

The formation of Silesia (to 1163). Factors of regional integration

Abstract:

Silesia took shape as a distinct region along with the development of state and church structures under Piast rule. The formation of these structures led to the dissolution of tribal relations. The central indicator of regional identity, the name belonging to the cultural legacy of *barbaricum*, acquired two new meanings, one territorial by nature and another new, far removed from its original, ideological sense within various traditions, not necessarily all of them Silesian. Cultural interpretation has led the Ślęża mountain, a source of myths and an essential part of both many legends and of the landscape, to undergo a similar transformation. In the period under consideration the influence of a so-called anthroporegional structure reaching back to prehistoric times on the structure of settlement is noticeable. When compared to the tribal era, the period of early state formation of the Piast monarchy saw the increased significance of the Odra river as an axis for the establishment of administration in both the state and Church. The region's integration progressed around its centre, located in Wrocław. The division of the Piast state into various territories after 1138 halted this process. The resulting divisions broke up regions formerly belonging to one diocese, and likely those previously belonging to one province as well.

Among the significant issues in the formation of the region during the second half of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries were the restriction of the meaning of the term "Silesia" to the latter-day Lower Silesia, as well as the definition of its regional identity by territorial authorities to the Silesian titlature, rather than that of Wrocław. This was a reference a naming convention which was as old as the *Ślęzanie* tribe. Silesia as a region thus became an undeniable fact of the social and political life of the fragmented Poland, while the extension of Silesian territory to the upper part of the Odra river occurred only in the 15th century.

Keywords:

Origins of Silesia, Silesian tribes, Geographus Bavarus, Pagus Silensi, Ślęża mountain, Silesian province

Introduction

Silesia is the 'gift' of the Odra river.¹ The river had become the axis of the land whose borders were later to coincide with the frontiers of the Wrocław Diocese, but

¹ W. Semkowicz compared the role of the Odra river system in the development of settlement in Silesia to that of the bronchial tree, which 'supplies lungs with oxygen, filling them to the last branch'; Sławomir Moździoch quoted this metaphorical thesis, adding a general comment based on archaeological studies (see Sławomir Moździoch, *Krajobraz rzeczny jako źródło tożsamości ludności średniowiecznego Śląska*, [in:] *Radices Silesiae – Silesiaca radices. Śląsk: kraj, ludzie, memoria a kształtowanie się społecznych więzi i tożsamości (do końca XVIII wieku) / Schlesien: Land, Leute, memoria und die Herausbildung der sozialen Bindungen und der Identitäten (bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts)*, eds. Thomas Wunsch, Stanisław Rosik, Wrocław 2011, pp. 49–51). For a Neolithic history of settlements, see Anna Kulczycka-Leciejewiczowa, *Osadnictwo neolityczne w Polsce południowo-zachodniej. Próba zarysu organizacji przestrzennej*, Wrocław 1993, pp. 163 and following.

the region thus formed was only assigned a permanent name, Silesia, in the 15th century. This was yet another phase in the historiography of a community which was identified with the dimension of ‘Silesianness’ through its name, and an integral element of the academic debate devoted to the subject is the reference to the tribal period, which was established in the 19th century as heritage of the *Silesiographia* created in the early modern period. At the time, the reception of Tacite’s work looked to fill ‘ancient’ Silesia with Elysees and other peoples of Germania and the historiography of this time was not devoid of allegoric literary devices which favoured the ‘Elysian’ paradisiacal interpretations of the origins of the land.²

This myth-building trend in the shaping of a narrative about its most ancient history harmonized with earlier fantastical images of the lands’ past. An excellent example can be found in the *Polish Chronicle* of Master Vincent called Kadłubek from the turn of the 13th century, which depicts Silesians as immemorial allies of the Poles – at least from the time of Alexander the Great.³ The author mentions this while describing the legendary battle of Psie Pole (Hundsfeld). In a popular Polish translation of this passage, the local population, in Latin *Silencii*, is referred to as the *Ślężanie*, i.e. a tribal community. This strategy was designed to archaize the narration, most probably in order to accommodate the customary approach of the reader who, in accordance with the scholarly canon, perceived the ancient history of Poland as a transition from the world of tribes to the reality of the state.

However, considering that this particular narration speaks of the year 1109, we should be sceptical about the *licencia poetica* of the translator and remember that at that stage of the Piasts’ history, and especially in the times of Kadłubek, such a community did not yet exist. Moreover, attributing this kind of perception of the past to the chronicler does not seem legitimate as his historical vision was characterized by presentism; therefore, it would be better to treat the *Silencii*, or *Silenciani*,⁴ as a community associated with a Piast-ruled province. The awarding of its members with the name of Silesians was favoured by the functioning at the time of such names as *Zlesia* or *Slezia*;⁵ it remains debatable, however, whether the territorial limits of this land corresponded to those of *Silentii provincia* mentioned by Kadłubek (see below).

This name has a native element to it, common to that of *Ślężanie*, but one should remember that this definition of group identity also results from a particular perception of the state and Church elites which went beyond the native cultural environment – the mythical origins of the Silesian communities recorded in the common memory of

² Przemysław Siekierka, *Ex Silesiae Antiquitatibus. Wątki ludów antycznych w traktacie Gentis Silesiae Annales Ioachima Cureusa. Historia i legenda, [in:] Radices Silesiae*, pp. 149–158, especially pp 150 and following.

³ *Magistri Vincenti dicti Kadlubek Chronica Polonorum/Mistrza Wincentego zwanego Kadlubkiem Kronika Polska*, ed. Marian Plezia, Kraków 1994 (=MPH, ns, vol. 11), III, 18, p. 105.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch* [hereafter referred to as: SUB], vol. 1, ed. Heinrich Appelt, Wien-Graz-Köln 1963, No. 45, p. 27, No. 117, p. 87.

the Latin *Christianitas* as a separate people is evidence of that. Thus, the identity of those *Silencii* is based on a lofty myth, not only by means of the reference to Antiquity but also by highlighting their role in the victory of Boleslaus Wrymouth (Bolesław Krzywousty) at Psie Pole, where they greatly contributed (according to the literary account) to the rout of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V.⁶ This identity would later be perpetuated by other medieval chronicles, especially Silesian ones.⁷

The year 1163 marks the end of the period covered in the present study, when the descendants of Ladislaus the Exile (Władysław Wygnaniec) returned to the lands of their ancestor's inheritance. However, the end of this period only indicates the approximate time when the proposed processual overview of social changes taking place in the upper and middle Odra will refer to functioning of the term Silesia within the wider realm of the Piast territories and the associated Church organization (the See of Gniezno). In this context, relations between Poland and Bohemia and the presence of the Přemyslid monarchy in the region should also be taken into account.⁸

When conducting such an analysis we need to refer to the proto-Silesian *Barbaricum* in regard to two basic aspects: on the one hand, the role of tribal heritage in the formation of the region (starting with the etymology of the name of the region); and on the other hand, the permanent physical features of the land, especially the elements of the landscape, which allow us to obtain a more complete picture of the processes of the formation of groups and identities, and finally of the formation of the region in the 12th century. In this aspect of our study we will refer both to the prehistoric era and to later periods. Treating the land as a region, we shall consistently recognize it as a part of a larger whole, which results in a bias towards a post-tribal perception.

Anthroporegions

From prehistoric times to the appearance of tribes, human settlement in Lower Silesia was relatively stable. It concentrated near the upper Odra, around the Moravian Gate, in the vicinity of Opole, by the Bystrzyca and Śleza rivers up to today's Wrocław, then in a strip covering part of the Barycz river valley (Trzebnica–Milicz), and finally by the Odra near Głogów and Krosno Odrzańskie and by its tributaries. This distribution of human settlements is visible from the early Neolithic age, i.e. from the 6th millennium BC, when the first farmers arrived here from the Danube valley. They most likely lived side by side with the Mesolithic peoples in the Sudetes Foreland until as late as the 4th millennium BC.

⁶ *Magistri Vincenti dicti Kadlubek Chronica Polonorum*, III, 18, p. 105 and following.

⁷ Recently on this issue, see Wojciech Mrozowicz, *Od kiedy możemy mówić o istnieniu tożsamości śląskiej?*, [in:] *Radices Silesiae*, pp. 138–144.

⁸ For recent information on the topic, with a reference to relevant literature, see Marie Bláhová, *Slezsko a české země ve středověku. Nárys problematiky*, [in:] *Radices Silesiae*, pp. 103 and following. Dependence of Silesian lands to Bohemia in the 10th century remain debatable; see below.

In the following millennia, settlement continued to concentrate in the above-mentioned areas and remained sporadic in other Silesian lands. Therefore, one can speak of certain anthropological regions (*anthroporegions*), i.e. territories where settlement had been permanently concentrated – based on natural conditions – from prehistoric times.⁹ A key role was played here by the favourable conditions for soil cultivation and animal farming, including the fertility and irrigation of the soil as well as the relatively mild climate.¹⁰ Thus, the Odra and its tributaries became axes for these areas, with three leading lands already established by the Neolithic era: in the vicinity of the Moravian Gate, an area from the Ślęza and Bystrzyca rivers to Wrocław and near Głogów. These lands stretched along the Odra and by its left bank, which has more tributaries than the right bank.

These areas were equally important in the era of the Lusatian culture, i.e. during the arrival of metallurgy (copper and bronze), but in that time the discovery of ores became an additional, non-agricultural settlement-shaping factor; for example, people began to settle in the area of Legnica.¹¹ The arrival of the Celts in Silesian lands constitutes a spectacular example of Bronze Age migrations. The Celts are associated with a significant boost in various types of production (pottery, metallurgy), although the largest growth in this respect is observed in the first centuries AD, namely in the period of the so-called ‘Roman influence’.

