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PLANTS IN FUNERAL CEREMONIES IN POLAND AND EUROPE NORTH OF THE ALPS (13th-18th CENTURIES)

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2. TRANSFORMATION OF THE FUNERAL CEREMONY IN THE MEDIEVAL AND MODERN PERIODS

In Middle Ages the sequence of Christian funeral rites was similar throughout medieval Western and Central Europe. Regional differences concerned practices not included in the liturgical prescriptions and depended on the status of the deceased (Koslofsky 2000: 22).

Initially, the medieval funeral was characterised by little Church participation. In the early Middle Ages, the role of the clergy was limited to giving absolution before death and at the place where the body was buried. The rest of funeral rites was secular in nature. It derives from pre-Christian traditions of Antiquity and from period of formation of local Christian liturgies in Europe. Until as late as the 5th century, the rituals of a Roman funeral – the straightening of the legs, the drawing of the last breath, the last kiss, were still acceptable in Christian burial ritual (Chrościcki 1974: 29). These early origins had a direct influence on the funeral rites of rulers, knights and clerics in monasteries.

In Western Europe, around perhaps as early as the 11th--12th century according to David Postles, or as Philippe Ariès considered in the 13th century, funeral practices pertaining to a hitherto closed group of clergies became shaped in ritualised form and began to penetrate into the laity. From this time onwards, burial was placed in the hands of professionals and the private stages of a secular funeral were replaced by an ecclesiastical ceremony (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 7). In Middle Ages most of the funeral procedures involved deceased clergy and wealthy lay people, and the poorest were taken directly from the place of death to the cemetery.

Among the rites of passage not regulated by the funeral liturgy are customs with elements found throughout Europe, such as making noise at the time of death, laying the deceased on the floor on straw or ashes, lighting candles near the body, bathing and dressing the corpse, closing the eyelids, folding the hands, keeping vigil by the deceased.

Preparation for the funeral began before the death occurred. According to the model of a good death prevailing in the Middle Ages, it should not happen unexpectedly. It was preceded by warning signs so that the dying person was aware of his or her fate and had a chance to secure both spiritual and material matters. Sudden death was regarded as something exceptional and frightening. In pictorial representations and in written accounts, a person's agony always takes place in a bed, whether struck down by illness or battered by an accident, he or she has the time needed to perform all the ante-mortem activities (Ariès 2011: 118).

A good death was also one that was not faced alone. If dying took place at home, the family would gather at the bedside to recite prayers under the leadership of a priest. At the deathbed books of hours were usually recited. They contained prayers and psalms that were a shortened form of the breviary. Medieval French and Dutch manuscripts of the books of hours are among the most important icono-

graphic sources for understanding the funeral process at that time. The farewell to the dying person could also be attended by outsiders. At the same time, masses for the deceased's soul were beginning to be celebrated in churches.

The priest would arrive at the home of the dying with a solemn procession consisting of lower clergy. In the surviving illustrations from medieval books of hours, containers for communion or relics can be seen in the hands of priests visiting homes. The dying person was given communion in the form of a viaticum (Latin 'provision for the journey') and the last anointing. The priest would also hear a profession of faith from the dying person. This was followed by a confession and the writing of the will by the clergyman. If the dying person had received or purchased a letter of remission of sins from the Pope, it was read out in public. The priest recited the *Commendatio animae*, a prayer for the intercession of the saints in admitting the dying person to Paradise, serving to free the soul. At the time of death, wood was struck or a bell was rung. The priest, with a lit candle, sprinkled the body with holy water (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 22).

A procession of clergymen carrying the chrism, the Holy Sacrament, holy water, the cross, candles and censers, would proceed to the deathbed. The dying person would make a public confession. Often, depending on the individual will, he or she would also opt for corporal mortification which served to express repentance and constituted penance for sins (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 23). The ways of mortification included resting on the floor on straw, in ashes or with the head on a stone. The custom of laying the dying on straw, ash or a board was known in Europe as early as the beginning of Christianity, probably reinforced by the recommendations of the first popes (Deforce *et al.* 2015: 602). Initially adopted in monasteries, it later spread into lay practice.

Elżbieta Dąbrowska lists six elements of the ceremony of the clergy. First, the body was prepared for display in the church. Among these are the closing of the eyelids, followed by *denudatio*, *lavatio* and *vetura* ('exposing', 'washing' and 'dressing' the corpse) with the reading of liturgical texts. The next element is the display of the body in the appropriate church for the deceased, followed by the selection of the burial site, transport, the Eucharistic liturgy and the placing of the body in the tomb (Dąbrowska 1997: 10).

In early Christianity, death was conceived as release from the sinful world to a better life in heaven. The triumphant nature of early medieval funerals changed when the Church began to emphasize the punishment for sins and judgment awaiting after death (Litten 1991: 147).

The adoption of the Doctrine of Purgatory at the Council of Lyon in 1274 had a significant impact on funerary rites (Descoeudres 1995: 76). In the Middle Ages, there was a belief in the constant spiritual and physical presence of the dead in the visible world and the possibility of interacting with the living. The idea of purgatory helped to relieve anxiety and Christianise the magical treatments and superstitions associated with the presence of the dead. It opened up the possibility of changing the fate of the deceased through pious acts performed after their death (Koslofsky 2000: 24). The belief in the Last Judgement only at the resurrection caused people to try to supply the grave with visible tokens testifying to the reception of forgiveness for sins and good deeds during life.

In the late Middle Ages, the belief in a Particular judgement taking place at the deathbed became widespread. Above the dying person there was a battle for the soul between angels and saints on one side, and Satan on the other. The support in the dying, necessary because of the ongoing judgement, remained a custom in the modern period.

Intellectuals of the Renaissance ere condemned the elaborate medieval ritual of dying, including the placing of hope in salvation in extremis (the forgiveness of sins in the face of the danger of death). From then on, all life was to become a preparation for death according to the motto *memento mori*. Unnatural death and death in prolonged suffering were considered evil (Kizik 2001: 181). During prolonged agony, Catholics prayed or read meditations, usually on the death of Christ or Virgin Mary (Rok 1995: 48-49). Assisting at the bedside of the dying person was also important for Protestants, who believed that doubt at a critical moment could contribute to the dying person falling into the lure of Satan. Protestants, however, ultimately rejected the belief in purgatory, the necessity of prayer and sacrifices for the dead (Pawelec 2010: 64).

After death, the process of washing the body began. From this point the last service to the deceased was performed by women. Usually, families hired, for a fee, people to perform funeral services on a regular basis (Litten 1991: 124). However, there are illustrations where the preparation of the corpse is also carried out by men. In an illumination from the *Book of Hours* written in France in the 15th century (*Book of Hours*, c. 1445: M.304 fol. 20r), a group of equally dressed mourners anoints the body with oil scooped up from a tin with an oblong brush.

