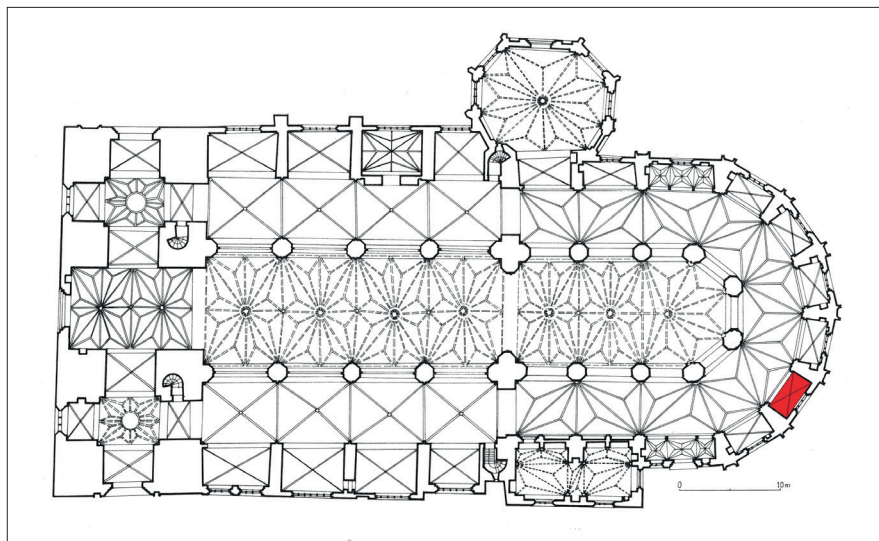


Fig. 1. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church. Place of research (plan of the church – after Jaraczewska 1982, Fig. 381; drawing by C. Rysz)

wall. In the late Medieval period, it was called the Parcham Chapel (Boehmer 1903, p. 353). It is possible that its owner was Thomas Parcham, who was the mayor of Stargard in 1458 and an envoy of Pomeranian Duke Eric II to King Casimir IV Jagiellon of Poland (Winckelsesser 1971, p. 89).

Due to a lack of written sources, we have no information about the chapel in the post-Reformation period and subsequent decades of the 16th century. The only available sources are the results of archaeological research. The period preceding the construction and the use of the uncovered burial chambers of the Grönings is represented by finds obtained in the space between the walls of chambers and side walls of the chapel. The backfill was probably made immediately after the building of the tomb was completed, i.e. in the period between 1625 and 1628 (1631) using soil dug during the construction of the chambers. It was at that time that the chapel was already used as a burial site, as is evidenced by, e.g., pieces of tombstone made of limestone and a funeral garland made of metal and plant².

The will of Peter Gröning and his burial chapel

Peter Gröning was born in Stargard in 1561 to a wheelwright of the same name and Gertrud *de domo* Bellin. As a teenager, he served Svant Tessen, a councillor at the court of the dukes of Pomerania and a *Landvogt* (sheriff) in Słupsk. He accompanied him on his travels to Prussia, Poland, and the Grand Duchy of Moscow. In 1578, he entered into the service of Anton von Zitzewitz, the *Schlosshauptmann* of Bytów Castle, who two years later recommended him to the Duke of Wolgast, Ernst Ludwig. Initially an assistant in ducal treasury offices in Wolgast and Pudagla on the Island of Usedom, he was appointed treasurer in Jasienica in 1584. He returned to his hometown Stargard in 1588 and married Margareta Friedrichs, the widow of Peter Naumburg, who brought a house as her dowry. He became a town councillor in 1590, treasurer in 1598 and mayor in 1616 (Fig. 2) (Blasendorff 1879, pp. 720–721).

The Grönings did not have children. In a time of plague, on 7 June 1625 Peter Gröning, acting in agreement with his wife, made a will. He donated part of his estate, about 7,000 florins, *ad pios usus*, of which 4,100 florins were allocated to scholarships for poor students. The executors of his will were the town receiver and wheelwright guild (Majewska 2000, p. 56). It was also in this document that the

² Archaeobotanical analysis of the excavated material is being prepared by Joanna Rennwanz Laboratory of Bio and Archaeometry of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences in Poznań. These will be subject to a separate study.



Fig. 2. Portrait of Peter Gröning (1561–1631), mayor of Stargard (the former collection of Peter Gröning Gymnasium in Stargard)

mayor named a chapel located in St. Mary's church as his burial site. He bought the place *behind the nave and the choir* as early as 1610 (Wehrmann 1930, p. 53). It seems that the tombs were not ready in 1625, considering that Gröning made it clear in his first will that "our bodies shall be [laid] on both sides of the chapel of St. Mary's church, both sides of which we bought from the church for 100 thalers. Hence, the two burial chambers should be ready and masonry walls completed so that our bodies, after our blessed deaths, be brought there and there entombed. This work being complete, both tombstones from the chapel shall be laid on tombs, which we bought from the church just as burial places. [...]. Both burial chambers shall be covered with flooring when the tombstones are laid in place. Such a burial shall my heirs conduct and the superiors of St. Mary's church

shall see to it" (Falbe 1831, p. 163). The wording of the will makes it clear that no other people were to be buried either inside the chapel or in the tombs: "When both stones are laid on tombs in the chapel as it shall be done, it needs to be [considered] that the stones and the chapel along with the burial site were purchased by the mayor of Stargard, Peter Gröning and his beloved wife Margareta Friedrichs from the church for both of them until the Doomsday and no other shall be buried there" (Falbe 1831, p. 164).