Contact with the Mediterranean lands, and especially trade with the Roman Empire (for example iron), gave the elites of the Przeworsk culture significant wealth, as evidenced by impressive archaeological findings such as the famous so called ‘dukes graves’ in Zakrzów or the amber depot in Partynice in present-day Wrocław.¹² These sites are associated with the famous ‘Amber Road’, which should be considered as an additional factor integrating the anthroporegion upon the Ślęza river and around Wrocław. Analogically, the Moravian Gate played a similar role in settlements on both its northern and southern sides. We should also consider the earlier Neolithic period due to the influx of people from the Danube region which took place through the gate.¹³

Already in that period, local rivers proved important in long-distance transportation,¹⁴ especially the Odra. On the other hand, it is believed that the Carpathians and Sudetes hindered the transfer of some cultural developments of the Neolithic age to the Silesian region.¹⁵ This is important evidence showing that natural barriers existed which promoted the separate statuses of the upper and middle Odra basins (from the south) within

⁹ For more information on anthroporegions in the context of historical geography see for example Jan Tyszkiewicz, *Geografia historyczna Polski w średniowieczu. Zbiór studiów*, Warszawa 2003, pp 24ff.

¹⁰ A. Kulczycka-Leciejewiczowa, *Osadnictwo neolityczne*, pp. 19–39, 163–166.

¹¹ Andrzej Mierzwiński, *Przemiany osadnicze społeczności kultury lużyckiej na Śląsku*, Wrocław 1994; see also R. Żerelik, *Dzieje Śląska do 1526 roku*, pp. 28 and following.

¹² For example Michał Kaczmarek, *Zanim powstał Wrocław*, [in:] M. Kaczmarek, Mateusz Goliński, Teresa Kulak, Włodzimierz Suleja, *Wrocław. Dziedzictwo wieków*, Wrocław 1997, pp. 10 and following.

¹³ A. Kulczycka-Leciejewiczowa, *Osadnictwo neolityczne*, p. 165.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 162-163, 167, 175, 182.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 162-163.

the North European Plain. However, in that period, neither this factor nor the presence of the main river artery led to the unification of local anthroporegions into one whole. This would not change until historic times.

The problem of the Germanic heritage

In the period of the Roman influence the Silesian lands became a destination for the migration of Barbarian peoples, of which some Germanic tribes are recognizable today. There is no evidence indicating that larger tribal unions were formed in that period in Silesian lands; however, in the light of the generations-long debate on the origins of the name Silesia, and more precisely its assumed connection with the Silingi Vandals, we must not fail to address this issue here.

Current discussions on ancient descriptions of Barbarian peoples have been unable to confirm the presence of the Silingi in the upper and middle Odra basin, and doubts have been raised over whether they were there at all.¹⁶ In this debate the only argument for their presence concerns the homophony of their ethnonym with the name of the region; the argument thus runs that Silesia was derived from the name *Silingi*. Such reasoning might be perceived as *petitio principii* (begging the question); it was, however, popular among academics of the 19th and 20th centuries, laying the ground for the interpretation of material relics of the Przeworsk culture as evidence of the presence of the Silingi, some of whom were to migrate to the south. Niemcza was allegedly an enclave of these Germanic remains, even in the period of the first Piasts; this information is based on a passage by a Saxon chronicler from Merseburg, Thietmar (d. 1018), stating that the town was founded by his compatriots (in his words: ‘nostri’).¹⁷

Thietmar spoke here about the connection of the name *Niemcza* with the Slavic name for Germans (*Niemcy*, or *niemcy*, meaning ‘strangers’),¹⁸ but within an oral tradition such a message could not reliably refer to events from five hundred years earlier. Thus, the account of Thietmar cannot confirm that remnants of Germanic peoples in Silesian lands from the times of the Przeworsk culture lasted to his day; moreover, associating the establishment of the stronghold with the Silingi should be considered a phantasm that has been introduced to the academic discourse (this is worth mentioning as such information has been disseminated in an internationally-known monograph of Wrocław).¹⁹

¹⁶ Recently, see Przemysław Siekierka, *Silingowie u Klaudiusza Ptolemeusza. Problem na nowo otwarty?*, ‘Sobótka’, 65 (2010), No. 4, pp. 553–563.

¹⁷ *Kronika Thietmara*, introduction, translation and commentary by Marian Zygmunt Jedlicki, Poznań 1953 (=Biblioteka tekstów historycznych, vol. 3) (hereafter referred to as: Thietmar), VII, 59, p. 555.

¹⁸ For example Karol Modzelewski, *Barbarzyńska Europa*, Warszawa 2004, p. 9.

¹⁹ See Norman Davies, Roger Moorhouse, *Mikrokosmos. Portret miasta środkowoeuropejskiego. Vratislavia, Breslau, Wrocław*, Kraków 2002 (the English edition: *idem, Microcosm. A Portrait of a Central European City*, London 2002, 2nd edition 2003; German edition: *idem, Die Blume Europas. Breslau - Wrocław - Vratislavia: Die Geschichte einer mittel-europäischen Stadt*, München 2002), p. 70; the authors speak about contact between the Vandals, with the ‘capital’ at Niemcza, and the Roman Empire. Other examples that

As it is impossible to confirm the presence of the Silingi in the Silesian lands, we cannot verify whether the tribe gave the name to the territory which would later be adopted by peoples inhabiting the area after intense migration in the 4th and 5th centuries BC. This period of migration brought about the fall of the Przeworsk culture and a demographic decline in the territory of Silesia and neighbouring lands north of the Carpathians. In the 6th and 7th centuries these lands became a domain of the Slavs, at that time newly crystallized as ethnos under the considerable influence of – as has been indicated by recent research proposals²⁰ – the contemporary migration-stimulated acculturation. As for the Silesian lands, it is possible that this domain also incorporated indigenous peoples, though thinly spread out it seems, as indicated by both Procopius of Caesarea – who spoke of an ‘empty land’ in 512 – as well as archaeological findings.²¹

The hypothesis of a complete depopulation of these lands seems unlikely as usually only the most thriving, militarily strongest and wealthiest groups of tribal communities attempted migration; even if the decision to migrate was taken by an entire community, smaller groups were most likely to stay.²² This observation is supported by pre-Slavic (old European) river names. Here we return to the basic problem in the discussion on the factors of regional integration, namely that of the name of Silesia, in the context of its genesis, the most significant element of which appears to be – in the perspective of

raise doubts as to the accuracy of the authors include a reference to the Ślęza as the (alleged) mount ‘Zober’, so-called by the Germanic people (see *ibidem*, p. 74); however, the verses by Juliusz Słowacki, quoted therein, either refer to the mountain *Zobor* near Nitra or are a literary fantasy. In German, obviously, Ślęza is called *Zobtenberg*.

²⁰ It is worth noting that the academic tradition, popularized in the 19th and 20th centuries, according to which there existed a proto-Slavonic community which concentrated within one *proto-fatherland* after the break-up of the so-called Balto-Slavs around 1000 B.C., has met with criticism which brought new findings assuming the final formation of Slavdom during the migrations between the 4th and 6th centuries BC. The dispute centres on the mechanism of transformation which had become the basis for ethnos. Lech Leciejewicz, among other authors (see below, footnote 23), supported the theses of acculturation reaching to much of today’s Polish territory, in contrast to Kazimierz Godłowski who saw the chief ethnogenic factor in the migrations of peoples from the basin of Dnieper from the 4th century AD. Another thesis is proposed by Florin Curta, who assumes that a single identity (manifested by a belief of common ancestry) was given to the peoples comprising early medieval Slavdom by the Byzantine discourse (see for example Walter Pohl, *Początki Słowian. Kilka spostrzeżeń historycznych*, [in:] *Nie-Słowianie o początkach Słowian*, ed. Przemysław Urbańczyk, Poznań-Warszawa 2006, pp. 11–25; Florin Curta, *Tworzenie Słowian. Powrót do słowiańskiej etnogenezy*, [in:] *Nie-Słowianie...*, pp. 27–55).

²¹ According to Procopius of Caesarea, a Byzantine historiographer from the 6th century AD, this deserted area, hypothetically located in the Odra basin, was found by the Germanic Heruli, a part of whom, having been defeated by their neighbours, decided to leave the Danube territories and migrate to their former fatherland in the north (see *Procopii Caesariensis De bellis I - VIII*, ed. Jacob Haury, *Opera omnia I - II*, Lipsiae 1964, (*Bellum Gothicum III*), VI,15; see *Testimonia najdawniejszych dziejów Słowian. Seria grecka, zeszyt 2. Pisarze z V - X w.*, eds. Alina Brzóstowska, Wincenty Swoboda, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1989, p. 54). See Lech A. Tyszkiewicz, *Słowianie w historiografii wczesnego średniowiecza od połowy VI do połowy VII wieku*, Wrocław 1994 (=Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis, No 924, Historia 63), pp. 21–24; see for example R. Żerecik, *Dzieje Śląska do 1526 roku*, p. 33.

²² Lech Leciejewicz, *Słowianie zachodni. Z dziejów tworzenia się średniowiecznej Europy*, 2nd edition, Wodzisław Śląski 2010, pp. 42 and following; for general information on the aforementioned migrations of Germanic tribes, see for example Przemysław Urbańczyk, *Władza i polityka we wczesnym średniowieczu*, Wrocław 2000, p. 110–113.

currently developed studies – hydronymy. Yet, nonetheless, we should focus our attention on the appearance of the Ślężanie and other Slavic tribes in the Silesian lands.