The bathing of the deceased took place on the floor. The body was laid on a straw mat, or a bed of hay or straw, in a horizontal position. At first the joints of the dead were stretched. The corpse was washed, disinfected with water and vinegar, anointed and perfumed. The Church recommended moderation in the amount of perfume applied. This procedure was modelled on the descriptions of Christ's burial (Chrościcki 1974: 29). If necessary, the deceased was shaved. Sometimes the bowels were also cleansed (Litten 1991: 124).

In the modern period, make-up and hair styling were performed on the dead body. In some cases, a statue or portrait of the deceased was used instead of showing the cadaver. Sometimes the corpse was equipped with fake limbs. Sophie Charlotte, wife of Friedrich Wilhelm I von Mecklenburg-Schwerin who was buried in St. Nicholas Church in Schwerin, was given gloved fake hands (R. Ströbl 2011b: 52). Paint retouching was done on faces (for example Brygida Czapska) or wax masks were applied (for example Polish King Jan III Sobieski) (Chrościcki 1974: 151).

In the modern period, the grooming of the deceased was the responsibility of the family or specialists hired for this activity. In the cities, this was done for a fee by women (Kizik 1998: 84) who usually collaborated with others specialising in funeral services, such as a coffin manufacturer. This was a continuation of medieval tradition, when such services were performed by nuns or Beguines (Koslofsky 2000: 95).

Sponges, bowls, combs, razors and other objects used during hygienic procedures were placed in the grave with the dead. It was believed that these items had become contaminated by contact with the corpse, or the dead could later claim their property. The water from the bath was poured in a secluded place, e.g., away from dwellings, under a specific shrub (often elderberry or danewort). This custom was still known in rural areas of Poland in the 20th century. The clothes of the deceased were given away to be washed. Bathing sponges have been found, among others, in the burials of Sophie Charlotte von Hesse-Kassel, Duchess of Mecklenburg from the crypt in St. Nicholas Church in Schwerin, in the parish church of Berlin-Mitte, in the crypt of the Gehler family in Görlitz, in the tomb of the von Saldern family in Bordesholm and the crypt under St Joseph's Church in Hamburg. A razor was excavated from a tomb located in St Paul's Church in Göttingen. Combs were discovered, e.g., in the crypt of Berlin-Mitte and in crypts located under the churches of St Michael and St Joseph in Hamburg. Bowls, most likely serving a bathing function, have been found in Breunsdorf (Ströbl and Vick 2009: 320-321) and the municipal cemetery in Haale an der Saale (Schafberg 2006: 253).

The usually naked corpse was then sewn into the shroud. The illustrations from medieval manuscripts show seams running along and across the fabric, so that the sewn-up shroud resembles a loose sack. It was also practised to wrap bodies tightly in the textile which was then secured with pins, perhaps also fastened with belts and buckles, or in other ways that have left no legible traces today (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 106). In the British Isles the custom of tying shrouds in knots at the head and at the feet of the deceased became customary. In the Middle Ages, the buried body may also have been laid naked in the ground (Wojcieszak 2012: 126). The original presence of shrouds is usually indicated only by the position of the skeleton – the tight attachment of the hands to the body and the joined lower limbs.

The shroud being placed over the naked body was an expression of humility. It is believed that the use of shrouds was introduced in Christian funerals to clearly distinguish them from pre-Christian customs of lavishly dressing and equipping the dead. Reference was thus made to models known from the Bible, such as the burial of Christ or the description of the mortal remains of Lazarus.

In the early Middle Ages, the face of the deceased remained exposed (Ariès 2011: 175), as was done in Antiquity. At that time, the head was covered before burial

with a separate scarf, called the sudarium. Traces of such headscarves have been discovered in 11th and 12th-century burials in the marketplace of Schleswig (Hägg 1997).

Shrouds in the Middle Ages were mostly made of linen and probably also of wool. However, the remains of woollen fabrics in burials are usually interpreted as the relics of deceased's clothing. As linen is characterised by high moisture absorption, bleached or raw was most suitable for burial ceremonies. Usually, the bed linen in which the person died, was used for the shroud. Less commonly fabrics for shrouds were specially purchased. Bodies were also sewn into animal skins. Exceptionally, the dead were buried wrapped in shrouds made of silk. In these cases, linen cloth was sometimes placed underneath the precious outer fabric to prevent it from staining. The dead were also buried on mats of straw or wrapped in tarred textiles (Diefenbach and Sörries 1994: 37).

Shrouds made of sheets of lead folded around the body were also used, available to the wealthiest in Western Europe. Custom of encasing the corpse in lead coffins survived in England and France until the 17th century. Among the upper classes of society, also fabrics impregnated with wax were used which were applied to the body in several layers (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 109; Litten 1991: 40). The latter two types of shrouds are associated with the embalming procedure which was culminated by the application of an airtight, antimicrobial cover that prevented preparation fluids flowing out of the corpse.

The most elaborate funeral practices involved the most prosperous strata of society. Dismemberment and burial of parts of the body in multiple locations was a rare practice. The dismemberment of corpses may have originated in Carolingian times. In Middle Ages the bodies of monarchs, especially German and French, were treated this way. Burial in several places served to balance dynastic and founding duties of the deceased. The burial of the heart or viscera was treated with the same reverence as the burial of the whole body.

Richard the Lionheart's body was buried in three locations, the internal organs were placed in Châlus, the heart was deposited in the Church of Notre-Dame in Rouen and the rest in the Abbey of Fontevraud. The heart was embalmed, wrapped in linen fabric and enclosed in a lead sarcophagus. Analyses carried out in 2013 revealed the presence of pollen grains of myrtle, daisy, mint, pine, oak, poplar, plantain and ladybell. In addition, significant amounts of lead, tin, traces of copper, mercury and antimony[1], lime, olibanum resin and wood creosote (a product of dry wood distillation) were recorded (Charlier *et al.* 2013).

Embalming became more common from the early 14th century onwards (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 80). The medieval process of embalming is as yet hardly recognised. The earliest surviving description of embalming carried out on Polish soil concerns king Sigismund the Old, who died in 1548. The first step involved cutting open the chest and abdomen and removing the viscera. Sometimes the skull was also opened and the brain extracted. Urns containing viscera were immediately buried (Chrościcki 1974: 49). Leaving the internal organs in the corpse would accelerate its decomposition. The body was then washed in solutions of preservative substances e.g.: water with wine, vinegar, salt, herbal decoctions. The interior was filled with herbs, textiles, horsehair or ash. The body was also rubbed with ointments. Traces of pre-burial dissections are sometimes visible on the bodies (Drążkowska 2014: 64-69).

The custom of burying entrails separately became widespread in the 16th century. In the 17th century, burials of hearts were more common among the aristocracy. A container with the remains of the heart of an unknown person was found in the coffin of Bishop Walenty Wężyk from the crypt beneath Przemyśl Cathedral, in southern Poland. In the church of St Joseph in Rennes, north-west France, the coffin of Louise de Quengo, who died in 1656, was discovered. Along with her in the tomb there was a lead urn containing the remains of the heart of her husband Toussaint Perrien (*Le corps d'une noble dame du XVIIe siècle retrouvé en France*, n.d.).

