

¹ APB THOR Sp. z o.o.
k.waszczuk@apbthor.pl
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6978-9615

² APB THOR Sp. z o.o.
d.zychlinski@apbthor.pl
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3827-8166

³ APB THOR Sp. z o.o.
p.pachulski@apbthor.pl
ORCID ID: 0009-0008-5763-6962

**KAMILLA WASZCZUK¹, DANIEL ŻYCHLIŃSKI²,
PIOTR PACHULSKI³**

**The urban cemetery in Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie
and the rural cemetery in Prusy Wschodnie.
Similarities and differences in Evangelical burial rites**

Abstract. This article compares two necropolises of people of Evangelical faith located in different regions in the present-day Polish lands examined in their entirety as part of rescue archaeological research. The first cemetery was located in the village of Łaziska in Greater Poland, the other one was situated in the village of Ciernie in Masuria. The analysis showed a number of similarities between these two burial sites. However, there were noticeable differences in the wealth and the origin of the communities who were using the necropolises, which, according to the authors, was due to different dynamics of the historical and social transformations in these two regions.

Keywords: cemeteries, Evangelical people, wealth, origin, social transformations, historical transformations.

Introduction

Scattered among forests and fields, small and forgotten Protestant cemeteries are one of the most visible pieces of evidence of the complex history of cultural relations that either united or divided the inhabitants of the present-day Polish lands. The memory of them has recently been resurrected by the creation of local communities and documentation performed by regionalists and genealogists. However, not all necropolises stand the chance of surviving and becoming part of the local cultural landscape. Some of them, for various reasons, are liquidated in favour of acquiring

new investment areas. Such was the fate of two small cemeteries located in two different parts of Poland. Although no trace of them remains today, thanks to a methodically conducted archaeological research, the memory of the people buried there could survive, and the yielded findings allowed the two communities to be subjected to a multifaceted comparison in the context of the burial rites they adopted.

The first of the described necropolises was located in the village of Łaziska (Rogowo-Łaziska), Żnin commune, Kuyavian-Pomeranian voivodeship, and was liquidated during the construction of expressway S5. The second was situated in the village of Ciernie, Ełk commune, Warmian-Masurian voivodeship, on the route of the planned expressway S61 (Figs. 1–3). The following synthesis is based on the results of archaeological excavations conducted by APB THOR Sp. z o.o. (Gniezno) on behalf of the General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways, and presented in unpublished monographs by Kamilla Waszczuk (2018; 2021).



Fig. 1. Location of the analysed Evangelical cemeteries in relation to the course of road projects (source: Generalna Dyrekcja Dróg Krajowych i Autostrad; developed by K. Waszczuk)

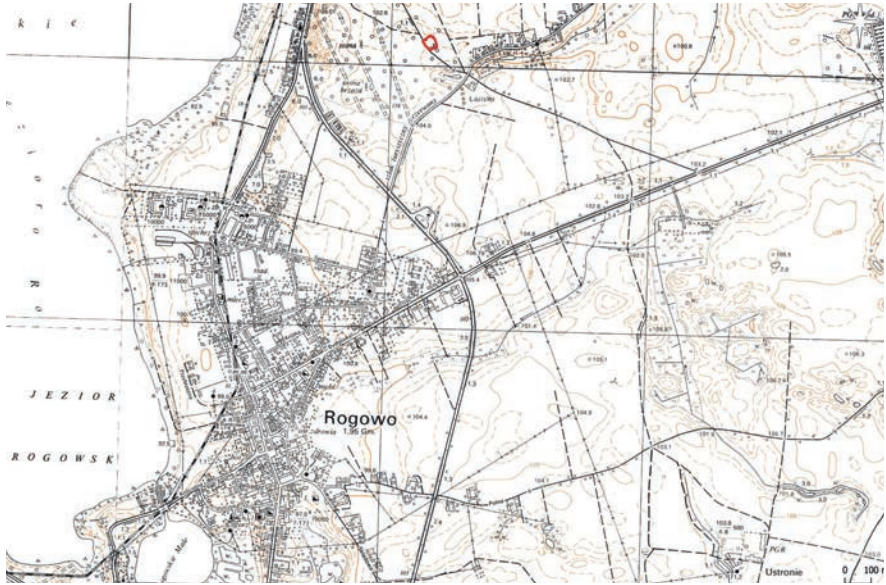


Fig. 2. Rogowo, Żnin commune. Location of the Evangelical cemetery (developed by K. Waszczuk)