The ‘Silesian tribes’ and the problem of their pre-state integration (the political-military aspect)

Discussions on the situation of the commonly-named ‘Silesian tribes’²³ flared up with great intensity in the late 1990s. At that time – based on archaeological findings – scholars began to question long-standing views regarding the location of the Bobrzanie, which consequently led to the questioning of the location of the Trzebowianie.²⁴ Both names are an interpretation of the names *Pobarane* and *Trebouane* found in the so-called *Prague Document* (1086). Both are mentioned next to the names *Zlasane* and *Dedose*, identified as the Ślężanie and Dziadoszanie respectively, and scholars have located all four in Silesia.²⁵

The question remains whether the aforementioned names were already present in the original document or whether they correspond to settlement territories from the second half of the 11th century. Even so, it should be emphasized that two of them, the Ślężanie and Dziadoszanie, are of tribal origin as they have their counterparts in the ethnonyms *Slenzaane* and *Dadosesani* mentioned in the so-called *Bavarian Geographer* from the mid-9th century.²⁶ With the help of Thietmar of Merseburg’s account from the 1120s we are able to, with a high degree of probability, define the location of both tribes, associating them with territories referred to as *Silensi* and *Diadesisi*; the former comprised the Ślęża Mountain and the stronghold Niemcza, and the latter bordered Milsko. These data allow us to assign the tribal communities to two of the aforementioned anthroporegions:

²³ For example Jerzy Lodowski, *Dolny Śląsk na początku średniowiecza (VI-X w.): podstawy osadnicze i gospodarcze*, Wrocław 1980, pp. 112–127; Lech A. Tyszkiewicz, *Plemiona słowiańskie we wczesnym średniowieczu*, [in:] *Słowiańszczyzna w Europie średniowiecznej*, vol. 1, ed. Zofia Kurnatowska, Wrocław 1996, pp. 51 and following.; Waclaw Korta, *Historia Śląska do roku 1763*, ed. Marek Derwich, Warszawa 2003, pp. 48–51.

²⁴ Sławomir Moździoch, *Spoleczność plemienna Śląska w IX-X wieku*, [in:] *Śląsk około roku 1000. Materiały z sesji naukowej we Wrocławiu w dniach 14-15 maja 1999 roku*, eds. Marta Młynarska-Kaletynowa, Edmund Małachowicz, Wrocław 2000, pp. 25–71.

²⁵ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Śląska*, ed. Karol Maleczyński, vol. 1, Wrocław 1951 [hereafter referred to as: KDŚ], No. 8, p. 25.

²⁶ *Descriptio civitatum ad septentrionalem plagam Danubii*, eds. Bohuslav Horák, Dušan Trávníček, [in:] *iiidem, Descriptio civitatum ad septentrionalem plagam Danubii*, Praha 1956 (= Československá Akademie Věd: Rozpravy československé Akademie Věd, Řada společenských věd 66.2), pp. 2–3. On the document and its date, see Henryk Łowmiański, *O pochodzeniu Geografa bawarskiego*, ‘Roczniki Historyczne’, 20 (1951–52), pp. 9–23; Jerzy Nalepa, *Geograf Bawarski*, [in:] *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich Encyklopedyczny zarys kultury Słowian od czasów najdawniejszych do schyłku wieku XII*, vol. 2, eds. Władysław Kowalenko, Gerard Labuda, Tadeusz Lehr-Splawiński, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1964, pp. 93 and following; for more recent studies, see for example J. Nalepa, *O nowszym ujęciu problematyki plemion słowiańskich u Geografa Bawarskiego. Uwagi krytyczne*, ‘Slavia Occidentalis’, 60 (2003), pp. 9–63 (here a comprehensive list of literature). Contrary to a common thesis that the text was created in the 9th century, J. Nalepa dates it to the 10th century (because Hungarians are mentioned next to Wiślanie, see *ibidem*, p. 10).

the Ślężanie – lands stretching along the Śleza river, perhaps as far as to Wrocław, and to the Dziadoszanie – lands upon lower sections of the Odra, near Krosno, Bytom Odrzański or Głogów.

As the so-called *Bavarian Geographer* mentions no communities with which the *Pobarane* and *Trebouane* could be associated, their character remains unknown. Traditionally, the former were located by the middle and upper Bóbr (in the *Chronicle of Thietmar* the river is called *Pober*),²⁷ and due to relatively poor evidence of settlements in this area in the 9th–10th centuries it was recognized as a section of Dziadoszanie. The *Trebouane*, on the other hand, while previously associated with Trzebnica, according to the concept which finally became established in the 20th century, lived near Legnica. As mentioned above, this view was questioned in the late 1990s when it was proposed that the name *Pobarane* should be associated with the previously unnamed settlement group by the Obra river, the *Poobrzanie*, or even the *Obrzanie*.²⁸

Such conclusions were drawn by juxtaposing the aforementioned poorly-developed settlement by the Bóbr with much the better developed one by the Obra. An analogical criterion proved efficient in a discussion on the location of the Trzebowianie, who, in light of the thin settlement of the areas near Legnica, are indeed – albeit cautiously – being relocated towards Trzebnica, not only because of the denser population in the area but also because of the ethnonym being related to the name of the town. This relatively new concept of distribution of the so-called (Lower) Silesian tribes has inspired further studies and made scholars question the general tribal metrics of the names *Pobarane* and *Trebouane*.

As it is posited that the names could have been mentioned in the *Prague Document* only, but not in the original founding document of the Bishopric of Prague (973), one

²⁷ Thietmar (VI, 26) mentions that in the language of the Slavs, *Pober* corresponds to Latin *castor*, or ‘beaver’; the hypothetical name *Bobrzanie* referring to people living by the river Bóbr is based on this name.

²⁸ Sławomir Moździoch, *Śląsk między Gniezmem a Pragą*, [in:] *Ziemia polskie w X wieku i ich znaczenie w kształtowaniu się nowej mapy Europy*, ed. Henryk Samsonowicz, Kraków 2000, pp. 173–176. Based on archaeological findings, the author of the hypothesis considered two alternatives: either to associate the Pobaranie with the Obrzanie, or assume the existence of two tribal settlement centres, namely the Obrzanie and the Poboranie (*Pobarane*); see: *idem*, *Spoleczność plemienna*, pp. 35–38. However, one should remember that the name ‘Obrzanie’ was associated with the Obra river by Jerzy Nalepa (*Obrzanie – plemię nad Obrą w południowo-zachodniej Wielkopolsce*, [in:] *Słowiańszczyzna w Europie średniowiecznej*, vol. 1, pp. 67 and following) and is in fact a pseudo-ethnonym. The hypothesis which associates it semantically (based on a connection with the river Obra) with the Pobarane gives us an argument in favour of the existence of a community with a name derived from the river, but at the same time assumes that the hypothetical Poboranie lived there rather than the Obrzanie. On the other hand, the hypothesis assuming the existence of two separate tribes (the Pobarane or Poboranie and the Obrzanie) treats the ethnonym as equal to the pseudo-ethnonym, which, when locating both names on a single map (as in S. Moździoch, *Spoleczność plemienna*, p. 36) is semantically confusing. Thus, the suggestion to stop using Obrzanie as a tribal name seems justified. Therefore, if one chooses to recognize the two settlement centres by the Obra as two separate tribes, it is worth leaving one of them nameless – in the discussed variant of S. Moździoch’s hypothesis this would be that of the ‘Obrzanie’, located north-west of the ‘Poboranie’.

should consider either their late genesis (in the period of state formation)²⁹ or that they were related to smaller settlement territories within a tribal community (perhaps the so-called *opole*, pl. *opola*) or organisms referred to as ‘small tribal’ ones. At this stage of the analysis it seems important to not automatically consider all ‘Lower Silesian’ names mentioned in the *Prague Document* as derived from tribes (though such a possibility should not be ruled out); on the other hand, we should bear in mind that not all archaeological settlements of the tribal period must necessarily be reflected in those names.

Returning to the *Bavarian Geographer*, we should remember that apart from the Ślężanie and the Dziadoszanie it lists three more ethnonyms associated with the territory of the future Silesia: the *Opolini*, *Lupiglaa* and *Golensizi*. The latter, probably the Polish *Goleńczyce*, are connected with the well-resourced tribal settlement on both sides of the Moravian Gate.³⁰ The traditional identification of *Opolini* as the Opolanie is based on the identification of Opole as their main centre. However, there is no archaeological evidence confirming the existence of a stronghold at the time the document was written, so we should assume that the name of the principal tribal centre was derived from the name of the tribe. Another hypothesis assumes that the name *opole*, being universal, need not have been associated with a particular tribe but with a smaller, neighbourly territorial unit.

What also remains unclear is the name *Lupiglaa*, which is most commonly associated with the inhabitants of the Głubczyce Plateau, the alleged ‘Stupid Heads’ (*Glupie Głowy*). In light of the associative nature of such arguments, as well as of the lack of strong archaeological evidence of a tribal community near Głubczyce, the question arises of whether the *Lupiglaa* should be located to the north of the Moravian Gate and thus in a part of the territory which was considered above to be that of Goleńczyce, or whether we should reject the hypothesis which assumes their location in Silesia.³¹

In the period discussed here, there is no evidence of the presence of a single local habitat in the Odra basin comprising the above-mentioned tribes. Moreover, the hypothesis according to which the Silesian *Przesieka* (*Przesieka Śląska*, literally the ‘Silesian Cutting’) already existed in the 9th century³² may only support the view that such integration

²⁹ This possibility was signalled by Stanisław Rosik, *Najdawniejsze dzieje Dolnego Śląska (do roku 1138)*, [in:] *Dolny Śląsk. Monografia historyczna*, ed. Wojciech Wrzesiński, Wrocław 2006, pp. 31 and following. In a discussion on this concept, Wojciech Mrozowicz pointed to the fact the names ‘Trebouane’ and ‘Pobarane’ sound similar to the ethnonym *Zlasane* which is clearly derived from tribal times. This suggests a tribal origin of all four names, but one also cannot exclude the possibility that the very method of creating names of territorial communities was preserved until the period of state administration. As such, the question is difficult to resolve. In any case, it still seems that we should not assume a static picture of the tribal situation from the 9th century on, and admit the possibility that in the 9–10th centuries there appeared new settlement territories and their new names.