Margareta died on 23 November 1628 and was buried in the chapel of St. Mary's Church. On 3 October 1630, Peter Gröning married Barbara Maria von Suckow from Dłusko (*Blankenhagen*) near Węgorzyno (*Wangerin*). On 28 January 1631, Peter Gröning drew up another will in which, apart from numerous other bequests, he donated 20,000 florins to endow the *Collegium* provided it opened no later than three years after the reading of the will. The executors named in the will were the mayor, two notaries and the elders of the tailors' guild. The Duke of Pomerania Bogislav XIV confirmed his donation on 5 May 1631 and offered the wood necessary for the construction of the school (Fig. 3). The executors of the will expedited its establishment and the *Collegium* opened in 1633. The second will also entails

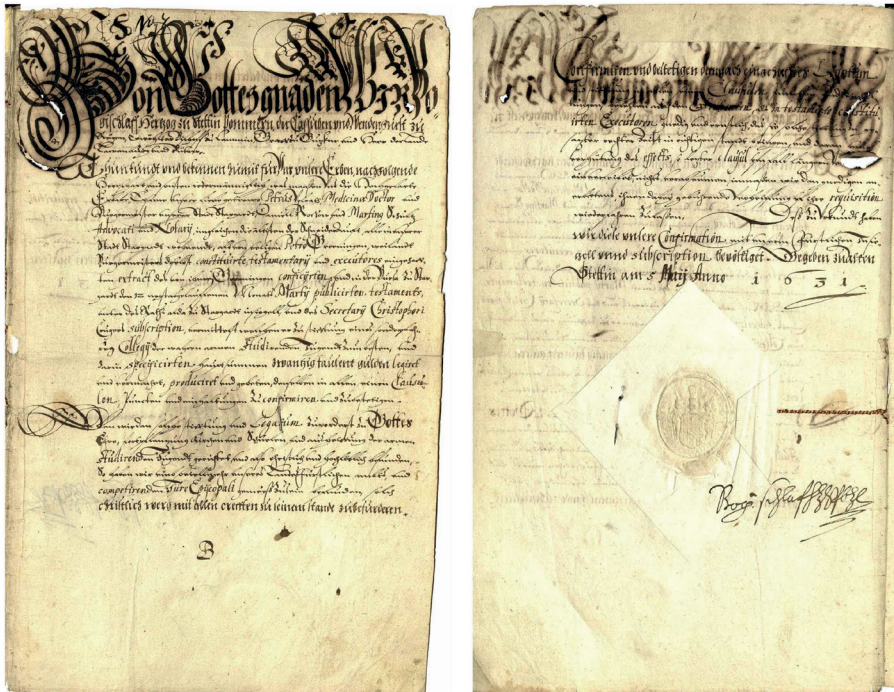


Fig. 3. Document of Pomeranian duke Bogislav IV of May 5, 1631 confirming *inter alia* the donation to Peter Gröning for founding *Collegium* (the collection of Landesarchiv in Greifswald, Reg. 38b, no. 16)

information about the burial site: “[...] my earthly body in the ground, which is the mother [of all men, with Christian ceremonies in my purchased chapel in St. Mary’s Church shall be buried behind a bolt [...]].” Moreover, there is also a disposition addressed to Barbara Maria von Suckow, which seems to negate the integrity of the tombs in the chapel: “[...] my dear wife may use both hereditary graves (tombs) in St. Mary’s Church behind the bolt. Moreover, my dear wife shall benefit from my chapel with a vault with beautiful Bible stories and works beautifully sculptured placed around, which are so very dexterously decorated [...]”³.

Peter Gröning died on 12 February 1631 and several days later, on 23 February 1631, he was buried in a chapel next to his first wife. Unfortunately, there are no records of either of the ceremonies, which were carried out in the shadow of the Thirty Years’ War.

³ The original will from 1631 is kept in the collection of the Landesarchiv in Greifswald, Reg. 38b, no. 16.

The chapel from the 18th to the 20th century

During the great fire of the town in 1635, St. Mary's Church and its furnishings were destroyed. An anonymous author who described the interior of the church at the beginning of the 18th century did not note any elements associated with the Grönings⁴. In turn, Daniel Gottfried Werner, the provost of the *Collegium Groeningianum* concluded in a publication issued to celebrate the centenary of the fund that nothing of the exquisite furnishings described in Peter Gröning's will had survived. Thus, the executors of the will and the fund as well as the provost of the *Collegium* commissioned a new decoration of the chapel which gave it the character of a mausoleum (Werner 1733, pp. 69–71). They included a series of murals showing scenes from the Bible: "Jacob's Dream, Joseph of Egypt Saves His People from Hunger, Vision of the Prophet Ezekiel (A Vision of the Last Judgement), The Miracle at the Grave of Elisha". The themes are believed to refer to the tragic fate of Stargard during the Thirty Years' War. The figure of Peter Gröning is at times compared to Joseph, who saved the town from the "plague" of the emperors' soldiers (Kalita-Skwirzyńska 1983, pp. 159–163). The programme was complemented with a pedestal with a wooden inscription board and a wooden, Baroque frame with a portrait of the mayor closing the arcade of the chapel made by Stargard sculptor Bartholomeus Frantz. The frame was designed in a shape of an arcade placed on double fluted pilasters with plinths. The pediment-shaped archivolt was topped with the portrait of Peter Gröning supported by pilasters and with an acanthus head above adorned with a sculpture of a personified *Caritas*. Directly above the opening, there was a drapery held at both ends by putti. In the lower part of the arcade, there was a low wall with a two-wing openwork wrought-iron gate leading to the interior of the chapel (Fig. 4) (Redlin 1895, p. 15)⁵.