[1] Tin, lead and antimony come from the container in which the heart was stored. According to historical written sources mercury was used for embalming in the past. Pollen from pine, oak, poplar, plantain and ladybell were considered environmental pollutants. From the products used for embalming, there are traces of myrtle, daisy and mint, whose pollenation occurs long before/after spring (the burial took place around 6. April 1199) (Charlier *et al.* 2013).

During the Middle Ages, the lay dead were rarely dressed for the grave, except for the wealthy. Infants were deposited in the ground in their swaddling clothes which were their only attire at the beginning of their lives. The youngest children were also buried in the robes in which they were administered for baptism, as the cloth still contained the chrism and holy water. Baptismal garments were allowed for children who died up to one month after birth, i.e., until the rite of churching of their mothers in the temple (Oosterwijk 2000: 45).

Clergy, more often than lay people, were buried in clothing. Bishops were given a full pontifical vestment. In addition, attributes in the form of a crozier, a chalice, a paten and a ring, were deposited with them in the tomb. The monks would either retain their religious habit or choose to wear a pious shirt (in Polish 'giezło') or hair shirt. Buckles found in the burials of clergymen perhaps testify to the presence of leather belts and footwear. Guillaume Durand, in his 13th-century description of church liturgy in the West, reported that the footwear on the feet of the dead was a sign of their preparation for the Last Judgement (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 87).

Probably some of the clergy were buried in personal clothing. In the burials of the Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order in Kwidzyn Cathedral, in the north of Poland, remains of robes made of silk have been identified, including a mantle made of multicoloured fragments of nine types of fabric of different textures, cut in the shape of diamonds. Despite the fact that the frescoes in the temple show the deceased in the attire specified by the statutes of the order, featuring a white cloak with a cross, the Grand Masters were buried in their private garments (Grupa and Kozłowski (eds.) 2009).

Monarchs and princes were laid to rest in their coronation dress. Royal insignia were sometimes replaced by copies made from less expensive raw materials. Polish king Kazimierz IV Jagiellon was wrapped in a shroud made of brocade fabric. Copies of the crown, orb and sword made from organic materials were placed in his tomb (Hryszko 2010: 62).

In the Middle Ages, the proper preparation of the corpse for burial played an important role because of the belief in bodily resurrection. In order to visibly mark remorse over sins and confirm that the deceased had been absolved of guilt, specific objects were placed in burials.. Letters, crosses or plaques with an inscription identifying the deceased or with the text of an absolution were placed in the graves. The dead were also provided with objects attesting to their piety, such as related to pilgrimage. Medicines, medical paraphernalia and mobility aids are found in graves which may be evidence of practices of 'healing of the soul' (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 87). In Britain, burials of people with stones, ashes or charcoals and even a St James' shell placed in their mouths have been discovered. This was probably an expression of penance for sins committed in speech (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 79).

In the High Middle Ages, however, there was a noticeable shift away from furnishing of burials. Personal items such as pieces of clothing or jewellery are occasionally found in graves. Tools, writing objects and everyday items are also very rare. Any personal items that were placed in the tomb with the deceased were likely placed before sewing the body inside the shroud. Few examples of burials are known containing pilgrim paraphernalia – badges, bells or walking sticks. Papal bulls are also found in elite graves, evidencing the depositing of correspondence in the graves, most likely letters of pardon or concerning other personal privileges (Paszkiewicz 2018: 716-717). Occasionally rosaries are found (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 93-94). Crosses in secular graves reappear in the 15th-16th centuries (Descoeudres 1995: 78).

The presence of coins in graves has not been explained conclusively. Coins were supposed to serve as payment for entering into the afterlife or money needed in the hereafter. They may also have represented a payment for a mass for the soul which the deceased could symbolically contribute on a continuous basis after their death. A similar concept was behind the creation of tombstones with a portrait of the deceased who thus gained the opportunity to attend services after the end of life. This may have been a form of paying the deceased his or her due part of property. In England and France, during healing-magical acts involving the recitation of invocations to saints, small coins were deposited on the body of the sick person which transferred the power of the prayers-incantations into the material realm. Thus, the coins may be another evi-

dence of healing of the soul (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 100-102). Coins in graves are thought to have been the equivalent of the grave offerings of ancient times. The coins, or the metal from which they were made, may also have represented a magical amulet or protection against the return of the deceased in the form of a wraith (Duma 2015: 129). They also ended up in the grave by chance, e.g., with the victims of epidemics buried in a rush.

After the hygienic procedures were completed, the body was laid out on wooden bier, less often in a coffin or in a bed covered with a mat. After a short vigil with the corpse held in the house, it was taken outside. The body was then brought to the church. During the exportation to the temple, the body was always enclosed in a coffin covered with a cloth (Ariès 2011: 176). Lighted candles and bells were carried in a solemn procession of priests, monks, the poor, children from workhouses and hospitals, schools and sometimes members of the confraternities of death. The procession was closed by a coffin on wooden stretchers. The order of the procession was usually specified in the will. For funeral participation, the poor received payment in the form of an alms, a robe or a candle. The mourning procession's passage was announced by the bell (Ariès 2011: 172).

The coffin on a stretcher was brought into the church and was placed at the entrance to the chancel, head facing west, face east, surrounded by a cross and lit candles (Litten 1991: 150). It remained covered with a cloth throughout the service. After the mass, the coffin was sprinkled with holy water and incensed (Litten 1991: 150). Vigils, services and prayers were held according to the *Officium pro Defunctis*. The following morning, after prayers, the place intended for burial was marked and the priest ordained the ground. A sign of a cross was drawn in the soil which marked the length and width of the grave (Litten 1991: 150). The depth was measured by using a benchmark rod (Duma 2015: 19).

This was followed by a mass, during which the gravedigger would dig a pit. The coffin was turned 180 degrees and carried out of the church. On reaching the burial place, the body was again sprinkled with holy water and incensed (Litten 1991: 150). Before being deposited in the ground, the will of the deceased was read publicly.

In the dug-out pit usually stood two individuals who were handed the body wrapped in a shroud. The corpse may have been placed on a board to make this operation easier (Litten 1991: 124). After deposition of the body in the tomb, the priest would place on it a letter or a metal cross with the absolution of sins inscribed. The body was then incensed and sprinkled with holy water a third time. Ashes from the censers were sometimes poured into the tomb. The priest would then begin to bury the pit, with the first sod of earth forming the shape of a cross. All the steps of the rite were accompanied by appropriate psalms and prayers. During the interment, the procession would return to the temple with chants (Litten 1991: 150). After death, masses were celebrated for the departed. The poor were given gifts (Litten 1991: 151) and fasts were held (Koslofsky 2000: 23) for the intent of the salvation of his or her soul.