³⁰ See for example J. Tyszkiewicz, *Geografia*, s. 39 n.; Stanisław Rosik, *Opolini, Golensizi, Lupiglaa... Ziemia opolsko-raciborska we wczesnym średniowieczu (uwagi w sprawie dyskusji historyków)*, ed. Anna Pobóg-Lenartowicz, Opole 2003, pp. 29–31, 34 (*Ibidem*, a list of literature).

³¹ S. Rosik, *Opolini*, pp. 30 and following.

³² For example R. Żerelik, *Dzieje Śląska do 1526 roku*, p. 36.

took place in Lower Silesia,³³ especially when considering that the region was enclosed from the west by the so-called Silesian Walls, dated by some historians to the 9th century (though usually to a later period).³⁴ When putting forward such a hypothesis, we should take into account that this may be a result of projecting later assumptions, namely those from the period when the existence of the *Przesieka* is undisputable, onto tribal times.³⁵

According to the *Book of Henryków*, the *Przesieka* ‘surrounded all the territory of Silesia’.³⁶ This information, however difficult it may be to interpret in a literary sense, suggests that up to the 13th century Silesia did not encompass the upper Odra basin, meaning that it was the ancient lands of the Ślężanie which proved ideologically most important for the formation of the historic land along the axis of the Odra. Such a conclusion can easily lead to recognizing Ślężanie as the ‘central’ and ‘most important’ tribe (*medii et potentissimi*), from which the integration of all ‘Silesian’ tribes begins, but this would mean entering the realm of a historiographical myth, as becomes visible when considering integration factors other than the danger of invasions linked with the *Przesieka* or the Silesian Walls.

The Ślęża – the geographical range of the cult and the semiotics of the landscape

Due to the uniqueness of the Ślęża as a landscape phenomenon, when discussing the oldest signs of spiritual life in Silesia the question arises of how influential the worship of the mountain was. Whether this extended beyond one tribe may be analyzed both based on findings of religious studies and by a comparison with religious cults of the nearby Polabian and Pomeranian Slavs (the mouth of the Odra and Rugia) in the 11–12th centuries. Such analogies, however, are not well grounded in the case of studies on the religious importance of the Ślęża because there is no evidence that a shrine or oracle existed on the mountain.³⁷

³³ For recent information on the topic, with a reference to relevant literature, see L.A. Tyszkiewicz, *Plemiona słowiańskie*, pp. 51 and following.

³⁴ See for example J. Tyszkiewicz, *Geografia*, p. 41.

³⁵ The fact that the so-called Prague Document lists the communities from Lower Silesia one after another suggests that from the Bohemian perspective it was perceived as a separate whole, and this, consequently, gives grounds to assume that the borderland role of *Przesieka* was considered perhaps even in the founding document of the Bishopric of Prague (973), allegedly confirmed in the Prague Document.

Importantly, this perception is an external one, and thus we should consider that such grouping of these communities stems from the influence of the regal or Church authority, including not only the permanent dependence on these institutions but also their aspirations to gain control over Silesian lands. A good example is the so-called Meissen charters, which in light of recent research (see Thomas Ludwig, *Die Urkunden der Bischöfe von Meißen. Diplomatische Untersuchungen zum 10.-13. Jahrhundert*, Köln 2008) are all forged documents, confirming the Meissen Bishops’ right to these lands granted to them allegedly by Emperors in the 10th century.

³⁶ *Liber foundationis claustris Sancte Marie Virginis in Heinrichow czyli Księga henrykowska*, ed. Roman Grodecki, Wrocław 1991, I, 9, p. 145.

³⁷ A synthetic recapitulation of cult Ślęża in the context of other Slavic sacred places can be found in the article by Lech Leciejewicz, *In Pago Silensi vocabulo hoc a quodam monte... O funkeji miejsc kultu pogańskiego w systemie politycznym Słowian Zachodnich*, ‘Sobótka’, 42 (1987), No. 2, pp. 125–135.

Related hypotheses are formulated in accordance with the incorrect interpretation of Thietmar, popularized by a Polish translation from nearly 60 years ago, and sometimes under the direct influence of the translation. The translation states that the Ślęza Mountain was worshipped ‘because heathen rites were performed on it’,³⁸ while in fact the chronicler indicated other causes, namely its size and height. Thietmar speaks about the unique role of the Ślęza in shaping religious beliefs of the local population, leading our thoughts towards the holy mountain having universal significance.³⁹

From a phenomenological point of view, the natural features of the Ślęza seem to explain its function as an *axis mundi*, a ‘world axis’. The idea that it linked three regions of the world – the sky, the earth and the underworld – corresponds to the fact that the top of the mountain is frequently covered by clouds. In such an interpretation the Ślęza appears as a cosmic mountain whose myth is linked to the concept of the ‘origins’ of the whole universe, treated within the ecumene as a prominent place, the mythical cradle of the world. Judging by Thietmar’s chronicle, which states that the territory of the Silensi had derived its name from the Ślęza mountain,⁴⁰ we may assume that it was indeed regarded that way by the Ślężanie.⁴¹ However, in the face of having no firm evidence to draw upon, we can safely assume, due to its mythical image, that it played a significant role in the life of the community.⁴²

The uniqueness of the Ślęza in the local landscape made the Ślężanie, by virtue of their ownership of the holy mountain, predestined to become the most important people of the lower Odra basin. Even so, we have no evidence to determine whether they used this potential to build political power. Similarly, one cannot possibly verify whether the worship of the Ślęza was practised by other tribes as well.⁴³ It is because the region, which was developed outside the ecumene of the Ślężanie acquired the name referring to their ethnonym only after the establishment of the state, and therefore the thesis that the name *Silesia* is derived from the mountain (or the river) needs to be supplemented by a missing link in the form of the name and the domain of the tribe, and subsequent territorial units of the early monarchy, and finally of the *Silencii provincia* mentioned by Kadłubek.

³⁸ Thietmar, p. 554.

³⁹ For a recent article on the Ślęza in the context of religious studies, see: Stanisław Rosik, *Mons Silensis – axis mundi. Góra Ślęza między historią a fenomenologią*, [in:] *Sacrum pogańskie – sacrum chrześcijańskie. Kontynuacja miejsc kultu we wczesnośredniowiecznej Europie Środkowej*, eds Krzysztof Bracha, Czesław Hadamik, Warszawa 2010, pp. 179–192 (*ibidem*, a list of literature).

⁴⁰ Discussion, see below.

⁴¹ This interpretation of the importance of the Ślęza for the tribal ecumene was extensively developed by Leszek P. Słupecki in his monograph on heathen places of worship, *Slavonic Pagan Sanctuaries*, Warsaw 1994, pp. 172 and following.

⁴² For more on this issue, see Stanisław Rosik, *W cieniu „śląskiego Olimpu”... Uwagi nad możliwością kosmicznej waloryzacji góry Ślęży w badaniach nad historią religii*, [in:] *Origines mundi, gentium et civitatum*, eds Stanisław Rosik, Przemysław Wiszewski, Wrocław 2001 (=Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis, No. 2339, Historia 153), pp. 62–72.

⁴³ See for example Leszek P. Słupecki, *Ślęza, Radunia, Wieżyca. Miejsca kultu pogańskiego Słowian w średniowieczu*, ‘Kwartalnik Historyczny’, 99 (1992), No. 2, p. 14.

The first stage of ‘silesiation’ (regio Zleznensis, dux Zlesie, episcopus Zlesie)

The area of the ‘*Silentii* province’ in Kadłubek’s chronicle is disputable, with two basic possibilities being the area ruled by dukes titled *dux Zlesie*,⁴⁴ or a larger area as indicated by the title *episcopus Zlesie* mentioned in a document from 1208. Bearing this in mind, it is highly likely that ‘silesiation’ reached beyond the Przesieka.⁴⁵ This is one of a number of hypotheses that should be taken into account when interpreting the territorial boundaries of *regio Zleznensis* at the turn of the 12th century in the light of Gallus Anonymus’ account.⁴⁶ On the one hand, a territory similar to that of the former Ślężanie land (probably *Zlasane*, as in the *Prague Document*) should be considered, while on the other hand it is likely that the tribe-derived name already applied to the entire province, with Wrocław as the capital. The city’s importance grew after it became a seat of the Bishopric, whose frontiers – according to documents from the 12th century – reached as far as Cieszyn.

Deriving the names of bishoprics from the names of lands was not uncommon in the 12–13th centuries (e.g. *Polonia, Pomerana*),⁴⁷ but in the case discussed here we need to admit the possibility that the name of the bishopric could have been a derivative of the connection between ‘Duke’ (of Silesia) and ‘Bishop’ (of Silesia).⁴⁸ The latter option would mean that the ‘silesiation’ process would not yet have begun, and that the Silesian title of the Bishop referred only to part of his territories. Even assuming this scenario, however, the Church administration remained an important factor integrating the region around Wrocław with that city at its centre, which in a later period resulted in extending the Silesian territory beyond the Przesieka. In the period discussed in the present article, however, this was prevented by the political fragmentation of Piast Poland.

The fragmentation slowed down the ‘silesiation’ of the entire middle and upper areas of the Odra basin, especially during the reign of Ladislaus Herman and his sons. We should note here that at that time Wrocław, as one of the ‘main capitals of the kingdom’,⁴⁹ was ranked right next to Cracow, which made it quite likely that its power extended to the border of Lesser Poland as regards both state and Church administration. This role of Wrocław had been determined by the stronghold structure network

⁴⁴ It is also disputable whether the Głogów district lay within the above-mentioned province, as it was described as a *March* – recently, see for example: W. Mrozowicz, *Od kiedy*, p. 143; Stanisław Rosik, *Najdawniejsza postać Śląska (do XIII w.). Pejzaż krainy a kształtowanie się śląskiej tożsamości regionalnej: przykład Ślęży i Trzebnicy*, [in:] *Radices Silesiae*, pp. 68 and following.