During the repair work of St. Mary's Church carried out at the beginning of the 20th century by Heinrich Deneke, the wall was pulled down, the Baroque frame was removed and fitted as a closure of a vestibule at the northern portal of the chapel, the floor level was raised and a pedestal with a commemorative plaque was erected. After 1945, all movable elements of the furnishing were either destroyed or plundered. Only the paintings on the walls remained; they were subject to conservation work between 1978–1980, which was carried out by Stefan Wójcik. At that time inscriptions and stars on the vault were painted over. Inside the chapel, heating and electrical wiring were installed.

⁴ The copy survived in the form of a 19th-century transcript in the collection of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, University Library, Rps 414/II.

⁵ Landesarchiv, Rep. 55, no. 18–19, no. 117. Cf. archival photographs from the collection of Photo Archives, the National Museum in Szczecin, Cat. no. 4445–4446, no. 7763.



Fig. 4. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church; Peter Gröning's chapel with a Baroque frame and gate in about 1890 (the collection of National Museum in Szczecin, Photo Archives, Ref. no. 7763)

Results of archaeological research in Peter Gröning's chapel

Today, the floor of the chapel is covered with a few types of reused brick tiles measuring 21 (21.5) by 21 (2.5) by 4 (3.5–4.5) cm including chamfered edge bricks (Fig. 5). The brick floor was laid on a sand and lime screed and a layer of sand ballast. Two installation pits were noted in that space: one for the heating system in southern part of the chapel, running along the E–W axis, towards the presbytery and the other, a small one, in the N–W corner for an electric power socket. Both were installed in the second half of the 20th century.

Below this level, there is a backfill of brick rubble and lime and sand mortar, the aim of which was to raise the floor level by about 0.4 m not only in the chapel, but also in the whole interior of the church. The works were carried out at the beginning of the 20th century and were part of restoration works carried out in the whole church. The rubble includes ceramic and glass shards, human and animal bones, a brick floor tile measuring 17.5 by 17 by 4.5 cm, a piece of a Gothic masonry brick with a cut-in edge measuring 3.5 by 3.5 cm, partly covered with a plaster and



Fig. 5. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church; Peter Gröning's chapel, contemporary floor level with uncovered footing of a pedestal of a commemorative plaque (photo by M. Burdziej)

a limewash, 8 cm high, which matches the profile at the entry to the chapel; a piece of brick, a glazed finial of a late-Gothic wimperg and a black plastic comb. Shards include pieces of jugs and baking moulds of brown stoneware from Bolesławiec (*Bunzlau*) (Fig. 6: 1, 2, 4), a porcelain cup from Zofiówka (*Sophienau*) marked with a symbol used between 1880 and 1916 (Fig. 6: 6).

Remains of a rectangular pedestal footing from bricks located in the central part of the chapel which supported a former commemorative plaque measuring 1.65 by 0.77 m with an empty space inside measuring 0.41×0.18 m survived under a layer of rubble. The structure was made of two layers of bricks.

At the entrance to the chapel there was a backfill of brick rubble, sand and lime mortar and sand, which was the remains of a pit dug for the footing of a bulkhead which originally enclosed the space of the chapel on the ambulatory side, with two lateral *avant-corps* on the inside of the chapel measuring 0.55 m (on the northern side) and 0.52 m (on the southern side) of which one layer of bricks and one layer of brick floor tiles remained. Originally, there was a centrally located entrance closed with an iron gate. Its threshold was made of brick floor tiles, the surface of which was whitewashed, overlaid with bricks on a 2–3 cm thick layer of clay. Both elements were added before 1911. It is possible that they were associated with the funding of the new furnishings of the chapel at the beginning of the 1730s.