In the Middle Ages, simple wooden coffins with a rectangular or trapezoidal base were used. Some of the oldest coffins had a gabled lid with triangular gable end. Their form was similar to reliquaries. Medieval coffins bore fittings, possibly also locks or padlocks, comparable to furniture chests (A. Ströbl 2014: 119-120). From the Middle Ages they were sometimes decorated with paintings. Usually during a funeral, the coffin was covered with a cloth with an embroidered cross (Litten 1991: 118; Diefenbach and Sörries 1994: 39). The interior was filled in a variety of ways. Occasionally, coffin linings of plants, grass and cushions under the heads of the dead are reported.

In the 13th and 14th centuries, the previous position of the deceased in grave, with his arms at the sides, was replaced by locating the forearms at the level of the pelvis, waist or chest. The use of coffins slowly spread, but the dead were often still buried directly in the burial pit without a casket (Wojcieszak 2012: 126). This seems to be connected with the material status of the people being buried – a higher fee was required for coffin burials (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 116). Coffins were also rarely used due to overcrowding in church cemeteries. They slowed down the decomposition of bodies which resulted in blocking the space needed for new burials (Weiß 1994: 19).

In addition to the wooden ones, coffins made of metal (lead) and sarcophagi (tumuli) made of stone were used, in which the body was sometimes deposited directly. More

often, however, the stone *tumba* indicated the burial place in a crypt below the church floor. These two types of corpse containers were rather available to people of high social and material status, buried inside the churches.

In Western Europe, a specific type of grave pits were anthropomorphic ones which repeated the outline of the human figure in the soil. Burial pit structures included stone or brick-built tombs with or without a lid or stone, brick, tile, metal or timber enclosures. There usually was a head support or enclosure of stones, bricks or tiles around the skull. The filling of the bottom was made of gravel, sand, lime, ash, charcoal, planks or plants. It is likely that leather or textiles were also used. Burials on wooden bier or boards are sometimes recorded (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005b: 132--145). Burying the body on a plank was considered a sign of lower social position or, in the case of clergy, mortification (Descoeudres 1995: 72).

In the modern period, wooden coffins of varying shapes were used, with the cross section in the form of a polygon, usually hexagonal. In the 18th century, the most common coffins were trapezoidal in shape, with pitched side walls and high lid (Majorek 2013: 72). The most expensive coffins were upholstered with leather and fabrics, such as silk, wool and linen. The edges were secured with tapes to provide additional sealing. Coffins were veneered or upholstered on the outside and even inside (Drążkowska (red.) 2015: 67).

The wood of the caskets was soaked in resins or tar for sealant and preservation (Drążkowska (red.) 2015: 34). The studs were pinned to form a decoration. They were arranged in Christological symbols or Virgin Mary signs, crosses and inscriptions. Plates made of tin or bronze sheeting containing information about the deceased, including their name, birth and death dates, biographical data, personal sigil, coat of arms, symbols of faith, passing, resurrection or signs of social affiliation, were affixed to the coffins. The poorer families were allowed to rent shrouds and coffin signs which had universal decoration (Kizik 2001: 205).

In the modern period, the painted and sculpted decorations of coffins often consisted of floral motifs. These included flowers (most often roses, forget-me-nots), palm branches, wreaths of laurel (Linnebach 1994: 50), oak branches, ivy, thuja, poppies, grape vines, anemones or fruit and ears of grain (A. Ströbl 2014: 106-109). The coffins were decorated with symbols, such as crosses, putti, crowns, symbols of faith and transience. At the end of the modern period, antique motifs – horns of plenty, obelisks, snakes devouring their own tails are more common (A. Ströbl 2014: 104-105). Rhymed epitaphs (Drążkowska (red.) 2015: 70) and quotations from The Holy Bible were also sometimes placed on coffins. The painted decorations sometimes imitated upholstery textiles or tin plaques (Kizik 1998: 81).

During the lavish funeral ceremonies in Poland, a portrait of the deceased on the metal plate was placed on the coffin. Coffin portraits were hung in the church after the funeral ceremony, as a commemorative. Sometimes the portrait was painted directly on the metal wall of the coffin (Grupa 2005: 32-33). Coffins with a hole in the lid cut at the height of the deceased's head were among those rarely used (Drążkowska (red.) 2015: 65). Funeral regulations in many modern cities mandate that the coffin should be covered with a lid and shroud during the ceremony (Kizik 2001: 196). Open coffins, however, were displayed in public places.

Parishes stored the communal coffins which were rented for a fee, used only for transport of the body to the cemetery. As coffins became more accessible to the lower classes in the modern period, the need among the elite to emphasise material disparities intensified. The 16th-17th centuries brought a significant development in the decoration and forms of coffins designed for the wealthiest. In the West, the communal coffins went out of use in the 18th century, with the development of a mass production of funeral accessories (Litten 1991: 86).

The bottoms of the coffins were in many cases lined with material of organic origin: herbs, hay/straw, moss, leaves, needles, twigs, wood shavings, sawdust, feathers (Kizik 1998: 91). The lining was hidden under fabric or left uncovered. In the modern period full mattresses with organic filling were also used (Drążkowska 2005a: 17). Sometimes, the colour of the fabric cover of the bier or wood stretcher was strictly defined according to the age and sex of the deceased. White textiles were to be used at the funerals of maidens and bachelors (Litten 1991: 144).

Besides the standard types of coffins in the form of a wooden casket, other variants of body containers were employed. Coffins in the form of anthropomorphic lead cans are characteristic of England, France and the Netherlands. They were used to enclose embalmed bodies, ensuring that the corpse remained permanently immersed in a preservative liquid. Tree trunk coffins, the lid and chest of which were hollowed out of large wooden logs, were used until as late as the 17th century. Another type is the so-called epidemic coffin which was equipped with a movable bottom or a side wall, by lifting of which the corpse was deposited contactless in the grave (Diefenbach and Sörries 1994: 40).

Coffins in German lands became widespread earliest in the north and west which may be linked to the Reformation. If a community member could not afford a coffin burial, the funeral costs and the purchase of the coffin could be incurred by the community (Diefenbach and Sörries 1994: 39). Coffins were required in the case of crypt burials for hygienic and practical reasons. The spread of coffin burials in the 17th century was certainly related to the wider availability of crypts and burial spaces in churches for lay people (Diefenbach and Sörries 1994: 39).

In England, the Reformation led to the end of the confraternities of death. The communal coffins passed into the possession of the parishes and continued to be used by them in a similar way. For a poor person's funeral, a shroud was usually purchased rather than a chest. In England, the spread of coffin burials came in the mid-17th century, in connection with emergence of funeral companies and an expanding market of casket makers. However, coffins for the deceased from all social and economic groups only became available from the 19th century onwards (Litten 1991: 118).