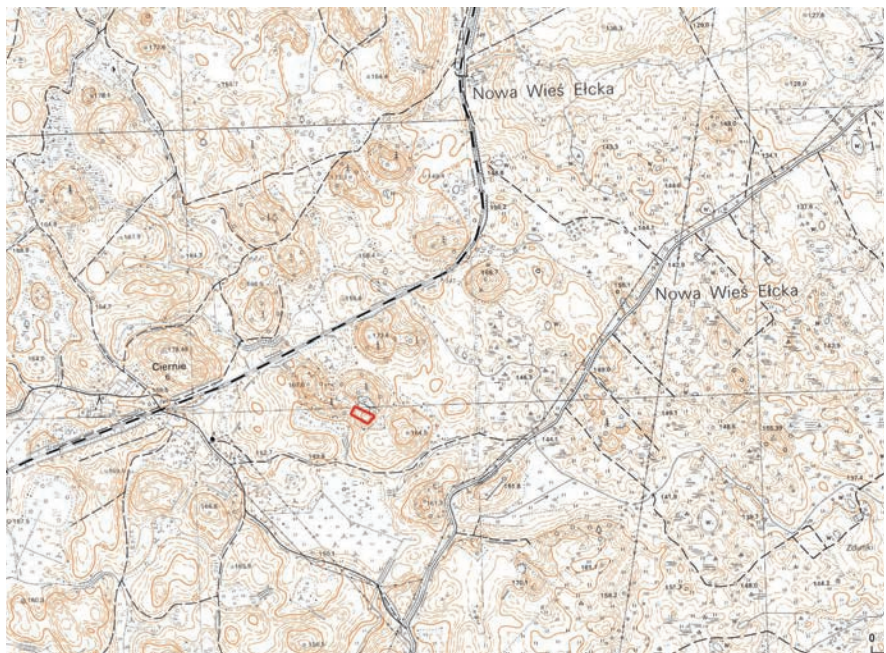


Fig. 3. Ciernie, Elk commune. Location of Evangelical cemetery (developed by K. Waszczuk)

Cultural affiliation

A German-speaking population was buried in both cemeteries. This is indicated by grave goods in the form of psalm books published in that language. In Rogowo-Łaziska, residents of German origin of the Evangelical parish of Rogowo were buried. Evangelicals were listed here from 1831, when the town had 11 Protestants. In 1858, there were 61 of them and in 1886, their number rose to 98 (Księżski 1980, pp. 5–8). In 1921, there were already 715 Germans living here (Zugaj 2013, p. 9), meaning that over the course of 35 years, there was a significant influx of people of this nationality. It is most likely, therefore, that the Evangelicals buried in the cemetery were predominantly settlers sent out to Greater Poland by the Colonisation Commission after 1886, and one can even see them promoting nationalistic ideas, as evidenced by the propaganda harness fasteners found in one of the graves, promoting the idea of German unification.



Fig. 4. Rogowo, Żnin commune. Burial of a postal worker from feature no. 33 (photo by A. Smaruj and R. Nowak)

In addition, two burials contained representatives of uniformed services, namely, a postal worker and a clerk, which also proves German nationality, since in the lands annexed by Prussia, only people of that nationality could hold office (Figs. 4–5).

The population from Ciernie, on the other hand, is of a farming background, settled in Masuria most likely during the casket colonisation of East Prussia, initiated by Frederick William and lasting from 1645 to 1749 (Judzinski 1975, p. 77). The village was first mentioned in 1574 as Czirnen (Kętrzyński 1882, p. 464). Then, the name Cziennen was in use from 1777 to 1818, later replaced by Cziernien. The sound of this name was probably not German enough, as in 1929, it was changed to Dorntal (Lange 2005).