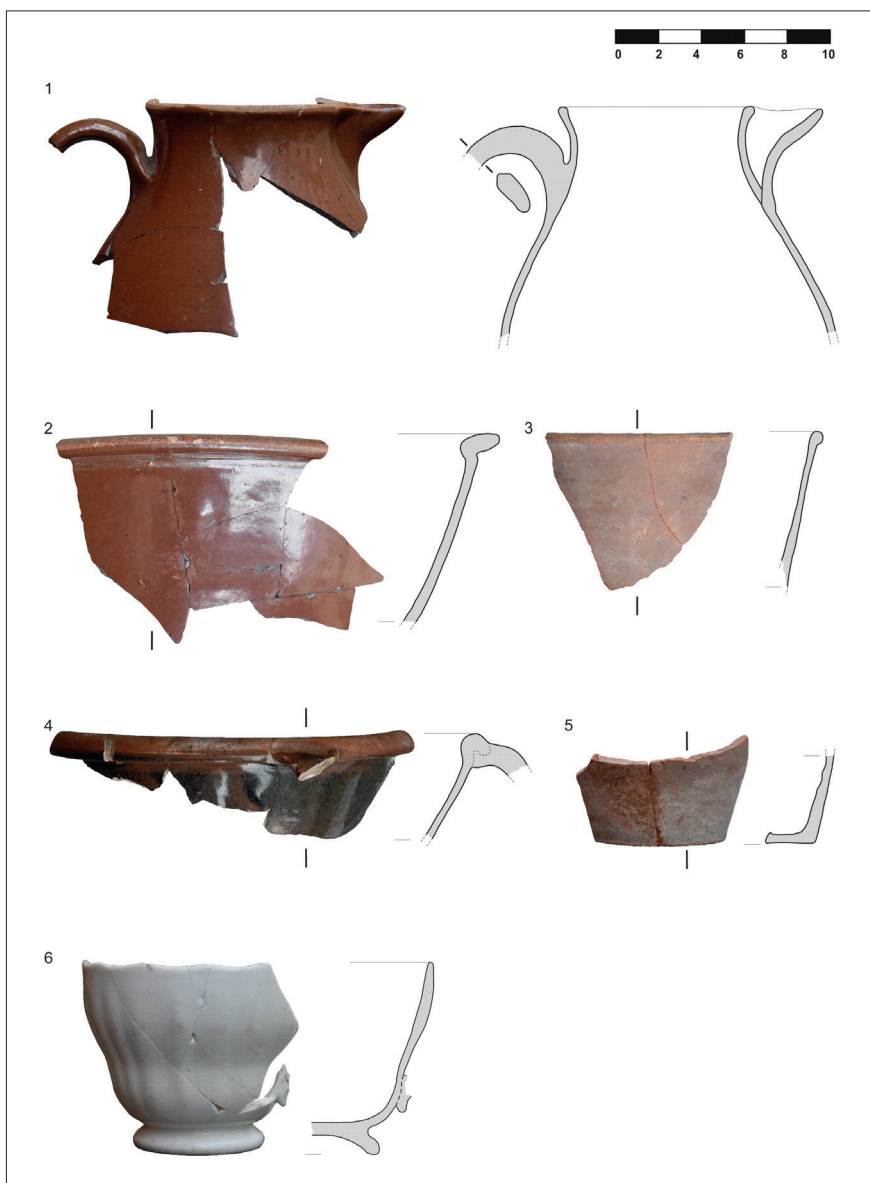


Fig. 6. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church, Peter Gröning's chapel. Shards dating to the turn of the 20th century: 1–2, 4 – brown stoneware from Bolesławiec (Bunzlau); 3, 5 – brick ceramics; 6 – porcelain from Zofiówka (*Sophienau*) marked with a symbol used between 1880 and 1916 (photo by M. Majewski; developed by C. Rysz)

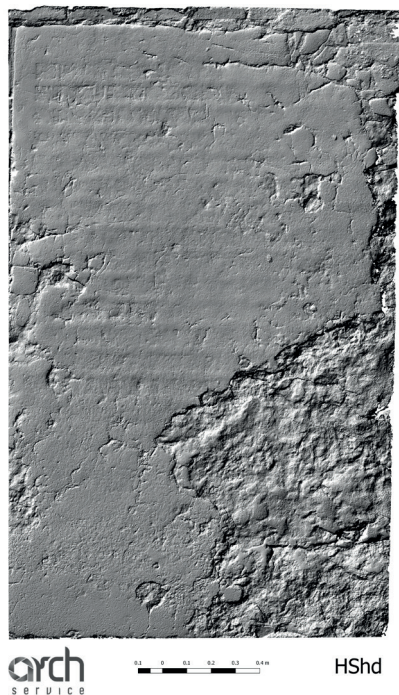


Fig. 7. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church, Peter Gröning's chapel. Tombstone over Peter Gröning's tomb; local relief model (LRM) (developed arch service 2019)

Another floor layer was made of mortar bricks laid horizontally and brick floor tiles measuring 28.5 by 28.5 by 6 cm and 17.5 by 17.5 by 5 cm, with clearly separate edges arranged in different patterns. In the southern part, there was a lime tombstone measuring 2.55 by 1.60 m, its surface dissected and cracked, filled with lime and sand mortar, and brick rubble with an entirely effaced inscription (Fig. 7).

Under the floor there was fine brown sand with some lime and sand mortar, pieces of bricks and charcoal. It filled spaces between the uncovered walls of tombs and the northern and southern foundations of the chapel. To some extent the sand also penetrated the tombs themselves. The backfill included shards of Lusatian urnfield culture⁶, grey ware, stove tiles, glass, human and animal bones, pieces of brick floor tiles glazed green and yellow on one side. A piece of a volute stone detail made of sandstone covered with black and gold polychrome (Fig. 8: 1). Fragments of coloured window glass with inscriptions and figure representations (Fig. 9)

are remains of historic stained-glass windows. Four pieces of a tombstone made of limestone with single letters in *capitalis monumentalis* (Fig. 8: 2–5) and a piece of a funeral garland made of gilded copper wire and gilded dried clover tree flower buds and other plants come from destroyed graves. It is possible that some other objects were part of grave goods; others could have been brought to the interior of the church in soil brought from town and then used to level the backfill. They include a bracteate of Duke Sambor II (1227/1228–1270/1271) made in the Tczew mint after 1260 (Fig. 10: 7); two silver denars, including one made in the Stargard mint (Fig. 5); an iron buckle with a prong (Fig. 10: 8); a lead ball with sprue not chiselled off (Fig. 10: 6); a bead or wooden button (Fig. 10: 4); a grapple of copper sheet; a pin of copper alloy; a piece of copper sheet; a lead trade seal

⁶ On numerous occasions, shards of Lusatian urnfield culture were uncovered in the immediate vicinity of St. Mary's church in the Old Town in Stargard (Mikuła 2019).