In the 17th century, the production of cheaper coffins from soft coniferous woods began. The more expensive oak wood was preferred among the more privileged social strata (Linnebach 1994: 47). Hardwoods better met the requirements necessary for burying the dead under churches and chapels. Of other types of hardwood used for coffins, elm, walnut and beech can be listed (Litten 1991: 90). Simple wooden coffins used by the elite were considered an expression of asceticism (Linnebach 1994: 48).

In the 17th century, sarcophagi, in which a wooden coffin was placed, came into use. They may have been made of stone or metal and ornamented with painting decoration (Chrościcki 1974: 50). One sarcophagus may have served during many ceremonies.

The coffins in which the deceased were deposited in crypts were often doubled or even tripled, made of different materials (Litten 1991: 100). In the case of wealthy people, the use of a coffin and outer sarcophagus served yet another function. The metal sarcophagus could be displayed on the parade bed after the inner, more modest coffin with the body, had already been buried. The wooden casket with the body was placed in the sarcophagus only after the ceremony had been completed (Linnebach 1994: 50). The transport of the sarcophagus with coffin containing body inside to the crypt could be too difficult.

The production of caskets was carried out by common carpenters, but for the wealthiest coffins were also made by the most renowned master cabinetmakers (Litten 1991: 99). In the 19th century, mass production of coffins began (Diefenbach and Sörries 1994: 40).

Shroud burials were practised in England until the third quarter of the 17th century (Litten 1991: 57). 17th-century shrouds resembled a robe. Some of them were provided with sleeves, and the face of the deceased was left exposed. The head was covered with a hood or other head covering. Around 1700, shrouds were replaced by a shirt open on the back, with ties at the neck and at the ends of the sleeves (Litten 1991: 79). The uncovering of larger parts of the body forced a transformation in the ways in which the corpse was positioned and also led to a greater emphasis on body aesthetics and decoration. In early modern Poland, corpses were wrapped in white shrouds (Kizik 2001: 194) or mortal shirts (Polish 'giezło', 'czecheł'). Sometimes a shroud was placed over the body in grave clothes (Grupa 2005: 30).

In the 16th-17th centuries in Europe north of the Alps, it was more common to dress the deceased for burial in garments which were made of different types of fabric. In modern graves dress accessories, fragments of fabric, leather, and metal parts of the dress are found, such as buttons, hooks, buckles, clasps or belt fittings. Local legal regulations in towns provided penalties for exaggerated, sumptuous funeral attire, but wealthy families included fines in the cost of the funeral.

Anna Drążkowska divided burial garments into those worn by the deceased during life, those sewn specifically for the funeral and mortuary clothes. Clothing worn during life usually corresponds to the current fashion of the period in which the burial took place. In the lands of Poland, representatives of the elite for coffins chose clothing according to the so-called 'Western fashion' or the patriotic attire of the nobility. Clothes worn during life are usually more carefully made than those prepared only for the coffin. They also bear signs of use, such as abrasions and stains at the elbows and hems.

Sepulchral garments were often only shaped on the body and fastened with pins. Significant numbers of pins are found in early modern cemeteries (Sawicki 2015: 72). Grave clothes were sometimes made from a fabric similar to or the very same textile used for the coffin upholstery or pillow.

The mortuary shirt was a simple linen robe tied at the neck. The grave robe was completed with a headdress – a cap for men and a bonnet for women. Children were always buried with a head covering. Footwear and its elements are often found in early modern burials (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska and Górzyńska 2010: 45).

Sometimes the deceased were buried with clothing ornaments and jewellery. Wreaths and grave crowns are found in the graves of young people. Bodies were decorated with flowers, and bouquets of fresh twigs along with artificial flowers, before the ceremonial presentation. Lutherans were equipped with a prayer or hymn book, Catholics with devotional items such as a rosary, cross, medal, scapular (Grupa 2005: 32), gorget or reliquary. Figurines of saints and pilgrim paraphernalia are found in graves (Descoeudres 1995: 79). In the modern period, coins would be placed in pockets, mouths, hands or placed on eyelids of the dead (Stankiewicz 2015: 14).

Protestant burials contain objects associated with the symbolism of love and fidelity, symbols of the good housewife in the form of belts with keys attached, knives, bells and goldware (Wachowski 2015: 233-238).

The clergy in the early modern period were buried in attire characteristic of their state and function. In the Holy Trinity Church in Strzelno, nuns were laid to rest in habits and veils (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska 2006: 135).

In early modern graves, parts of clothing and personal items such as pipes, spectacles, tools and armament can be found (Sawicki 2015: 60-77). Urban cemeteries contain both richly furnished burials and modest ones, with almost no equipment. Unusual items found in coffins include apothecary vessels and glassware, natural and artificial eggs, brooms and stools. Apothecary vessels containing remains of medicines were found in graves in Thaldorf, Breunsdorf, Halle, Geiseltal and Hassleben. A poison bottle dating to the mid-17th century was discovered in Schwerzau (Schafberg 2006: 254).

A peculiar German custom involved lacing the bodies with ribbons. Because the procedure was applied to deceased children and young women, its protective significance against prematurely dead children and postpartum women is assumed (Linnebach 1994: 60). Women, who died during pregnancy or childbirth, were also equipped for the grave with scissors used to cut off the umbilical cord (Wachowski 2015: 234).

In Hanseatic towns, the house of a deceased person was marked by the hanging of a linen cloth or shroud. This custom originated with an ordinance by the Grand Master of Teutonic Order, Winrich von Kniprode, in the 14th century (Kizik 2001: 190-191). In the modern period, the corpse was displayed on a special bed in the hallway of a tenement, decorated with fabrics and candles, with the furniture covered with washable black paint (Kizik 2001: 193). The houses were decorated by people hired for a fee. In the case of people who died of infectious diseases, a white St Andrew's cross was placed on the facade of the house (Grupa 2005: 30).

Depending on local regulations, the burghers were obliged to bury the deceased between three and five days after death. The burial date was postponed if it occurred on a holiday, to the next working day (Kizik 1998: 71). Typically, efforts were made to postpone the funeral. Time restrictions did not apply to the nobility, representatives of the city patriciate, military officers, so they could show off with lavish, elaborately prepared funerals. After the death of prominent personalities, people of wealth or rulers, the waiting time was longer if the visitors invited to the funeral had travelled from far away or the corpse had to be transported to another location. In exceptional cases, funerals were even postponed for years.

Fig. 1. Albert Glöckner, *Coffin portrait of Wilhelm III. von Sachsen-Altenburg who died on the 14th of April 1672*, Zeitz, Museum Castle Moritzburg

The bodies of aristocrats and kings were displayed in decorated chambers or in the palace chapel. In the residence, the corpse was presented on a parade bed (bed of State). During royal funerals, a chapel with a temporary altar was set up in the chamber of the castle, at which the bishops celebrated mass (Rożek 2008: 35). According to the ritual of the French kings from the 15th century onwards, the body was displayed in the funeral chamber, while an empty coffin with the image of the deceased was exhibited in the parade room. After the body was brought into the church, the coffin, urn or portrait was placed on a several-stepped catafalque with a baldachin. Catafalques were erected from around the 12th century. The elaborate architectural form of the catafalque in the modern period is referred to as *castrum doloris* ('castle of sorrows'). *Castrum doloris* may have been decorated with allegorical sculptures, pictorial representations, emblems, coats of arms and symbols. Mass was celebrated at the catafalque every day until the funeral.