In Ciernie, the issue of nationality is unclear. At the moment, it is impossible to determine whether the village was inhabited by German settlers or Masurians. One of the men buried there was probably a military (an epaulette button, pattern 1915, was found, indicating that the person belonged to the 1st Battalion, 3rd Company of the Prussian Army); however, compulsory conscription applied to all men under Prussian rule, regardless of their origin. German-language inscriptions appeared on both surviving tombstones, and 10 service booklets were also issued in this language. It should be noted that one of them was written in Polish.



Fig. 5. Rogowo, Żnin commune. Burial of a clerk from feature no. 142 (photo by A. Smaruj and R. Nowak)

Characteristics of cemeteries and manifestations of burial rites

Both of the cemeteries in question showed characteristics of small mid-field establishments. They were located on naturally exposed land forms, isolated from the rest of the surroundings. In Rogowo, the cemetery was established in a space not elevated above the surrounding area, but limited on all sides by natural depressions, and probably periodically waterlogged. The necropolis was at a distance of about 1,800 m from the Evangelical church in the Rogowo market square. In Ciernie, on the other hand, the necropolis was founded on a moraine hill, about 700 m from the centre of the village.

The Rogowo-Łaziska cemetery functioned for about 50 years, in the second half of the 19th century, with a possible extension into the early 20th century. About 304 people were buried there at that time. The burials were scattered over the entire available space of the cemetery measuring 40 by 33 m (about 13.2 ares), enclosed with an iron fence. The graves were dug in fairly regular rows and divided by strips of land (probably serving as passageways) about 0.7–1.0 m wide. The only exception was the burial of a six-month-old child (grave no. 116), located right next to the fence, oriented NW–SE, with its head facing NW (Fig. 6).

The cemetery in Ciernie was in use for about 240 years, from the early 18th century until the outbreak of the Second World War. In the area of 76 by 33 m (about 25 ares), as many as 359 people were buried. The arrangement of burial pits was much less regular there. The first and largest concentration of them was located in the southeastern part of the cemetery, on the top of the hill, opposite to the alleged gate. They were mostly oriented along the NW–SE axis, albeit with frequent deviations. It seems that every metre of available space was used here for making another grave. The second, slightly smaller concentration was located beyond the southwestern border of the first concentration. Here, too, the layout of the graves was more regular (Fig. 7).

Some burials were commemorated with tombstones. In Rogowo, 26 such structures were distinguished, which means that they were founded for 8.5% of the deceased, while in Ciernie, 14 tombstones were discovered, i.e., they were provided for only less than 4% of burials. The techniques for making them were quite diverse in Rogowo. Ready-made concrete casts with profiled edges were used, brick frames were built and then plastered, as well as cement screeds in formwork, resting on a stone foundation. In Ciernie, only ready-made concrete castings were employed, with one made of terrazzo. Frames with figural depictions were used the least often. In Rogowo, one was decorated with depictions of angel heads framed by festoons of drapery at the top and palm branches with rose blossoms on the longer edge. This tombstone crowned the burial of a woman aged 20–25 (Fig. 8). In Ciernie, likewise, one of the frames was a bit more elaborate. The shorter edges featured urns framed by Ionic pilasters, while the longer edges had embossed angel heads