⁴⁵ The charter of Władysław Odoniec from 25 December 1208, see SUB., vol. 1, No. 117, p. 87.

⁴⁶ *Galli Anonymi cronicae et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, ed. Karol Maleczyński, Kraków 1952 (= *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* n.s., vol. 2) [hereafter referred to as: Gall], II, 50, p. 119.

⁴⁷ Gall I, 30, p. 57; *Pommersches Urkundenbuch*, vol. 1: 786–1253, part 1, *Urkunden*, ed. Klaus Conrad, Köln-Wien 1970, No. 23, p. 24.

⁴⁸ Such parallel titles of dukes and bishops is not only found in the 12th century Pomerania but also in the 13th century Kuyavia, see for example *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, vol. 1, ed. Ignacy Zakrzewski, Poznań 1877, No. 84: *episcopus Cuiaviensis* (1215 r.); No. 140: *dux Cuyavie* (1232).

⁴⁹ Gall, II, 8, p. 75.

dating back to the times of the first Piasts and restored after the crisis of their rule in the 1030s. By the first half of the 980s, Wrocław had already become a principal centre among the strongholds located along the Odra (as evidenced by dendrochronology). A key argument here is the fact that it became the seat of the Bishopric in the year 1000. It is possible that this was the decisive factor determining the importance of Wrocław in the following centuries.

The formation of the region's foundations: the role of the first Piasts, the contribution of the Přemyslids and the problem of the Great Moravia legacy

Over the centuries, the designation of Wrocław as a centre of state and Church administration proved to be a chief determinant of regional integration, and the establishment of the Wrocław Diocese was an element of the strategy for a new order in Europe, *renovatio imperii*, realized by Otto III in cooperation with Boleslaus the Brave (Bolesław Chrobry). The only piece of information on the first Bishop of Wrocław, John, is found in Thietmar, who lists him among the Gniezno suffragans, but this nevertheless seems credible as it refers to a contemporary period and to a community with which the chronicler was familiar.

During the crisis of the Piast monarchy in the 1030s, the Bishopric became disintegrated (though not its canonical or theological dimensions), to be later renewed by Casimir the Restorer (Kazimierz Odnowiciel). Hypothetical reconstructions of the history of the Bishopric draw on relatively late accounts from the 14th and 15th centuries, which speak about the Wrocław Bishops who were returning from exile in the times of Hieronymus (1046-1063), whose name opens the catalogues of Bishops written in the late middle ages (John and his possible successors from the period prior to this date are not mentioned). As Casimir the Restorer seized power over Wrocław in 1050, this year is given as the earliest possible date of the Bishop's return to the city.⁵⁰

Literature mentions in this context the regaining of Silesia by Casimir the Restorer following its annexation by Břetislaus of Bohemia in 1038 or 1039. The legality of this Polish conquest in 1054 was established at an Emperor congress in Quedlinburg based on the tribute paid to the Přemyslids. Unfortunately, the sources do not mention the name Silesia or any similar name for the territory. Moreover, we can only hypothetically determine the scope of Bohemian territorial gains during the Polish crisis. According to Cosmas of Prague (the 1120s) Břetislaus incorporated two regions ('*duas regiones*')⁵¹ to Bohemia in 1038 (or 1039) whose hypothetical identifications include the following ideas:

⁵⁰ For a discussion on this topic, see for example Tomasz Jurek, *Ryczyn biskupi. Studium z dziejów Kościoła polskiego w XI w.*, 'Roczniki Historyczne', 60 (1994), pp. 21–66; Kazimierz Dola, *Dzieje Kościoła na Śląsku. Średniowiecze*, Opole 1996, pp. 24–26.

⁵¹ *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, ed. Bertold Bretholz, Berolini 1923 (= *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Scriptores* n.s., vol. 2), II,2, p. 83.

1) lands from Silesia and Lesser Poland, 2) Silesia and the Kłodzko Valley,⁵² 3) the divided Silesian territories (in the future, Lower and Upper Silesia). Despite these doubts, it is still possible that the compromise of 1054 (which lasted, with various perturbations, to 1137) concerned at least part of Silesia, which in the 10th century had already become an area of conflicting Polish and Bohemian influence.

Generations of academics have seen the victorious war against Boleslaus II of Bohemia over the *regnum ablatum* (lost kingdom, or rule) as the decisive moment in the incorporation of these territories to the statehood of Mieszko I.⁵³ The conflict was believed to have taken place in 990 and was hypothetically seen as a war over the Silesian lands,⁵⁴ but it is difficult to define the exact contested territory based on the aforementioned account. Thus, it is worth noting here that the hypothesis, according to which the chronicle report refers to the middle and upper Odra basin, has been supported in recent decades by dendrochronology, which has helped to date the strongholds located on the river axis from Opole to Bytom Odrzański and Krosno Odrzańskie. They were probably founded around 985,⁵⁵ which supports the thesis that Mieszko annexed these lands at the cost of his brother-in-law, who unsuccessfully attempted to restore his power in the territory in 990. This concept is also in line with the account of the Monk of Sázava, according to which Bohemia lost Niemcza in that year, however, there are supporters of the view that this concerns Lusatian, not Silesian Niemcza.⁵⁶

According to the current state of research, the hypothesis that *regnum ablatum* was located in Silesia still seems well founded. Nevertheless, one should be wary when using it to construct other hypotheses or to support other claims. This note of caution should be applied to the thesis that Silesian tribes found themselves within the Bohemian monarchy before being incorporated into Poland. The *Prague Document* – the only historical record stating *expressis verbis* that the Silesian territories were dependent on Prague – may indicate, even if its content is faithful to the original, either actual Bohemian control over the territories or merely its attempts to take such control.

The claim that the name ‘Wrocław’ derived from Wratislaus I (d. 921), the representative of the Přemyslid dynasty, however, should be considered a historiographical myth. According to the latest research, the stronghold was not built before 940; it is difficult to say if this reflected attempts to consolidate Bohemian influence in Silesia or if it was meant to protect the local population from intruders. Various archaeological finds from Bohemia provide evidence of contact between the inhabitants of the fortress and

⁵² Or the Kłodzko Valley and the land of Gołęszyce, see J. Tyszkiewicz, *Geografia*, p. 39 (links – sic! – the occupation of the two ‘regions’ with the outcomes of the Quedlinburg congress of 1054, i.e. anachronically in relation with the times of Bretislaus).

⁵³ Thietmar IV, 12.

⁵⁴ For more on this issue see Lech A. Tyszkiewicz, *Przylączenie Śląska do monarchii piastowskiej pod koniec X wieku*, [in:] *Od plemienia do państwa. Śląsk na tle Słowiańszczyzny Zachodniej*, ed. Lech Leciejewicz, Wrocław-Warszawa 1991, pp. 120–152.

⁵⁵ For example S. Moździoch, *Krajobraz rzeczny*, p. 52 (the map).

⁵⁶ For a discussion on this topic, see for example L.A. Tyszkiewicz, *Przylączenie Śląska*, pp. 144 and following.

the Přemyslids, but whether they really prove a Bohemian post was located in Wrocław is difficult to say. It is safer, then, to speak of a period of Bohemian influence in 10th-century Silesia that conflicted with the expansion of the Piasts, who eventually seized power over the territory at the end of the century.

This time of external influence, especially from Bohemia, stimulated inter-tribal consolidation of the land. However, we should begin our discussion here with the problematic (mainly as far as archaeological evidence is concerned) issue of Great Moravian influence in the territory. Already then, in the light of an expanding medieval European civilization, local inhabitants faced a choice of whether to access this circle of Christian monarchies.

The cradle of ‘silesiation’: *pagus Silensi* in Thietmar’s Chronicle

The work of Mieszko I’s and Boleslaus the Brave’s contemporary Thietmar of Merseburg is a primary source of information about the reign of these two rulers over the territories of Silesia. His chronicle contains descriptions of events which were important to the Empire and which were taking place in two territories (called *pagus* in Latin) we are particularly interested: *pagus Diadesi* and *pagus Silensi* (or *Cilensi*)⁵⁷. These names seem to be related to the ethnonyms *Dziadoszanie* and *Ślężanie*, which raises a question as to the nature of these *pagi*. The suggestion that they are tribal territories incorporated into the Piast monarchy, which has been a dominant thesis in the literature, requires further discussion, firstly in the context of examination of historical sources.⁵⁸

In the chronicle, the term *pagus* is not used exclusively in relation to the early-Piast monarchy,⁵⁹ and furthermore it is also repeatedly employed when characterizing western Slavdom. What is striking in this respect is the frequent identification of such units with tribes, starting in the first chapters of the chronicles depicting the Głomacze, who were also referred to as *Dalemińce* by their German neighbours. It was in these lands, ‘in provintiam, quam nos Teutonice Deleminci vocamus, Sclavi autem Głomaci appellant’, that Henry I made his victorious expedition (in 912). This piece of information became the basis for conjecturing how ‘pagus iste nomine hoc signaretur’, and thus the etymological origin of the name of the conquered tribal territory.⁶⁰

These quotations suggest that *provincia* and *pagus* were synonyms; importantly, the name of such a unit is an ethnonym. Surprisingly, Thietmar abandons the terminology employed by Widukind of Corvey, in whose work, quoted in the chronicle, the territory is

⁵⁷ Thietmar VI, 57, pp. 395 (*Cilensi* used without *pagus*).