The funeral proceedings for bishops of the Latin rite are defined in the *Ceremoniale Episcoporum*. The bishop's body, with a cross in his folded hands rested on a private bed, on a table or carpet, on a mattress filled with straw or wool and covered with black cloth. Torches or candlesticks and chairs were placed around the bishop's body for the people keeping vigil at his side (Drążkowska 2014: 91).

Royal and noble funerals were held particularly lavishly in the 17th century. The celebration of a nobleman's funeral could last several days. During royal funerals in Kraków, the former capital of Poland, there were processions that passed around all the churches in the city. Temporary altars were erected, at which thousands of masses were held. During the ceremonies, a figure on horseback would appear playing the role of the deceased, weapons and symbols of power were broken, and triumphal gates were constructed. The ceremonies were followed by a feast with merry music and fireworks. In between various games, hunts and plays were organised (Chrościcki 1974: 50-54).

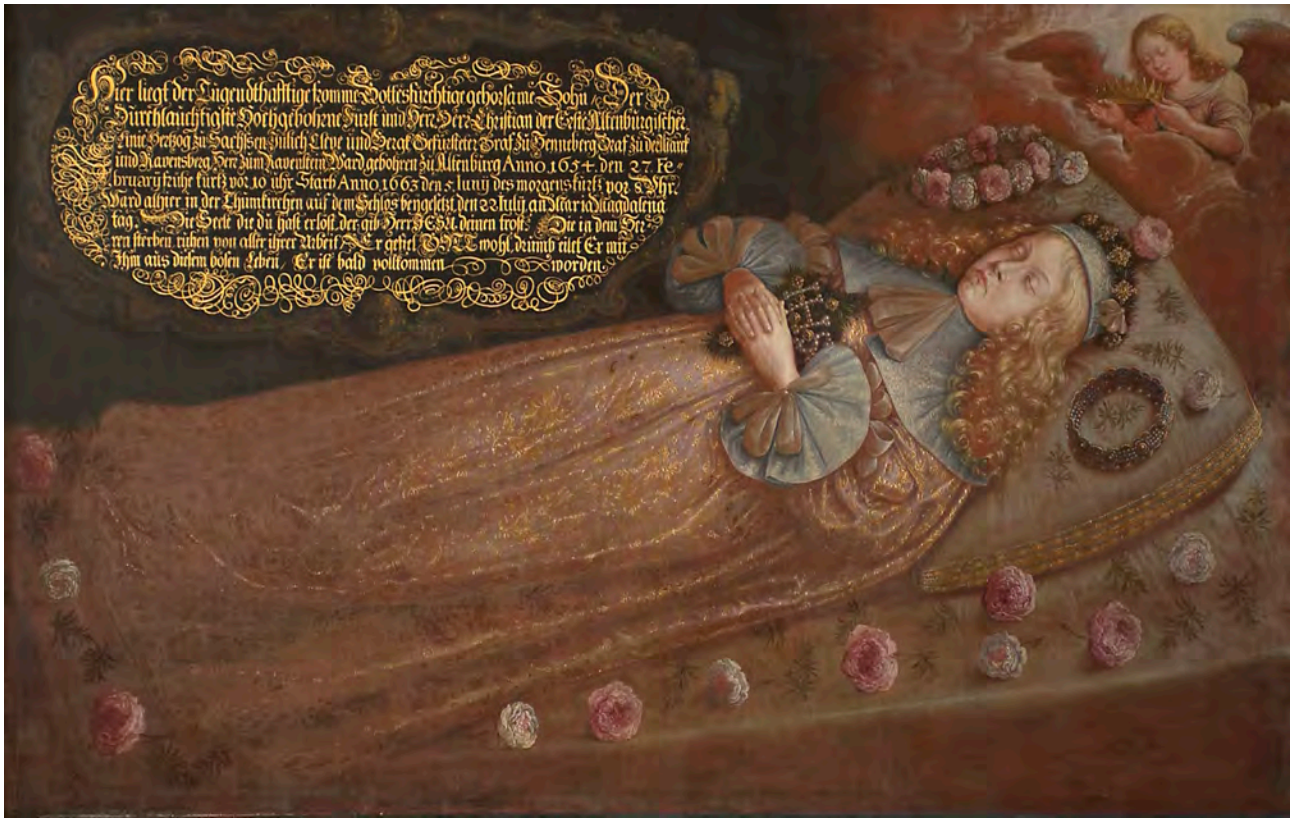

Fig. 2. *Posthumous portrait of Prince Christian von Sachsen-Altenburg*, 1663, Residenzschloss Altenburg, crypt in the castle church

Fig. 3. *Christian von Sachsen-Altenburg – portrait in funeral oration*, 1663, Residenzschloss Altenburg, currently: Darmstadt, Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek

The transport of the corpse to the burial site depended on the distance between the place of death and the cemetery. In the Middle Ages, corpses were transported to church cemeteries situated close to houses. Later on, the establishment of burial sites outside of urban boundaries necessitated the use of special coffin carrying equipment and wheeled vehicles (Litten 1991: 120).

In the Middle Ages a burial confraternity was active at almost every parish, taking care of the transport and organisation of the procession. In towns, it was obligatory that guild members or delegations from the workshops attended the funerals of guild masters and their family members, journeymen and apprentices. People not belonging to the guild could have a guild funeral for a fee (Kizik 2001: 229).

As soon as the washing of the deceased began, a messenger with invitations to the ceremony was sent (Kizik 2001: 227-228). The messengers invited people to attend the funeral orally or handed out written invitations. The printed invitations were decorated with engravings and provided with literary texts. In Pomeranian (southern Baltic coast

area) villages until the 19th century, people were invited to attend a funeral procession or wake by hitting their gates with sticks (Bonowska 2004: 49-50).

Guild members would gather in front of the deceased's house in anticipation of the priest. Just before setting off, they placed the body in a communal coffin which was later transported to the church (Litten 1991: 124). The parish coffin was usually permanently fitted with pegs to make it easier to carry, in other cases it was placed on a stretcher. The coffin was carried at waist height, less often supported on the shoulders (Litten 1991: 124).

At the head of the procession stepped the clergyman with the cross, followed by the acolytes, an official from the parish or sacristan, the priests, just behind them the coffin, then the guild members in mourning clothes with staffs in their hands. The procession was closed by the family of the deceased and other guests (Litten 1991: 148-150).