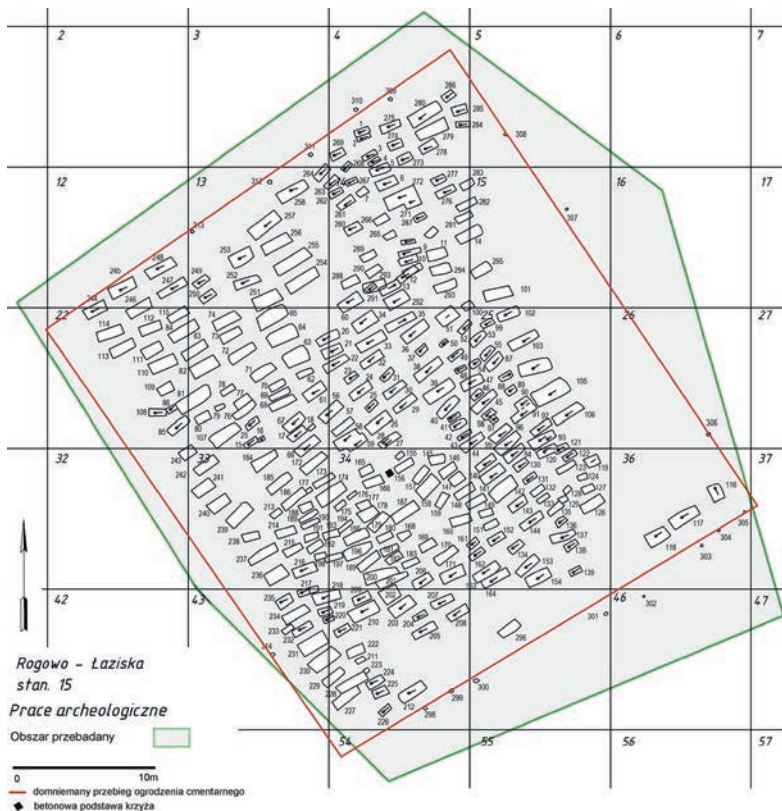


Fig. 6. Rogowo, Żnin commune. Plan of features within Evangelical cemetery (developed by A. Smaruj)

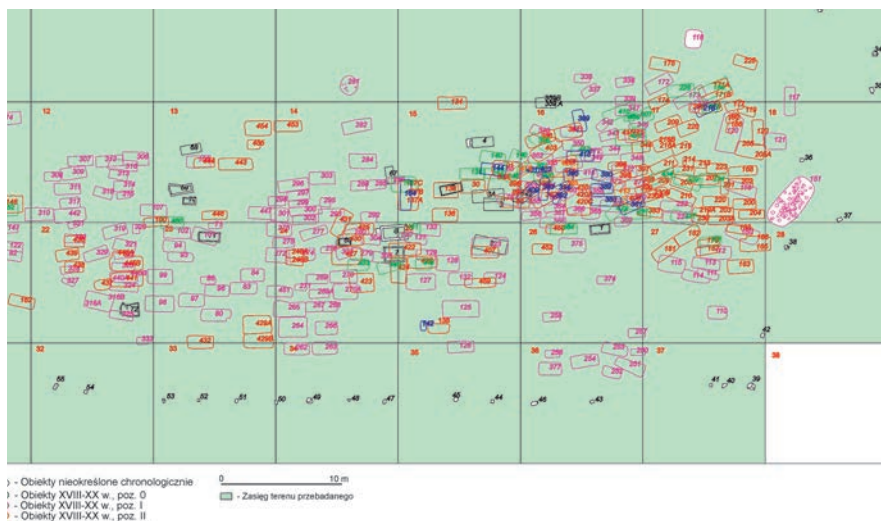


Fig. 7. Ciernie, Elk commune. Plan of features within Evangelical cemetery (developed by A. Smaruj)



Fig. 8. Rogowo, Żnin commune. Decorated grave concrete construction of a woman aged 20–25-years-old (photo by A. Smaruj)



Fig. 9. Ciernie, Elk commune. Decorated grave concrete construction of a six-month-old baby (photo by A. Smaruj)

framed by festoons of drapery with roses. It crowned the burial of a six-month-old child (Fig. 9).

All the deceased were buried in coffins, even small children and premature babies. Only in a single case in Ciernie two children were buried in a single casket. It was of both rectangular and trapezoidal shape, closely matching the height of the deceased. Some of them were also adorned. In Rogowo, coffins with ornaments accounted for about 10% of all caskets, while in Ciernie, it was only 2.5%. More abundant decorative elements were observed in burials from Rogowo. Here, the lids of coffins were decorated with tin openwork plates with cut and embossed ornaments in the form of stylised hearts, lace, crosses, and German-language sentences. Individual coffins were provided with cast-iron legs in the form of lion's feet or wooden spheres. Seven coffins were found to have decorative handles attached, three on each side (Fig. 10). The lids of some of the coffins were tightened with screws, topped with stylised religious imagery, although tassel handles were also present. In Ciernie, decorative handles, cast-iron legs in the form of lion's feet or with floral motifs, and decorative "closers" for the lid were also used; however, they were somewhat less common (Fig. 11). On the other hand, it is possible that some kind of a textile appliqué was scored on the rim, as pins were found in individual cases.