⁵⁸ Recently on this issue, see S. Rosik, *Najdawniejsza postać, [in:] Radices Silesiae*, pp. 67–71; Przemysław Wiszewski, *Region wrocławski – region śląski. Podziały terytorialne a kształtowanie wspólnoty regionalnej w XI – pierwszej połowie XIII w. Esej źródłowy*, ‘Sobótka’, 66 (2001), No. 3, pp. 12–16.

⁵⁹ For example *Hassegun* – see Thietmar, VII, 72, p. 571.

⁶⁰ Its etymology is based on the root Głomacz, see Thietmar I, 3, p. 7; see also another lection in *ibidem*, V, 36, p. 303: ‘pagus, qui Zlomizi dicitur’.

called *Dalamancia*.⁶¹ Therefore, Thietmar chose to treat territorial units synonymously with a particular human community, giving prominence to the latter aspect. The ethnonym *Daleminci/Glomaci* represents one type of name of such units,⁶² and not the only one which is linked with an ethnonym.⁶³ In this context, it seems more likely that *Silensi* (*Cilensi*) is also a name – like other names ending with ‘-ci’, ‘-zi’, ‘-si’ – of a particular people, a tribe already positioned within the network of contemporary monarchies in the territories of the western Slavs.⁶⁴

This conclusion is made problematic by Thietmar himself, who states that this *pagus* derived its name from the mountain, and thus not from the tribe. This observation has been made more viable by reading *Silensi* as the *ablativus* of *Silensis* (Silesian), and this version has held a dominant place in academic research, perpetuated by translating the phrase ‘in pago Silensi’ as ‘in Schlesiengau’⁶⁵ or ‘w kraju śląskim’.⁶⁶ In this context, ‘Silesianess’ would originally be associated with the mountain Ślęza and then extended on to *pagus* as an adjective emphasizing the central (ideologically) point. However, we should note here that a characteristic feature of Thietmar’s chronicle is that he never inflects these adjectives (for example ‘ad Diedesizi pagum’, ‘in pago Hassegun’),⁶⁷ so it seems unlikely to be true in the case of ‘in pago Silensi’. Thus, it appears that there are no sufficient grounds to interpret *Silesi* as an *ablativus* of *Silensis*, though the deriving the name *pagus* from the mountain requires further etymological analysis.

Thietmar provides this information while describing the location of Niemcza: ‘Posita est autem [haec] in pago Silensi, vocabulo hoc a quodam monte nimis excelso et grandi olim [sibi] indito’⁶⁸ ([it] is located in the land *Silensi*, and its name was given [to it] after a very high and large mountain). He claims, therefore, that the name was given ‘a long time ago’, or ‘some time ago’ (*olim*) which, although imprecise, seems unlikely to indicate that this could have happened in the times of Thietmar, when the territories were incorporated into the sphere of the Polish monarchy. It is worth noting here that in a later part of the sentence the chronicler states that in pagan times the mountain was worshipped by all local inhabitants,⁶⁹ pagan times, in the context of Thietmar’s chronicle, end with the establishment of a Christian monarchy in a given area.⁷⁰

⁶¹ *Widukindi res gestae Saxonicae. Widukinds Sachsengeschichte*, ed. Rudolf Buchner, Darmstadt 1971 (*Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* vol. 8), I, 17, p. 46.

⁶² In this form in: Thietmar, I, 4, p. 9. Chudzice (‘in pago Chutizi’; see II, 37: ‘in pago Chutici’); and the Dziadoszanie (IV, 45, p. 203: ‘ad Diedesizi pagum’; see VI, 57, p. 395: *Diedesi* – here without *pagus*).

⁶³ For example *ibidem* VI 23, p. 345: ‘in pago Redirierun’ (the Redarowie).

⁶⁴ See footnotes 44, 47, 49.

⁶⁵ *Thietmari Merseburgensis Episcopi Chronicon*, ed. Robert Holtzmann, transl. Werner Trillmich, 6. edition, Darmstadt 1992 (=Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, vol. 9), VII, 59, p. 421.

⁶⁶ *Thietmar*, p. 554.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem* IV, 45, p. 203; VII, 72, p. 571.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem* VII, 59, p. 555.

⁶⁹ Literally: ‘when the cursed paganism was practiced there’, see *ibidem* VII, 59, p. 555. ‘There’ (*ibi*) refers to the *pagus* rather than to the mountain.

⁷⁰ Stanisław Rosik, *Interpretacja chrześcijańska religii pogańskich Słowian w świetle kronik niemieckich XI–XII wieku (Thietmar, Adam z Bremy, Helmold)*, Wrocław 2000 (=Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis No. 2235. Historia 144), pp. 147 and following.

The etymological use of the name of the tribal land derived from its sacred pagan centre was an attractive theme for Thietmar, as emphasized by his similar treatment of the Głomacze. In this case, by explaining the name (*pagus*) *Silensi* Thietmar shows himself to be erudite; he may have repeated a particular topos, but the merit of his account in the context of historical study of nomenclature lies in linking the name of the territory with its sacred centre, in this case a mountain.

Thietmar's account should not therefore be taken as an answer to the question on the historical origin of the name *Silensi*. Even if the etymology is a genuine one (which is in line with one hypothesis, see below), it is provided by Thietmar based either on some local tale known to his contemporaries, or on the conjuncture (again, perhaps drawing on such tales) of the chronicler or an acquaintance, analogical to, for example, the case of Głomacze. Both solutions relate only to knowledge of Boleslaus the Brave's contemporaries and cannot be treated as valuable etymological evidence in academic research today.⁷¹

The very link between the name of the mountain and the territory may be treated as the basis for a study of the ideological importance of Ślęża as a sacred centre for local people (see below). The origin of the name of their land has sunk into oblivion. Rejecting the adjectival form of *Silensis* and considering its early pedigree as suggested by Thietmar, it seems most likely, by analogy to other western Slavic territorial names, that *Silensi* (*Cilensi*) was the original name of the Ślężanie tribe which found itself incorporated into the Piast state.

In this context, we should analyze the notes that appear in brackets in the above quotation which make the Dresden manuscript of the chronicle more legible. Due to the lack of the word *sibi* ('to it') unambiguously related to *pagus Silensi*, the original text emphasized the connection between the name (*vocabulum*), namely *Silensi*, with the mountain. It was only the addition of *sibi*, probably by Thietmar himself, that resulted in the interpretation that it was the *pagus* in which Niemcza lay that was given its name from the name of the mountain. However, as an ethnonym was probably used here, *sibi* does not change the core meaning of the etymological argument, but instead proves that *pagus* was for Thietmar most importantly a territory, even if it was used as the name of its inhabitants.

***Pagus Silensi* between the *barbaricum* and the regime of a Christian monarchy**

Thietmar treated the worship of the holy mountain in *pagus Silensi* as a thing of the past, especially among the elites whose customs brought about a new order in this territory. This political change was marked by the founding of the Bishopric in Wrocław, which created a new, alternative (to the Ślęża mountain) sacred centre in this territory,

⁷¹ But it can constitute indirect evidence, by confirming the uniqueness of the mountain in the eyes of Thietmar and his contemporaries, see S. Rosik, *Najdawniejsza postać*, pp. 72 and following.

but over a wider area. Importantly, we cannot be sure that Wrocław had belonged to *pagus Silensi* at all. Niemcza, on the other hand, raises no doubts in this respect; its military role was confirmed by Thietmar in 1017 and, importantly, it had its origins in the Great Moravian period; also, its nearby sites need to be considered in this case (such as, for instance, those in Gilów).⁷²

In this context, it seems more likely that the main centres of the Silesian ecumene were located near the Ślęża. Based on the records contained in the so-called *Bavarian Geographer*, attributing 20 centres (*civitates*) to the Ślężanie, as well as providing analogical information on other territorial units (*regiones*), a view arises that the ecumene was in fact polycentric. In the case of this and other Silesian ‘regions’, the reported number of *civitates* is generally recognized by scholars as credible, at least in an approximate sense.⁷³ Such calculations are correct when based on an assumption that *regio* corresponds to a defined tribal unit, which is difficult to question in the case of the Ślężanie and their neighbours from the Odra basin. However, as the note does not give such details as the location of the ecumene and its peripheries, we should take into account that the list also contains centres of settlement which were within the sphere of influence of the tribes.

This is an important reservation as – assuming that *civitates* were fortified centres of local, neighbouring communities⁷⁴ – we cannot be certain if the first, pre-Piast Wrocław fortress was established near a settlement of the Ślężanie,⁷⁵ for the Odra river crossing could have lain outside their ecumene, which, as mentioned above, was most likely centred around the Ślęża. At any rate, there is no doubt that the rising status of Wrocław was an element of the new order which in the 11th and 12th centuries brought an end to the *barbaricum* and introduced the culture of the West in these territories. In the process, relics of the tribal past became incorporated into the culture of the new Piast state, making them essential components of the new Silesian identity which was destined to integrate the region in the following centuries.

⁷² See for example Krzysztof Jaworski, *Znaleziska wielkomorawskie w Gilowie, Niemczy i Starym Książu na Dolnym Śląsku*, [in:] *Śląsk i Czechy a kultura wielkomorawska*, ed. Krzysztof Wachowski, Wrocław 1997, pp. 113–125.

⁷³ As opposed to those lying further north and east, where much larger numbers apply, see *Descriptio civitatum*, pp. 3 and following.

⁷⁴ While *civitates* are translated either as particular centres (e.g. *gords*) or as territories (e.g. districts), only the former interpretation seems fully justified here, especially in the context of an account on the Bulgars: ‘Vulgarii regio est immensa et populus multus, habens civitates V, eo quod multitudo ex eis sit et non sit eis opus civitates habere’ (see *Descriptio civitatum*, p. 2) (‘the Bulgars, whose land is vast and populous, have only five *civitates*, and it is because they are an enormous community and they do not need *civitates*’). In this context, *civitas* appears as a fortified centre rather than a territorial unit.