In the modern period, bier was introduced into use which enabled transport of the body on it without a coffin (Litten 1991: 127).In a painting kept at the St Janshospitaal Museum in Bruges, a body on a bier is wrapped in straw only (Deforce *et al.* 2015: 602). The corpse on the bier may have been carried by two or four people (Litten 1991: 127). After the dissolution of funeral confraternities, the duty of carrying the corpse fell to the family or servants of the deceased, until the emergence of professional funeral homes in the 17th century (Litten 1991: 128-129).

The persons carrying the body were given a sprig of rosemary which was thrown into the grave at the end (Litten 1991: 129). It could also have been a small bouquet of flowers (Litten 1991: 159) or a fruit. Funeral attendees might be served alcohol before departing (Litten 1991: 144). Small children's coffins were carried without the use of bier or stretchers on the shoulders or head. Coffins of the adults were also carried tied on the back and could be transported by four people on their shoulders. The coffins of the poorer were carried until the 19th century, while the wealthier were sometimes transported by vehicles (Litten 1991: 134).

After the Reformation, almost all necessary pre-burial arrangements were handled by the family, sometimes even including the digging the grave pit (Jonsson 2009: 179). By the end of the 19th century, funeral homes had chapels available where the body was deposited before burial (Litten 1991: 167). The custom of covering the coffin with garlands appeared around 1860 (Litten 1991: 170).

In Germany, at the beginning of the Reformation, any funeral ceremonies were abandoned. Burials took place without processions, the participation of priests and singing (Koslofsky 2000: 92). Martin Luther, however, saw the need for a ceremonial funeral. The ceremonies were not intended, as before, to help the deceased enter paradise, but instead fulfilled important social functions. The focus was on highlighting the biography and achievements of the deceased, bringing comfort to the mourners and the weak in faith, helping in contemplation of the resurrection mystery (Koslofsky 2000: 93). The Protestant funeral reflected above all the deceased's position in the community (Koslofsky 2000: 100)

The Lutherans announced the death by ringing the bells. A second time the bells were rung as a sign that the preparations for the ceremony had been completed, although in some towns this custom was abandoned, considering it as being associated with Roman Catholic funerals (Koslofsky 2000: 96). Before the procession started, the body was displayed with the face uncovered and individual farewells took place. After this brief presentation, the coffin was closed (Litten 1991: 144). The funeral regulations in Protestant cities also attempted to suppress the night vigil by the deceased, as during this rite the Roman Catholics held an intercessory prayer for the soul (Koslofsky 2000: 95).

Protestant funerals were attended by pupils under the supervision of a teacher who joined the procession with singing. The number of bells that were rung, priests, pupils and guests attending, depended on the status of the deceased. The order in which the mourners were expected to follow the coffin varied according to their age, social rank and gender(Kizik 2001: 230). The mourners should be lined up in pairs. The number of people taking part in the procession was usually determined by the local law regulations. If the mourners were few in number, the poor were invited (Kizik 2001: 232). The procession was led by a so-called marshal with a staff. Only men were allowed to carry the body. The procession was usually closed by women, but in Bremen and Hamburg, for example, they were forbidden to take part in the funerals (Kizik 2001: 234).

The funeral sermon became part of the Lutheran tra-

dition in the late 16th century. Sermon texts contained moral and doctrinal instructions, a praise of the deceased's life, his glorious deeds and the origin story of his family (Koslofsky 2000: 110). The sermons were sometimes published in print.

The Lutheran ceremony should include the ringing of bells, a procession, singing and burial in the cemetery (Koslofsky 2000: 94-95). In England during the Reformation, a new liturgy came into use (Litten 1991: 151-153). Modesty was required, therefore the procession took place without priests or bells and consisted of mourners dressed in simple black robes (Litten 1991: 159). The priest met the procession at the church or cemetery gate, rather than at the home of the dying. Psalms 39 and 90 and the *Letter to the Corinthians* were read in the church, then the body was taken to the burial place. There, prayers were recited over the grave (Litten 1991: 161).

In funeral regulations in urban areas, the hour of burial was strictly defined. Usually, funerals were held in the morning, so that students from schools would have a chance to attend the ceremony. In the second half of the 17th century, the nobility began to insist on night funerals, previously reserved for the dishonourable. The specific funeral schedule of the cities made it impossible to organise a longer ceremony in the daytime. Secular funeral orations and poetic works were an important element of night funerals, the presentation of which was not possible during the usual funerals due to time constraints (Koslofsky 2000: 133; Grupa 2005: 33). In case of night funerals, clergy participation was limited to a minimum (Koslofsky 2000: 133). The religious ceremony stages were replaced by singing and secular orations (Koslofsky 2000: 137). The night funeral provided an opportunity to display extravagance and heighten the drama of the event.

The raising popularity of night funerals and the organisation of lavish ceremonies coincides with a time when material differences between representatives of various classes began to blur. The elite's desire to distinguish themselves led to the development of increasingly unusual funerals that was full of contrasts and surprising concepts in accordance with a Baroque aesthetic. The daytime burial was an event intended for the entire religious community, while the night time allowed to enjoy the luxury of privacy. This trend included representatives of all states desiring ennoblement. Around 1700, night funerals began to be organised also by the burghers (Koslofsky 2000: 141).

The denial of Christian burial became a tool for disciplining stubborn sinners. The dishonourable funeral took place in silence, outside the cemetery, without priests or mourners. The pauper's funeral was also an embarrassing event, with the cost being borne by the community (Koslofsky 2000: 102).

Cemeteries were initially located in towns and villages usually next to parish churches, chapels and also within monasteries (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska and Górzyńska 2010: 39). The first Christians wanted to be buried near the relics and graves of saints, hence the establishment of cemeteries around places of worship (Koslofsky 2000: 40).

The cemetery area was separated by a wall, fence or ditch (Duma 2015: 17). The enclosure not only protected the graves from destruction, but thereby established an area within which the right of asylum was valid. It also served to separate the dead who, according to medieval beliefs, remained spiritually and physically present in the community. From the 15th century onwards, cemetery gates were fitted with bars to prevent animal intrusion (Steeger 2003: 18).

Cemeteries were areas of greenery, with free-roaming paths and crosses that did not, though, indicate graves. In the early Middle Ages, fruit trees were planted in cemeteries. The way of marking a burial above ground is unknown. Likely, the graves were most often not marked permanently (Duma 2015: 23). It is possible that a small mound was raised over the grave (Descoeudres 1995: 76). In the medieval depictions of cemeteries, wooden crosses are sometimes visible. They may also have been made of stone. Over time large slabs of stone began to be placed on graves for their protection from animals (Duma 2015: 17).

As construction free and unplanted green areas located in city centres, cemeteries became places for recreation, business, fairs and courts. Cemeteries within the churches were characterised by a hierarchical arrangement. The most favourable burial place outside the church was the external area around the chancel wall. The highest concentration of graves is usually recorded by its eastern wall. The part of the cemetery north of the temple was used

for burials at the very latest (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska and Górzyńska 2010: 44). The area near the western portal as the place most distant from the altar was also intended for less prestigious graves (Descoeudres 1995: 73).