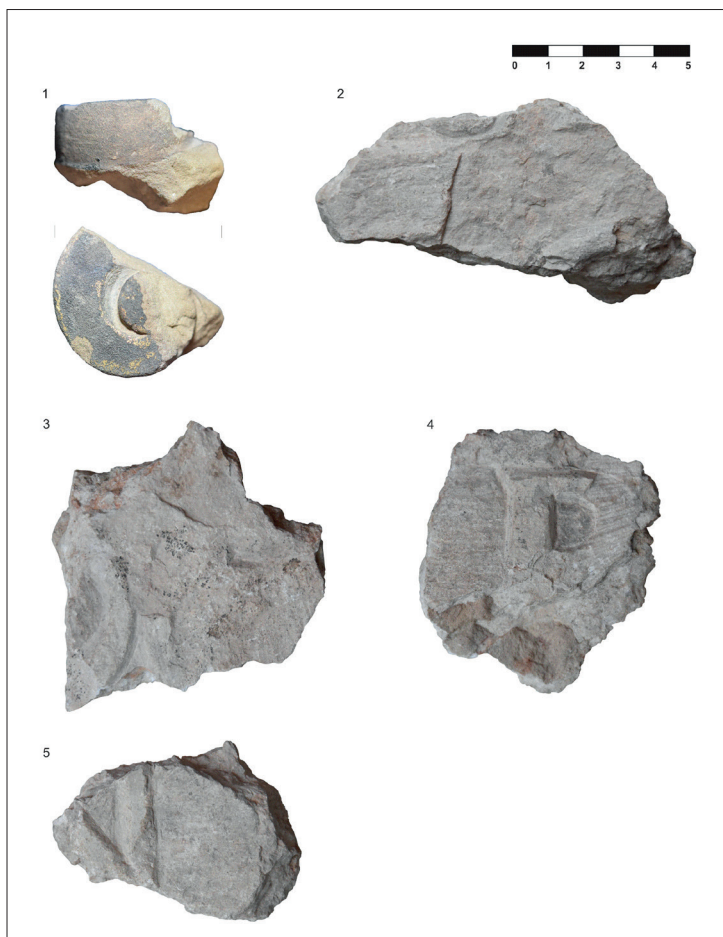


Fig. 8. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church, Peter Gröning's chapel: 1 – piece of a volute stone detail with remains of polychrome; 2–5 – pieces of tombstones (photo by M. Majewski; developed by C. Rysz)

from Augsburg (Fig. 10: 1); a loop of copper alloy (Fig. 10: 3); a bone awl/bodkin (Fig. 10: 9); a small iron knife (Fig. 10: 10); and a ring of copper alloy (Fig. 10: 2) made of double sheet of metal, slightly distorted, measuring 1.5–1.8 cm in diameter, with engraved single letters IHS in *capitalis monumentalis* and plant motifs at the sides filled with black pigment. The timeline of this level dates to the construction of the tomb of the Grönings and its existence until a new fund for the furnishing of the chapel was established at the beginning of the 1730s.

The tomb of the Grönings consisted of two individual, rectangular chambers, placed next to each other (Fig. 11). The northern one, in which the remains of



Fig. 9. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church, Peter Gröning's chapel: glass of stained glass windows (photo by M. Majewski; developed by C. Rysz)

Margareta Gröning, *de domo* Friedrichs were buried, was oriented approximately along the E–W axis and made of bricks measuring 30.0 (29.0, 28.5) by 14.5 (14.0) by 7.5 (8.0) cm in the head part, bound with lime and sand mortar mixed with pieces of plain tiles and ridge tiles. The circumferential walls were one-brick thick, while the inner face was plastered and whitewashed. The continuous footing inside the chapel measures 2.30 by 0.95 (0.93) m. The bottom of the chamber is of lime screed laid on a continuous footing enclosing the ambulatory of the church.

Directly under the floor there was backfill proper of the tomb: clean light, dusty sand. Just above the middle section of the top plate of the coffin the remains of a funeral garland (?) of organic matter were found in the sand.

An oak, quadrangular, rectangular coffin, originally with diagonal long and short sides running parallel to the coffin base had a flat upper plate measuring about 1.88 by 0.60 (0.59) m. It was originally made of three long boards measuring



Fig. 10. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church, Peter Gröning's chapel. Artefacts uncovered from the backfill created at the time of the building of the chapel: 1 – lead trade seal, Augsburg; 2 – ring of copper alloy with engraved single letters IHS in *capitalis monumentalis*; 3 – prong of copper alloy; 4 – bead or wooden button; 5 – coin, silver denar made in Stargard; 6 – lead ball; 7 – bracteate of Duke Sambor II made in Tczew mint; 8 – iron buckle; 9 – bone awl/bodkin; 10 – iron knife (photo by M. Majewski; developed by C. Rysz)