⁷⁵ We need to be cautious when referring to the *Bavarian Geographer* here: in the studies on the condition of the lands of Silesia in the 10th century this description is rather a source of analogies as to the structure and organisation of tribal communities rather than data on their exact number; it would be difficult to imagine that this number did not change over the years.

The heritage of the Ślężanie: the name of Silesia and its mountain (*Mons Silensis*). The significance of the rivers: the Ślęza and the Odra

Nomenclature based on the root of the ethnonym *Ślężanie* became the chief determinant of Silesian identity. Highlighting the difference between the ‘Ślężanian’ and the ‘Silesian’ substrates in interpreting the terminology of the 10–12th centuries is not a result of respect for variations in the contemporary language, but of respect towards the assumptions of historical reflection: considering the difference between the tribal communities and the later state regime which shaped Silesia as a region. For that reason, nomenclature containing an element of ‘Silesianess’ remains a part of the linguistic heritage of the Ślężanie. This, however, is a semiotic issue, as the (Ślężanie-)Silesian root has carried different messages over the centuries.

The stem ‘śl-’ in Silesian nomenclature is commonly associated with an Old European language substrate, meaning humidity, or an aquatic environment. Hence the strong position of the hypothesis that the name ‘Silesia’, and *de facto* the ethnonym *Ślężanie*, is connected with the river Ślęza,⁷⁶ by analogy to the Wiślanie, living by the Wisła river, or the Bużanie, living by the Bug river. According to this concept, the Ślężanie took over the nomenclature used by pre-Slavic inhabitants. However, the earliest record of the name Ślęza dates back to 1155 (*Selenza*),⁷⁷ therefore the claim that it served as a basis for the name of the people whose existence had been recorded some 300 years earlier, must remain a hypothesis. It is still possible that the hydronym was only established in the Slavic period.⁷⁸

In the light of the above-mentioned analogies linking the hydronym with the ethnonym, the latter proposition seems less likely, but in the context of the special phenomenon of the Ślęza mountain, it should be nevertheless taken into account when discussing the origins of Silesia. The oldest records point to a name ‘Ślęż’ (*Slenz*),⁷⁹ which finds an analogical form in 12th-century Polabia: mount *Zlensgor*⁸⁰ contains this stem, while there were no rivers of a similar name in the vicinity. This example suggests that the holy mountain of the Ślężanie might have not acquired its name according to the sequence: river–land–mountain. It would be safer to assume that the Ślężanie took their name from

⁷⁶ See for example Lech A. Tyszkiewicz, *Wandali Silingi a Śląsk*, ‘Sobótka’, 51 (1996), No. 1-3, p. 334; Jürgen Udolph, *Der Name Schlesiens*, „Jahrbuch der schlesischen Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität zu Breslau“, 38-39 (1997–1998), Stuttgart 1998, p. 15–18.

⁷⁷ See the Wrocław Bishopric bull from 1155, in: KDŚ, vol. 1, No. 35, p. 90.

⁷⁸ This alternative line of thought would undermine the thesis that the remnants of the population connected with the Przeworsk culture were dominated by the more numerous (proto-) Slavs – see above.

⁷⁹ The names *Slenz*, *Zlenz* were recorded around the mid-13th century. See Stanisław Rospond, *Ślęza* (1), [in:] *Słownik Starożytności Słowiańskich*, eds Władysław Kowalenko, Gerard Labuda, Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, vol. 5, Wrocław 1975, p. 564. The current name ‘Ślęza’ (used after World War II) is based on this historical form. Historical and political forces most likely saw that ‘Ślęza’ was used instead of the more appropriate ‘Ślęż’ (see footnote 98).

⁸⁰ See Jerzy Nalepa (*Ślęza Góra na pograniczu wielocko-lużyckim*, ‘Onomastica’, 2 (1956), pp. 318–322) states that the name of the Lusatian *Zlensgor* mountain is connected with the boggy land in its vicinity.

some kind of water element whose form remains unknown. Thus, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that the role of the mountain as a fundamental element in the landscape of the Silesian ecumene was not secondary to that of the river.

The thesis concerning the myth-building potential of the Ślęża as a central place of the Silesian landscape is supported by clear evidence only in Thietmar's account. The Ślęża had continued to play a central role until the modern period, being typically called 'the Mountain of Silesia' or 'the Silesian Mountain',⁸¹ with the first evidence of this perception dating back to the 12th century records, like for instance *Mons Silencij*.⁸² In the following centuries it was employed in various legends (concerning the beginnings of the Piast dynasty⁸³ for example, or the Canons Regular of Blessed Virgin Mary in Wrocław at Piasek/Sand Island⁸⁴) as a mountain at the heart of Silesia, but at least from the 14th century it began to lose these kinds of associations as a new name – *Zobtenberg*, or 'the mountain by Sobótka' – was beginning to be used.⁸⁵ Eventually, in the modern era, the latter name replaced the former one,⁸⁶ although the mountain maintained its significant role for the Silesians as a landmark and a characteristic feature of their land, evidence of which can be found in Stein's *Silesiographia* during the Renaissance.⁸⁷

Compared to the tribal period, the Ślęża river also became less important to settlement processes as was the case of other Odra tributaries upon which anthroporegions were located. Instead, the Odra became a vital communication channel, but firstly (and

⁸¹ In *Spominiki wrocławskie*, ed. Aleksander Semkowicz, [in:] *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 3, 2 edition, Warszawa 1961, p. 734 (footnote) from the 15th/16th-century the highest mountain of Silesia is mentioned: '*qui mons Silentii appellatur*', which literary means: 'which is called the Mountain of Silence'. The word 'Silentii', however, is probably related to the name 'the Mountain of Silesia' (*mons 'Szlesie'*, *mons Silesiae*), which was still used at that time; see footnote 81.

⁸² KDS, No. 22, p. 54.

⁸³ A good example can be found in a 14th-century version of the file of St Hedwig, in the legend of a Tatar Empress in Silesia, according to which the Piasts came from the Ślęża, and not from Gniezno; see *Vita s. Hedvigis (vita maior)*, ed. Aleksander Semkowicz, [in:] MPH, vol. 4, 2nd edition, Warszawa 1961, p. 561 (footnote): '*in dy Schlesien an dy grantze des Czottenberges, etwan der Furstenbergk genandt, von welchem berge dy alden Cronicken sagen, das dy alden edeln fursten in Schlesien und Polan ire ursprungliche geburt haben und uff dy czeyt mechtiger schlosz czwey yn Schlesien seyn gelegen, als nemlichen Furstenbergk und Lewbes...*'; see Marek Cetwiński, *Chronica abbatum beatae Marie Virginis in arena o początkach klasztoru*, [w:] *idem, Metamorfozy śląskie*, Częstochowa 2002, pp. 93-94.

⁸⁴ *Chronica abbatum beatae Marie Virginis in arena*, ed. Gustav A. Stenzel, [in:] *Scriptores rerum Silesiacarum*, vol. 2, Breslau 1839, pp. 163 and following; discussion, see M. Cetwiński, *Chronica abbatum...* 87-94; Wojciech Mrozowicz, *Z dyskusji nad początkami klasztorów w średniowiecznej historiografii śląskiej*, [in:] *Origines*, pp. 171-178; Przemysław Wiszewski, *Zakonnicy i dworzanie – tradycje fundacji klasztorów w średniowiecznym dziejopisarstwie śląskim (XIII-XV w.)*, [in:] *Origines*, pp. 191 and following.

⁸⁵ See Stanisław Rosik, *Mons Silensis (Ślęża) a ukształtowanie się Śląska. Historyczny proces wobec najdawniejszej tradycji*, [in:] *Ślązańskie światy*, eds. Wojciech Kunicki, Joanna Smereka, Wrocław 2011, p. 69.

⁸⁶ Both names were in use still in the 16th century, as proved by a passage for the 'Chronicle of Benedictus': '*supra Montem Szlesie alias Czottenbergk*' – see *Kronika książąt polskich*, ed. Zygmunt Węcławski, [in:] *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 3, Lwów 1878, p. 558, footnote.

⁸⁷ Bartholomeus Stenus, *Descriptio tocius Silesie et civitatis regie Vratislaviensis*, ed. Hermann Markgraf, Breslau 1902 (=Scriptores rerum Silesiacarum, vol. 17), p. 5: '*unum, quod in mediterranea longius extenditur, Montem Sequacem sua lingua vocant, cui et ejusdem nominis oppidum subjacet; sequacis autem cognomen obtinuit, quod quocunque proficiscentes prosequi propter altitudinem videatur...*'. The aforementioned weakening influence of the Ślęża on Silesian myth was probably related to the processes of colonization and urbanization, see S. Rosik, *Mons Silensis (Ślęża)*, p. 69 and following.

more importantly for our period of interest) it acted as a defence line, with a system of strongholds acting as basic centres of state administration.⁸⁸ We discussed above the fundamental role of Wrocław as the key centre for the post-tribal state and Church regime, but ultimately it was the concentration of power in this very centre that hindered ‘silencing’ processes in the region.

Silesia steps out from under the shadow of Wrocław

The *Chronicle of Gallus Anonymus* shows that it was the central role of Wrocław rather than the Silesian element that mostly determined the sphere of the state and Church in the territories of our interest at the turn of the 12th century. Comes of Wrocław, Magnus, in the description of the events of 1093 is characterised as holder of ducal title, and the assembly under his leadership took decisions of the highest importance (for example regarding the support for Zbigniew in his struggle for power in Poland).⁸⁹ With a high degree of probability, we can assume (see above) that at that time the province of Wrocław, territorially identical to that of the Bishopric, had an alternative, less popular name which contained a Silesian element (*regio Zleznensis*).