The layout of the burials followed the arrangement of the church, and is referred to as row-like (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska 2006: 136). Bodies were laid to the ground on their backs, with the arms placed along the body or crossed at the chest or pelvic level, the head usually facing west, with the face turned towards the east. This allowed the deceased to participate in the religious services by looking at the altar. There are also graves in which the dead were placed in unusual positions.

In cemeteries, distinct areas called *locus separatum* were created for people excluded from the community (Duma 2015: 23). These were to be marked in space (Stankiewicz 2015: 14), sometimes even fenced off. In most cemeteries, there was traditionally a place where dishonourable or strangers whose burial could not be taken care of by the family, were laid to rest. Pits for bones collected during the cleaning of old graves were also located there (Duma 2015: 24). These may have been situated in the far end of the cemetery, close to the wall (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska 2006: 143). The people excluded from the community could also find their final resting place in the monastery cloisters (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska and Górzyńska 2010: 51).

Until the beginning of the 16th century, the burial of unbaptised children in consecrated ground was not permitted in Germany (Duma 2015: 17). When it became possible, they were buried on the outskirts of cemeteries during silent ceremonies (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska 2006: 143). There was also a secluded burial space for women who died during pregnancy, childbirth or postpartum (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska and Górzyńska 2010: 45). In Wrocław, the city council in 1528 issued an order to avoid burying women, who died postpartum, near frequented cemetery alleys (Stankiewicz 2015: 14).

Overcrowding of church cemeteries resulted in the destruction of older graves, while digging the new ones. In the Middle Ages, mortuaries began to be erected where bones from dug-up burials were deposited (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska and Górzyńska 2010: 46; Duma 2015: 19-20). The remains exhumed during cemetery clearance were also deposited there. The excavated bones were sometimes buried in common pits or placed in new graves, e.g., on the lid of a coffin (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska and Górzyńska 2010: 49). Based on medieval artistic depictions, bones were also stored in the attics of churches and in the arcades of the walls surrounding cemeteries.

The tombs of clergy and rulers in the Middle Ages were situated inside the churches. From the late Middle Ages, church burials of the laity who could afford it, such as church benefactors, knights, burghers, craftsmen and merchants, became more common (Majorek 2013: 71). When individual craftsmen would not be able to pay for a church burial, the cost of such could be paid by the guild (Steeger 2003: 20). From the late Middle Ages onwards, a simple earthen grave could be regarded as a sign of an inferior position in the community (Descoeudres 1995: 73).

The most prestigious burial location within the church walls was the chancel. Not only the proximity of the altar, but also the possibility of constant remembrance of the deceased by the priests celebrating services, induced people to seek burial in this location. If burial stone plates were placed in the ambulatory, the dead could also receive prayers from pilgrims. Slightly cheaper was the space in the aisle which was also passed by pilgrims and worshippers entering the church (Litten 1991: 200-201). In the modern period, it was still believed that the location of the tomb near the altar allowed the deceased to pray and take part in services after death (Duma 2015: 22).

The oldest vaults of monarchs, high-ranking clergy, founders and benefactors were located in the western part of the churches (Sulkowska-Tuszyńska 2006: 136). Crypts below the floor level of the churches and burial chapels next to the temples were being built. In Germany, large, free-standing crypts were being erected in cemeteries in the 16th-17th centuries. From the 18th century, municipal crypts began to be organised (Ströbl and Vick 2011, 97).

The creation of private crypts is linked to the Reformation. After the dissolution of the monasteries, there were no longer any churches in which burial was considered prestigious or more promising for salvation. Consequently, the nobility began to choose parish churches as their burial sites (Litten 1991: 207). Usually, family crypts were located under the naves or private chapels. Crypts were also the

burial place of the middle class (Litten 1991: 212). The walled rooms were finished using a variety of materials. Some had windows, ventilation or an opening in the floor for run-off products of decomposition. In crypts, coffins were stacked on top of each other, or placed in rows on specially built shelves or in niches (Litten 1991: 210).

Since the Middle Ages, tombstones of wealthy individuals were placed in churches. Initially these were stone monuments with a representation of a reclining figure. From the 16th century, the Italian type of tombstones with a semi-recumbent figure, became popular in Poland. The 17th century is characterised by the use of many compositional solutions. The dead were usually shown as praying, blessing or asleep (Karpowicz 1988: 458-459). The stylistic development of tombstones was influenced by the transformation of the funeral ceremony. The appearance of elite gravestone monuments sometimes copied the design of the *castrum doloris* (Karpowicz 1988: 460). The 18th century in sepulchral art is associated with a rejection of a convention in favour of surprising concepts.

The sepulchral plates inside churches were not necessarily linked to the place where the body was buried. They were located in the floor, and over time they began to be mounted on the walls. Epitaphs commemorating the deceased and post-mortem portraits were hung in the churches. Wreaths, coffin portraits and mourning flags with a painted image of the deceased, also served a commemorative function after the ceremony (Stankiewicz 2015: 41). Wreaths were displayed on walls and emporiums in special boxes, on supports or decorative cushions.

At the end of the 15th century, new burial sites outside the city walls began to be established or existing ones were enlarged. Until then, mass graves were set up outside the walls on an ad hoc basis, e.g., for victims of epidemics. Bodies of people excluded from the community – strangers, suicides, convicts, were usually deposited there. Burials outside the walls did not involve payment, so cemeteries located outside the cities soon began being identified as burial places for the poor (Duma 2015: 21).

Due to population growth towards the end of the Middle Ages, cemeteries next to churches in towns began to lack space for new burials. Due to the increasingly elaborate forms of funeral processions, it became more convenient to hold ceremonies outside the city walls. Hygienic issues were also raised. Overcrowded cemeteries were considered a potential source of epidemics. The clergy were against the change, fearing a reduction in revenue. Also opposed were parishioners who were attached to the places where their family members had been buried for centuries (Koslofsky 2000: 43).

The practice of establishing cemeteries outside the walls was earliest to appear in towns where Protestants predominated. Breaking the monopoly of the Church was one of the aims of the religious reformers. Martin Luther advocated the establishment of necropolises outside city walls. For Luther, too, the primary motivation was their harmful effects on health.

In 1527, Martin Luther published the text *Ob man vor dem Sterben fliehen solle*. There, he recommended burials outside the city for economic reasons and to emphasise one's piety and integrity. He believed that the burial place should be quiet and encourage reflection on death, the Last Judgement and the Resurrection (Koslofsky 2000: 46-47).

In 1772, by decrees of Emperor Joseph II., church cemeteries in the cities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were closed (Diefenbach and Sörries 1994: 42). The year 1776 marked the closure of all church cemeteries in Prussia, by edict of Emperor Friedrich III. Wilhelm. The process of closing old and creating new burial grounds on the outskirts of living areas was a long-term one. In England, the emergence of similar prohibitions lasted from 1850-1862 (Litten 1991: 134).