A trait characteristic of both cemeteries was the deposition of personal belongings and coins with the deceased. The latter were particularly numerous and diverse in Ciernie, with 121 pieces distinguished. They represented Polish, German and Russian coinage from the years 1693/1694–1930. Individual numismatic items were first deposited with the dead at the turn of the 18th century; this tradition was briefly revived in the first half of the 1880s, and then continued from the 1820s until the cemetery was no longer in use. Such grave finds include, among others, a single Solid Civitat Elbing coin from 1763, and a deposit of 47 Russian kopecks from 1889–1914 in a boy's grave: 1889–1914. Other coins were issued during various periods of the German rule, the oldest piece being a Solid Prussiae Ducalis issued in 1693–1694 in the Brandenburg Electorate. The largest number came from the Berlin mint, but coins minted in Dresden, Hannover, Munich, Muldenhutzen, and Stuttgart, as well as in the Silesian Province, were also identified.

Much less diverse numismatic items came from Rogowo. A total of 14 coins were found there. Without exception, they were German pfennigs minted usually in Berlin, and only 3 of them in West Germany. Two came from Frankfurt, and one from Hamburg. They were dated back to the years 1858–1900.

The most moving grave goods were gifts to children. In Rogowo, out of 144 children's graves, they occurred in 17 (12% of the total). In 6 burials, 8 coins were found, in addition to a glass milk bottle, a hair comb, 2 rattles, a porcelain doll's head, a porcelain cup, an earring, a metal Catholic cross, and 3 paper souvenirs.

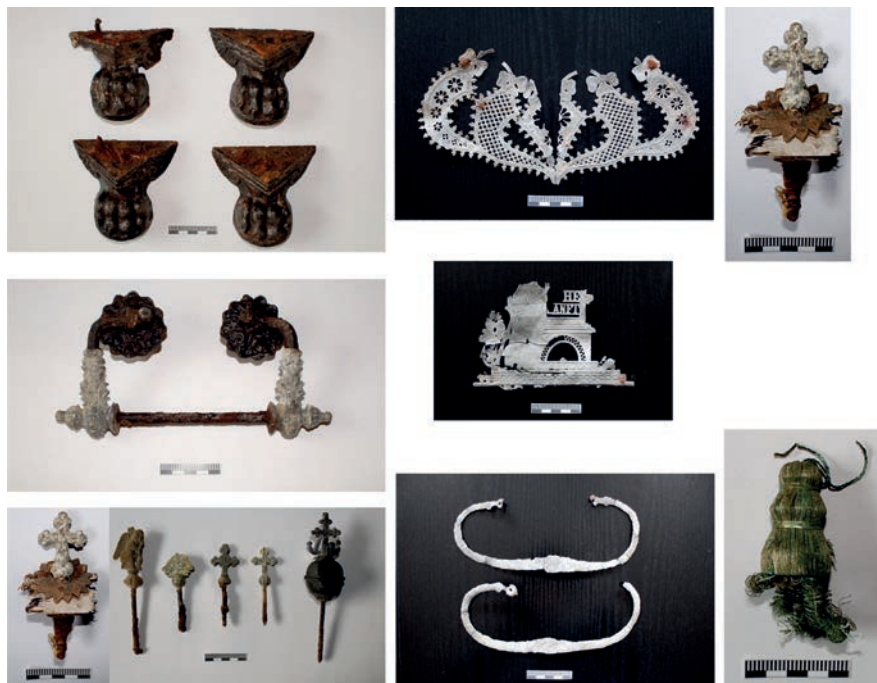


Fig. 10. Rogowo, Żnin commune. Selected examples of coffin decorations (photo by R. Nowak and K. Waszczuk)

In Ciernie, of 166 children's graves, grave goods were found in 43 (26% of burials). The most common were coins (58 pieces in 41 graves), but in this context, we also found a glass game ball, 2 rubber balls, 3 porcelain doll heads, a celluloid doll, 3 brooches, a wire braid, 3 decorative appliques, an ebonite chain, a decorative pin, a glass stopper for a small decanter, 2 styluses, a casket with metal fittings, an earring, and a garland.

In the graves of adult deceased from Rogowo, grave goods were found in 15 of the 516 burials (3%). Among them, there were 4 coins, 3 combs, a wedding ring, eye pads, glasses, a wallet, 3 psalm books, decorative harness fasteners, and a glass cross.