In that period, ‘Silesianness’ was most likely associated with the former territory of the Ślężanie, and therefore the whole state and Church province had to be called by the name of its capital, Wrocław. This name was even more attractive considering that the land was in the early stages of Christianization, and using the name Silesia would have meant referring to the Ślęża, the worship of which was probably still practised by the local population. The idea of Piotr Włostowic to set up a monastery on the mountain can be explained, among other things, by his striving to suppress its cult, as mentioned by Thietmar. In this context, the figure of St. John the Baptist played a significant role, both as the patron of the Diocese and for the missionary activity in a country that was so strongly marked, with its very name, by the pagan tradition.

The situation changed within the generation of Boleslaus the Wrymouth’s grandsons when Boleslaus the Tall (Bolesław Wysoki), in the Lubiąż Charter of 1175, established a ducal title for Silesia. The motivation for this decision, maintained by Henry the Bearded (Henryk Brodaty), remains a matter of speculation. Boleslaus, having returned to his patrimony, could in this way manifest independence from his uncles, Polish dukes who were responsible for the defeat of his father, Ladislas the Exile.⁹⁰ One should mention here a charter issued for Cistercian monks who came from Germany and in whose consciousness it was not the entirety of Poland, which at the time still included

⁸⁸ See for example Sławomir Moździoch, *Castrum munitissimum Bytom. Lokalny ośrodek władzy w państwie wczesnopiastowskim*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 64–67. Earlier, a comprehensive study: *idem, Organizacja gospodarcza państwa wczesnopiastowskiego na Śląsku. Studium archeologiczne*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1990.

⁸⁹ Gall II, 4, pp. 70 and following.

⁹⁰ Recently on this issue, P. Wiszewski, *Region*, pp. 20–23.

Silesia, but Silesia itself that came to function as their homeland. On the other hand, promoting this Silesian tradition seems to be significant for international relations, specifically to foster closer ties with the Holy Roman Empire.

Other Polish rulers treated the dominance of the Empire more as a necessary evil (especially the activity of Barbarossa), whereas Boleslaus the Tall and Henry the Bearded were much more favourably inclined towards increased collaboration with the Germans, which did not mean – especially in the case of the latter ruler – withdrawing from Polish politics. Rather than a manifestation of separatism, this approach should be considered an effort to gain recognition for the rulers' own lands, analogies of which can also be found in the titles of the rulers of other parts of the fragmented Piast state.⁹¹ Thus, the grounds were being prepared to found the separate tradition of the Silesian Piasts, the development of which saw some anti-Polish elements in the following centuries (for example, the dynasty being said to have originated not in Gniezno but on the Ślęża).⁹² This was not yet the case in the times of Boleslaus the Tall or Henry the Bearded, but a question arises as to the social background of such traditions.

It is possible that magnate elites were key in this respect, as they were engaged in patronage on a regional scale and thus enjoyed a unique position in the region.⁹³ A prominent example of this elite, Piotr Włostowic (d. ca. 1151) is believed to have given rise to a local current in Latin literature in the 12th century. A key work to prove this was to be the so-called *Carmen Mauri* (The Song of the Moor), which was to praise this magnate as patron. The existence of the piece, however, is only indicated in *Chronica Poloniae Maioris* (*The Chronicle of Greater Poland*), from the 13th century at the earliest, on the basis of which it would be rather difficult to determine its Silesian origin. Simultaneously, based on the hypothesis whereby the title Moor was connected with the Benedictine Monastery of St. Vincent in Wrocław, a reconstruction of the song was created in the 20th century. This hypothetical reconstruction was published in the series *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, as an appendix to *Cronica Petri comitis*, known from the first decades of the 16th century and used in the process of 'reconstruction'.⁹⁴ However, the current state of research does not lend enough evidence to support the hypothesis regarding the Silesian origin of *Carmen Mauri*, nor to date it to the 12th century, but most controversial is the linking of the piece with the aforementioned chronicle from a much later period.⁹⁵ Therefore, no sufficient evidence exists to support the thesis that a Silesian

⁹¹ See for example the above, footnote 49.

⁹² For example Marek Cetwiński, *Piastowie rodowitymi Ślęzakami: średniowieczna „tradycja wynaleziona”*, [in:] *Radices*, pp. 129–134; see above, footnote 81.

⁹³ On their regional identity in the 12th century, recently: P. Wiszewski, *Region...*, pp. 19 and following, 23.

⁹⁴ See *Cronica Petri comitis Poloniae wraz z tzw. Carmen Mauri*, ed. Marian Plezia, Kraków 1951 (=Monumenta Poloniae historica, n.s., vol. 3). About the reconstruction of *Carmen Mauri*, see M. Plezia, *Wstęp*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. I–LXIII.

⁹⁵ In the light of current research we can only conclude that some earlier poem was incorporated into the *Chronicle*, whose volume, not to mention the origin, remains unknown. Thus, linking the poem with *Carmen Mauri* is merely one element of the hypothesis whose components include not only the Wrocław

literary culture had already developed in the 12th century with the help of local, non-Piast elites.

Moreover, we should take into account the fact that contemporary elites owned land all over Piast Poland and carried out foundation actions in many locations. A good example comes from Piotr Włostowic himself, who became so strongly associated with Silesia only in the later Silesian tradition, and only for the sake of his office.⁹⁶ In this situation, we should consider that promoting the title *dux Zlesie* by the rulers might have been a tool to build this tradition and root it in the consciousness of the elites; Boleslaus the Tall was able to use the Cistercians to help him in this regard. These issues require further research. Here, we should emphasize that at the end of the period of our interest the Silesian element began to prevail over the Wrocław one in terms of defining the region's identity (for the time being, of course, this region did not extend beyond the Przesieka), thereby becoming a vital factor for fostering social ties in the area.

Conclusions

The above analysis of factors behind the formation of Silesia as a region within the monarchies of the 10th–12th centuries suggests that a principal driver of this complex process was the liquidation and re-evaluation of the significance of tribal components, promoted by the development of the state structures and Christianization.

A key determinant of regional identity, the region's name, while belonging to the cultural heritage of the tribal period, was not only given a new territorial dimension but most importantly received a dramatically different ideological meaning; it became an element of manifold traditions, not only of Silesian ones, as suggested by the *Chronicle of Wincenty Kadłubek* – a work which itself helped shape these traditions in terms of historiography. The central and myth-building element of the Silesian landscape, the Ślęża mountain, underwent a similar transformation as far as its cultural interpretation is concerned.

In the period discussed here a clear role in shaping settlement patterns in the region was played by the anthroporegions, being of ancient origin and closely connected to the local river network. In comparison to tribal times, the role of the Odra grew to become the axis for the state and Church administration, based on a system of strongholds. The integration of the region focused around the centre in Wrocław, but the process was

(Ołbin) origin of the piece but also a conviction that local Silesian literature was developed in a Slavic environment with a contribution of a representative of Romanesque culture (the 'Moor'), and as early as in the 12th century, before the Germanization of the Silesian elites (such thinking is clearly influenced by the socio-political discourse in Silesian historiography of the 19th and 20th century, now – hopefully – outmoded). For more on this issue, see Marek Cetwiński, *Historia i polityka. Teoria i praktyka mediewistyki na przykładzie badań dziejów Śląska*, Kraków 2008, pp. 172–191.

⁹⁶ In a copy dated to 1209 (after 1261) called 'comes Zlezic', see KDS, No. 243, p. 292.

slowed down by the fragmentation (after 1138) of the territory, which lay in one diocese and earlier, quite likely, within one state province.

What was also key to the formation of the region was that in the 2nd half of the 12th century and in the early 13th century the concept of ‘Silesianess’ was narrowed down to the territories of Lower Silesia, and that regional Silesian titles began to prevail over Wrocław ones, which meant a revival of the old Silesian naming tradition in these territories. Thus, Silesia as a region became a lasting element of the social and political life of Poland in the age of fragmentation, although the area of the upper Odra river was to be ‘Silesianased’ only in the 15th century.

In fact, in the case of most of the aforementioned aspects of regional formation the tribal roots had already been cut away in the period when the region covered only the territories of the present Lower Silesia. It is worth emphasizing this as today in Poland the name ‘Silesia’ is most commonly associated, due to various socio-political initiatives, with Upper Silesia. This proves that following the origins discussed in the present article, the formation of the various Silesian identities has been chiefly determined not by tribal factors but by later phenomena, to a variable extent linked to the political sphere, especially in the era of national states.

Therefore, what gains particular importance is the postulate that it is necessary to demythologize the views on the role of tribal heritage in shaping the cultural character of the region. This should be emphasized especially in the light of various scientifically-dubious ideas, based on unverified speculations and myths, which promote an unfounded image of the prominent role of *barbaricum* in the historical genesis of the land. The best example of this can be found in the renaming of the central mountain of the region to ‘Ślęża’ over sixty years ago.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Renaming the mountain officially to ‘Ślęża’ after World War II constituted an acknowledgement of its tribal origin as well as of the oldest records of its name (*Slenz*, see above, footnote 80), and was an element of the Polonization of the territories incorporated to Poland in 1945. One should remember, though, that the mountain already had a Polish name: Sobótka (with a Latin counterpart being *Mons Soboticus*, German: *Zobtenberg*), with which the tradition of Silesian origins had been linked. To give an excellent example, the title of one of the most important Polish historical journals published since 1946 was given the name *Sobótka* (‘Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka’). Thus, the new name of the mountain contained a purely Slavic element, referring to the Ślężanie. The renaming operation was similar – though not identical – to the attempts to introduce the name Silingberg before World War II, in order to promote a belief that it had been the holy mountain of the Silingi (see M. Cetwiński, *Metamorfozy*, p. 264).