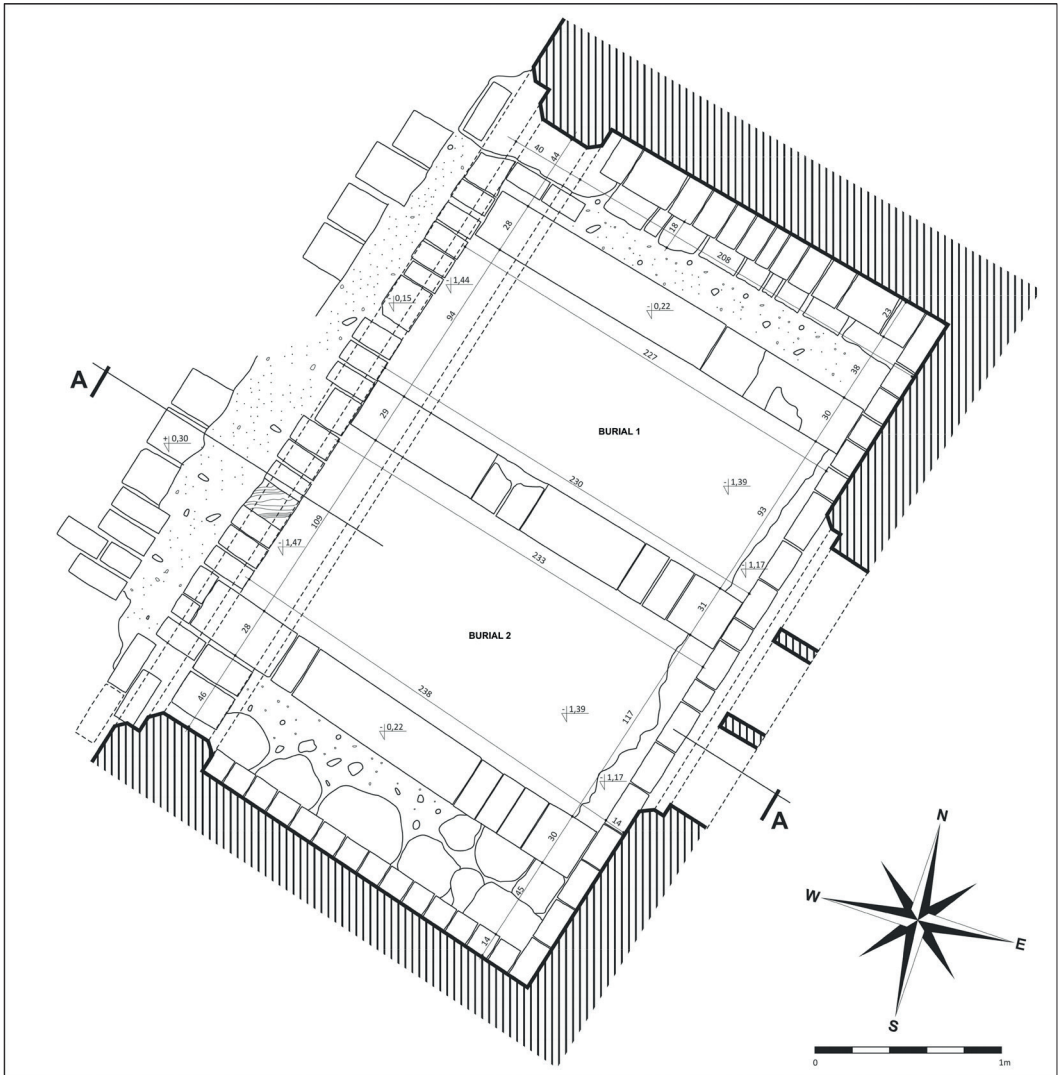


Fig. 11. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church, Peter Gröning's chapel. Tombs of Margareta and Peter Gröning (plan on the basis of a drawing by T. Balcerzak; developed by C. Rysz)

about 16, 24 and 16/17 cm in width. The bottom of the coffin measured about 1.88 by 0.48 (0.45) m. The coffin was placed directly on a lime screed floor. The lid was nailed to the long sides of the coffin with five iron nails, four of which were square shank nails going slightly flat toward the point, partly grooved and with either circular or irregular heads. One nail is headless with a smooth shank. A further three iron nails, which originally fastened the boards of the lid, also have smooth shafts and are headless.

At the sides of the base of the coffin fourteen nails were found; they fastened the sides of the coffin to its bottom: five on each of the long sides and two on each of the short sides. These are long square shaft nails, going slightly flat towards the point of the nail, partly grooved with circular heads.

The southern burial chamber located directly under the tombstone is associated with the resting place of mayor Peter Gröning and was oriented approximately along the E–W axis. It was made of bricks measuring 30.0 (29.0, 28.5) by 14.5 (14.0) by 7.5 (8.0) cm in the head part, bound with lime and sand mortar mixed with pieces of plain tiles and ridge tiles. The circumferential walls were one-brick thick, the inner face was plastered and whitewashed. The interior measures 2.38 (2.35) by 1.17 (1.09) m. The bottom of the chamber is of lime screed laid on a continuous footing enclosing the ambulatory of the church.

The upper part of the backfill contained remains of plants, fragments of boards and logs and a bouquet of artificial flowers, samples of which were taken. The artificial bouquet was made of gilded copper wire, gilded dried clover tree flower buds, string and wooden pieces which were wrapped in a textile wrapper. The burial chamber was filled with clean, light middle-grain sand.

The oak, quadrangular, rectangular coffin, originally with diagonal long and short sides running parallel to the coffin base, had a flat upper plate measuring about 2.03 by 0.62 (0.60) m. It was originally made of three long boards about 19, 22 and 18/19 cm wide. The bottom measured about 1.96 by 0.43 (0.37) m. The coffin was placed directly on a lime screed floor. On the short side, next to the head the coffin was placed on a support of bricks measuring 29.0 (29.0) by 14.0 by 7.5 cm. Three outer bricks were resting on stretching bricks, two were placed horizontally. The lid was nailed to the long sides of the coffin with five iron nails, four of which were square shank, of various length, going slightly flat toward the point, with a partly grooved and either circular or irregular heads. The other four iron nails that originally fastened the boards of the lid have smooth shafts and are headless.

Below the lid, there was a skeleton lying on its back, oriented along the E–W axis with a deviation resulting out of necessity to adjust to the axis of the chapel, with the skull (head) pointing W and the visceral cranium (face) facing E (Fig. 13). The position of the bones of the forearms indicates that when the body was laid in the grave both hands rested in the area of the elbows of the opposite arms, the right on the left one. The skeleton survived incomplete. Most of the bones have decomposed.



Fig. 12.
Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World
Church, Peter Gröning's chapel.
Margareta Gröning's burial chamber:
skeleton (photo by M. Majewski)



Fig. 13.
Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World
Church, Peter Gröning's chapel.
Peter Gröning's burial chamber: skeleton
(photo by M. Majewski)

The skull was covered with a four-wedge hat made of silk velvet (Fig. 14). Next to the arm bones, left and right, pieces of bobbin laces were identified. On the breastbone and in the area of the chest bones a textile band was found. Next to the lower jaw there was a coin.