In Ciernie, the presence of gifts was recorded in 52 of the 191 graves of adults (27%). In 42 of them, 59 coins were found in addition to a cup, a band made of phloem, a pocket watch, pince-nez, glasses, 3 combs¹, 10 booklets, a chain-disc,

¹ After combing, the comb was removed. The deceased was dressed, money was placed in his hand as payment for his work, and a songbook was placed on his chest. Young children, instead of money, were given a gilded apple so they could play in paradise (<https://mazury24.eu/aktualnosci/mazurzy-wierzyliz-dusze-zmarlych-ich-odwiedzaja,12454>. Accessed: 16.06.2023).



Fig. 11. Ciernie, Elk commune. Selected examples of coffin decorations (photo by K. Waszczuk)

porcelain pipe elements, 2 mouthpieces of straight pipes, a ring, a knife and chain link, and glass beads.

There was probably also some variety in the clothes that the dead were buried in. Some were probably wearing the so-called “mortal shirts” or simple clothing, but some others were adorned in ceremonial garments. Remnants of more elaborate costumes included buttons and other fasteners, shoe fragments, shreds of leather, and elements of uniforms.

In Rogowo, such elements were found in only 12 child burials (8.3%) and 22 adult burials (4.3%). In three child graves leather shoes were found, in two others beads that were remains of embroidered caps, and 7 revealed buttons. As for adults, shoes were found only in a burial of a 50–60-year-old woman. In addition, buttons occurred in 22 graves, and a 50–60-year-old man was furnished with propaganda harness fasteners depicting the bust of Kaiser Wilhelm I.

In Ciernie, costume elements occurred in 22 of 166 child graves (13%). Tailor’s pins were also included in this category. While they are not clothing elements, they seem to have been used to give a garment a proper arrangement post-mortem, so it can be assumed that they served a decorative function. Buttons were found in 8 graves, while in 4 others pins were found along with a leather belt, a ribbon, beads sewn onto caps; one child aged 2–2.5 years was wearing leather shoes. Costume elements were more common in adult graves. These were present in 41 burials (21.5%). Four men and a woman were outfitted with leather shoes; other finds involved 8 buckles, leather plating elements, various types of leather fastening elements, 80 buttons, 2 caps, a cap visor, 2 rivets, 2 tailor’s pins, a ribbon, 7 embroideries, and a circle attached to a leather strap.

Characteristics of the two populations and their mortality structure

Despite the environmental differences in which the two groups of people lived, and probably also their genetic differences, they did not differ significantly in height and health. In Rogowo, women were from 147 to 167 cm tall (with the average height of 155.2 cm), and in Ciernie, they were from 145 to 171 cm tall (157 cm on average). Rogowo’s men were from 161 to 185 cm tall (with the average height of 167.8 cm), while those buried in Ciernie were from 157 to 176 cm tall (166.4 cm on average).

Among the skeletal conditions confirmed in Rogowo, decay was most often observed on female remains, while spinal defects characterised mainly men. Particularly noteworthy was the skeleton of a 13–14-year-old child, who was found to have inflammatory changes in the bones of the upper limb and a fractured femur. In Ciernie, degenerative lesions were found predominantly in males.

The mortality structure in both locations was also very similar². The most numerous were burials of children who died under the age of 18. In Rogowo, they accounted for 48%, and in Ciernie, for 47%. The highest mortality was recorded for the *infans* I age category (0–7 years), which was 37.5% and 36%, respectively. The number of deaths spiked again in the *adultus* stage, with deaths from this group accounting for about 14.4% and 20%. A slightly smaller number was noted for the *maturus* group, which accounted for 13.5% and 12.4%, and the elderly, which was 12% and 13.2%.

In Rogowo, in all the age groups, women were the dominant sex among the deceased with three times more women than men in the *adultus* group; in the *maturus* category, the numbers were comparable, and in the *senilis* category, there were twice as many women. In Ciernie, on the other hand, four times more women than men died in the *adultus* group, more men than women died among the *maturus*, while in the *senilis* category, the mortality rate among both sexes was equal.