Six iron nails with semi-circular heads were identified above the edge of the coffin; they were probably used to fasten a band or a cloth. They were attached every 0.31 m. At the edge of the bottom of the coffin, fifteen iron nails were found; they fastened the sides of the coffin to the bottom, five on each of the long sides, two on each of the short sides where the legs were and three on each of the short sides



Fig. 14. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church, Peter Gröning's chapel. Peter Gröning's burial chamber: hat on the skull and a coin under lower jaw (photo by M. Majewski)

at the head. These are long square shaft nails, going slightly flat towards the point of the nail, with partly grooved shafts and circular heads. Two further nails have smooth shafts and are headless.

Discussion

The period preceding the building and exploitation of the uncovered burial chambers of the Grönings is represented by the finds excavated in the space between the walls of the chambers and side walls of the chapel. The backfill was probably made just after the tomb had been built, i.e., in the period between 1625 and 1628 (1631), using the soil dug out during the construction of the chambers. For this reason, all the unearthed artefacts can be dated to the period preceding the construction of the sepulchral chapel. It was already at that time that the chapel was used as a burial site, which is apparent in the numerous pieces of human bones and a very interesting burial garland made using gilded copper wire, gilded dried clover tree flower buds, and other plants. Other artefacts include coins that date back to the period between the 13th and the 15th centuries (Fig. 10: 5, 7), a lead trade seal from Augsburg dated to the end of the 16th century (Fig. 10: 1), and a ring of copper alloy with the IHS monogram incorporated in a plant motif at the sides. (Fig. 10: 2) The latter artefact is a sign of a Christian tradition, which incorporates symbolic inscriptions on jewellery. Late medieval and German inscriptions are known from finds from the territory of Poland (Chudzińska 2004). The symbolic initials IHS (*Jesus Hominum Salvator*) are usually identified with Protestants (Wachowski 2015, p. 238); however, they are also used by Catholics. A ring of very similar form and lettering was excavated in the village of Papendorf near Greifswald; the find was dated to the 17th century (Hollnecker 2015, p. 383). The piece from Stargard may date back to as far as the 16th century.

Sixteen pieces of stained window glass with inscriptions, figure representations and plant motifs (Fig. 9) are associated with pieces of windows uncovered during the excavations in the former church of the Order of Hermits of Saint Augustine in Stargard (Majewski 2016, pp. 247–248). They date back to the turn of the 16th and the beginning of the next century, while a piece of a volute stone detail made of sandstone covered with black and gold polychrome, which is part of an unknown work, was made at the turn of the 17th century (Fig. 8: 1).

Unfortunately, the tombstone made of limestone unearthed above the burial chamber survived in very poor condition. It showed signs of burning, which could be due to the fire of 1635. Numerous cracks and repairs in the mortar made raising it safely impossible. For that reason, before the burial chamber was opened photographic documentary evidence was taken as well as visual analyses based on major components, shading and the so-called slides and LRM (local relief model)

were made (Fig. 7). The data made it possible to establish that the inscription was originally made in fourteen lines and was made in *capitalis monumentalis*. Three fragments with legible letters of the inscription remained. It is not known whether the tombstone was prepared especially for Peter Gröning or whether it was a temporary, reused one and no new inscription was prepared. A heavily effaced inscription would indicate long and intensive use, which cannot be the case considering the limited space of the chapel. Therefore, it can be concluded that the tombstone was reused and that originally it was placed in a floor in the part of the church which was more frequented and used. The presumed tombstone of Margareta Gröning survived only in four pieces uncovered in the backfill of the burial chamber with individual letters of inscription in *capitalis monumentalis* (Fig. 8: 2–5). It is possible that the tombstone was damaged during the fire in 1635.

Directly beneath the tombstone, on the surface of the backfill, an artificial bouquet made of gilded copper wire, gilded dried clover tree flower buds, string and wooden pieces which were wrapped in a textile wrapper was uncovered.

After the fire of 1635, the interior of the chapel was repaired by filing in the floor in the damaged tombstone over the burial chamber of the remains of Margareta Gröning. It seems that also at that time cracks and areas of loss in the tombstone over the burial chamber of Peter Gröning were filled.

A plastered and whitewashed mortar partition which originally enclosed the space of the chapel on the side of the ambulatory with two lateral *avant-corps* on the inside of the chapel as well as a rectangular footing of a pedestal of former commemorative plaque, which was located in the central part of the chapel measuring 1.65×0.77 m and made of brick, are the remains of the modifications to the space of the chapel in about 1731 while covering the walls with paintings, a Baroque frame of the chapel and a pedestal with a commemorative board.

Major changes were made to the interior of the chapel during the restoration work on the church carried out by Heinrich Deneke. By 1911, he had the mortar partition and the pedestal of the commemorative board removed, while the Baroque frame of the chapel was transferred to some other place in the church. Also, he had the floor raised by about 0.3–0.4 m; this is visible in the preserved wall paintings, which are a continuation of those preserved above (Fig. 15), backfills and levelling layers as well as surviving floor level from before the repair works. The youngest layer includes ceramic and glass shards which date to the turn of the 20th century (Fig. 6). After the renovation work was finished, the plaque commemorating Peter Gröning was placed on new pedestal. In the post-war period, the commemorative plaque was removed and two utility trenches were dug for a heating system and electrical wiring.

The registered and collected samples for specialist genetic, archaeobotanical, and archaeoentomological analyses will yield more detailed data that will not only expand the knowledge regarding the buried individuals, but also deepen the understanding of funerary customs.



Fig. 15. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church, Peter Gröning's chapel. Remains of Baroque murals under removed flooring dating to the beginning of the 20th century (photo by M. Majewski)

Supplement: results of the anthropological investigation

In the light of the written sources and archaeological and anthropological research, it could be concluded with high probability that the skeletons found in the two burial chambers are those of Margarete Gröning *de domo* Friedrichs (deceased in 1628) and her husband, mayor of Stargard, Peter Gröning (deceased in 1631).

Considering the mass of the skeleton and the analysis of different characteristics of sexual dimorphism of the skull and pelvis, it was concluded that the skeleton of the first buried person was a skeleton of a woman (Burial 1: Margarete Gröning)⁷. The degree of obliteration of the coronal, sagittal, and lambdoid sutures and observations of the surface of the pubic symphysis allowed the stage of biological age to be assessed as *senilis* (over 55 years old). The advanced stage of obliteration processes shifts the date of death to about 70 years old. The formulae developed by Manouvrier, Bach and Trotter/Gleser were used to estimate the antemortem stature

⁷ The osteometric analysis was carried out by Marcin Burdziej from the Museum of Archaeology and History in Stargard.

from long-bone length. The value received, 159.3 cm, indicates the deceased to be a person of average height.

At the time of death, the deceased person had only four teeth; however, due to the lowering of alveolar process due to ageing and defects at the time of discovery only left upper cuspid tooth was stable in the tooth-socket. A carietic focus was observed in its crown.

Bony outgrowth on the heel bone under the sole, commonly known as heel spurs, and sclerotic changes in the area of the Achilles tendon insertion were observed. Both changes were definitely a source of acute pain and made daily functioning difficult. In the area of the right knee joint, signs of an inflammation of the patella and the softening of the cartilage, known in medicine as *chondromalacia patellae* were found. Apart from acute pain during movement as well as at rest the condition resulted in knee “buckling” and stability problems.

The skeleton showed numerous signs of healed fractures, which with a high degree of probability could be associated with a single, serious accident. Fractures can be seen on seven consecutive right ribs, some of which were displaced fractures, which would indicate a sharp force injury due to a fall on a hard edge. Signs of fracture are also to be seen on the distal (lower) epiphysis of the right radial bone. Such fractures are often suffered while attempting to support the body while falling.

The most serious injury from the point of view of the treatment and healing process observed on the skeleton was the fracture of the left inferior pubic ramus which, apart from apparent thickening in the area of the fracture, resulted also in a minor asymmetry of the pubic symphysis. Convalescence and full recovery of strength and health in the case of such injuries, under treatment today, takes from two to three months, whereby the patient requires constant and professional care during the first month of treatment.

The coin discovered under the jaw of the deceased survived in a very poor condition. A partially remaining inscription and a drawing allows the conclusion that it is a Pomeranian (Stargard?) denarius which goes as far back as the 15th century.

Considering the mass of the skeleton and the analysis of different characteristics of sexual dimorphism of the skull and pelvis it was concluded that the skeleton of the second buried person was the skeleton of a man (Burial 2: Peter Gröning). The degree of obliteration of the coronal, sagittal, and lambdoid sutures and the attrition of teeth allowed the stage of biological age to be assessed as *senilis* (over 55 years old). The formulae developed by Manouvrier, Bach and Trotter/Gleser were used to estimate the antemortem living stature from long-bone length. The value received was 175.8 cm, which indicates the deceased person was tall. Except for the cranial vault the remaining bones of cranial and facial bones underwent the

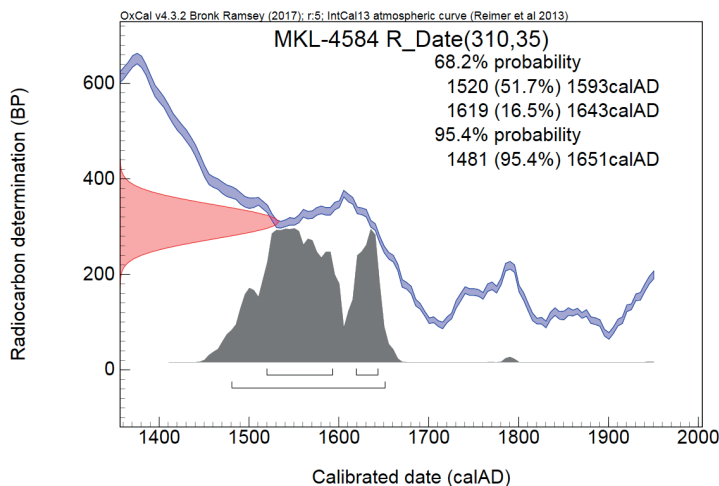


Fig. 16. Stargard, St. Mary's Queen of the World Church, Peter Gröning's chapel. Peter Gröning's burial chamber: results of calibrations of radiocarbon measurements of wood (developed by M. Krapiec)

process of mineralisation, which renders craniometric measurements and forensic facial reconstruction impossible.

The degree of preservation of the skeleton hinders observation of any pathological changes. The only noticed change was adhesion (scarring) of two vertebrae. A number of centripetal processes were observed on the longitudinal ridge, the *linea aspera*. The change is not pathological though, as it serves as evidence of strong adductor muscles. These muscles work hard during, e.g. horse riding, which combined with the written sources could prove that Peter Gröning spent a lot of time travelling on horseback.

The elements of a man's garments discovered inside the coffin included a hat worn at home made of smooth cut silk velvet. It was sewn of four wedges and its lower rim was bordered with a narrow silk ribbon. The lining was of plain silk⁸.

The timeline of the burial is confirmed by a West Pomeranian coin, the *witen* found under the jaw; it was minted by duke Ulrich I in 1620. Moreover, the results of calibrations of radiocarbon measurements taken from logs located under the tombstone covering the burial chamber indicate the period corresponding to the burial of Peter Gröning⁹ (Fig. 16).

⁸ The analysis was carried out by Anna Drązkowska from the Faculty of Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń.

⁹ The results of analyses were carried out in the Laboratory of Absolute Dating in Kraków under the supervision of Marek Krapiec.

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