Burials of dissected individuals were discovered in both cemeteries, as evidenced by a severing of the skull vault. In Rogowo this operation was performed on the bodies of women (17–19 years old and 30–35 years old; Figs. 12, 13), while in Ciernie it was performed on the skull of a man aged 40–50 years (Fig. 14). In the latter case, however, the procedure was performed in a very low-precision manner, which may indicate little skill on the part of the person performing it.

Conclusions

Despite many similarities, the comparison of the two necropolises reveals contrast that may indicate the existence of significant cultural differences between the two analysed Evangelical-Augsburg communities.

In the case of the Rogowo cemetery, it can be said with certainty that its location outside the city reflects the sanitary regulations introduced by Frederick II in 1773, stating the necessity of establishing cemeteries *extra muros* (Długozima 2011, p. 65; Klima, Wycichowska, Poppek 2019, p. 82) and, at the same time, the need for a burial space for Germans who colonised the Rogowo area. In Ciernie, a necropolis outside the village boundaries had been established at least 70 years before this regulation was issued. Finds of the oldest coins allow us to assume that it was likely founded at the turn of the 18th century; it cannot be ruled out though that the residents of Ciernie had been buried there previous to that, albeit without the addition of coins.

Both cemetery sites were located in areas isolated from the settlements and the farmland, yet in close proximity to water reservoirs. In such cases, in Protestant

² Results of anthropological analyses by Dr Artur Rewekant.



Fig. 12. Rogowo, Żnin commune. Traces of autopsy of 17–19-year-old female from feature no. 73 (photo by A. Smaruj)



Fig. 13. Rogowo, Żnin commune. Traces of autopsy of 30–35-year-old woman from feature no. 279 (photo by A. Smaruj)



Fig. 14. Ciernie, Elk commune. Traces of autopsy of 40–50-years-old man from feature no. 262 (photo by R. Nowak)

cemeteries, the custom of orienting tombstones towards a water feature was characteristic, expressing the belief that the deceased should be able to look at the landscape they loved in their lifetime (Majdecka-Strzeżek 2016; Majewska 2020, pp. 14, 17). This condition was not fulfilled by either of the two necropolises, as the view of the lake in Rogowo was obstructed by a moraine embankment, and in Ciernie, by a small hillock. In both cemeteries, however, the principle of orienting burials perpendicular to the shoreline of the water reservoirs was met. In Rogowo, Rogowskie Lake was treated as such, while in Ciernie, it was the drainage basin of an unnamed watercourse stretching on the eastern side of the hillock, which was periodically filled with water.

The history of the Rogowo cemetery is linked to the specific community it was established for, and at the same time, to the continuity and the parallel use of this burial site.

In this case, we can speak of respecting the egalitarian nature of the funerary space, as well as maintaining its organisational set-up. In Ciernie, on the other hand, there were two distinct clusters of graves. The first one, which was the most numerous and, at the same time, the least orderly, was located on the top of the hill, opposite to the alleged gate. Apparently, the aim here was to maximise the use of the most prestigious space, even at the expense of digging burials into the existing ones, as well as breaking the rules of orientation. The second cluster was adjacent

to the first on the west side and was characterised by a somewhat more regular spatial arrangement. The remaining burials in Ciernie had the same repetitive orientation. So perhaps we are dealing here with two family zones, with the rest of the cemetery available to people who did not belong to these families – workers, servants, new settlers.

In both cemeteries, the deceased were gifted with personal items, but the cases were more frequent in Ciernie. This situation may indicate that this society was more affluent or had greater possessions. Perhaps, on the one hand, this was due to the self-sufficiency of the homesteaders in terms of food supply, and thus greater purchasing power for non-food items, as well as at least 300 years of ancestral continuity that allowed them to accumulate material goods over many generations. It is also most likely that the relatively short period of German settlement in Rogowo did not allow for the accumulation of this much wealth to be shared with the dead.

The wealthier status of Ciernie residents is indicated also by their garments. More often, adults were buried there with their footwear, leather items of clothing, and in buttoned attire. An additional observation concerned jewellery, which in Ciernie was offered only to children. In contrast, burials of children wearing shoes were more common in Rogowo.

A characteristic common in both burial traditions was providing all the dead with coffins made specifically for them. This rule applied to the youngest children as well as premature babies, who were not buried with their dead mothers, but had individual graves made for them. This is probably the result of the Evangelicals' belief that deceased children are saved first (Kowalski 2014, p. 76); besides, in this religion, from the 17th century onward, unbaptised children were allowed to be buried with a full ceremony (Bunzel 1981, p. 177).

However, some differences were noted in the quality and decoration of burials in the analysed cemeteries. Rogowo's residents paid much more attention to the appearance of graves and coffins. They erected tombstones more often, even if they had to make them "at their own expense". Unlike the Catholic faith, where a tombstone can serve as a pious foundation for a deceased sinner to help him get to paradise, the Protestant faith excludes the existence of purgatory, and the tombstone is merely a commemoration of the life of the deceased and the place where his remains are laid (Kowalski 2014, p. 73). Despite the Protestant rule regarding the modesty of burials, coffins in Rogowo were also more richly decorated. Perhaps there was a professional funeral home in the town, driving demand for funerary accessories. This was manifested not only in the decorative fittings of coffins (legs, handles, closures), but also in the prevalence of tin openwork ornaments on lids and the paper mementos gifted to children. In Ciernie this type of decoration was completely unknown. An additional argument for the functioning of a funeral establishment in Rogowo was also the performance of post-mortem

cosmetic procedures, as evidenced by the findings of eye pads on one of the men. However, given the fact of the stylistic dissimilarity of the elements decorating the coffin and the origin of the coins from Frankfurt, it cannot be ruled out that the corpse was brought here from another part of Germany.

While there is no doubt that colonisers of German nationality of the Protestant faith were buried in Rogowo, the nationality of the deceased in Ciernie is not clearly confirmed. The names of those associated with Ciernie are also not typically German. The tombstones read – Ida Dola and Gustav Nitlas, while the following residents of Ciernie were mentioned on the monument commemorating the soldiers who died in the fighting in 1914–1915, erected in Bajtkowo: Gustav Bandilla, Gustav Drager, Hugo Katoll. According to Wojciech Kętrzyński, since the time of the Teutonic Knights, Eastern Masuria was colonised mainly by people coming from different areas of Poland. It was only after 1711 (and after the plague epidemic) that the development of Polish settlements halted in favour of German ones (Białuński 2019). Thus, there are many indications that the community originally inhabiting Ciernie may have been Masurians of the Evangelical faith. This is indicated by the evidence of the presence of multigenerational family structures and the fact that a Polish-language psalm book was found³.

Regardless of the differences in wealth and ancestry between the two societies, as well as in their ability to access healthcare, which was obligatory in Prussia, child mortality was just as high in both Greater Poland and Eastern Masuria. It was also significantly high among young women, higher even in rural areas than in towns, which may indicate the level of personal hygiene and access to medical assistance. In both cases, it is also reasonable to suspect that a significant proportion of men died on the fronts of Europe, as evidenced by the under-reporting of male graves.

Summary

Analysing the reported study results, some differences in the approach to burial rites between the two population groups are evident, despite the fact that they represented one religion. The deceased buried in the Rogowo cemetery most likely belonged to some of the first generations of German settlers sent from other areas of Germany to the newly formed administrative organism that was the Grand Duchy of Posen, subject to strict regulations of the Colonisation Commission and the authorities it established. This manifests in the schematic organisation of

³ After 1872, German authorities intensively pushed for the elimination of the Masurian language. Edward Szymanski (1895-1966) characterised the Masurians as follows. “They are distinguished by their Polish ancestry and German education, Slavic customs and mores and German traditions, Polish surnames and German names, Polish proverbs and German songs, Slavic religiosity and Evangelical profession. It is a ‘transitional’ personality type, on the way from a Pole to a German”.

the cemetery, standardised burial aesthetics and, at the same time, the typically Protestant modest grave goods offered for the deceased, whose families likely did not have many tangible possessions yet.

The people of Ciernie, on the other hand, represented a typically ancestral society, settled in one place for several hundred years, and at the same time, living on the sidelines of political changes, which allowed them to preserve certain traditions and individual characteristics. Their manifestation was the organisation of the cemetery and funerals based on individual needs and capabilities. As it seems, also the many years of settlement stability allowed the residents of Ciernie to accumulate more items that could be given to the loved ones of the deceased.

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