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The multi-ethnic character of medieval Silesian society and its influence on the region's cohesion (12th–15th centuries)

Abstract:

From the end of the 13th century the number of German settlers rapidly grew in what had been a mostly Polish-speaking community of Silesians. Piotr Górecki indicated that the presence of newcomers from Germany in the Piast realm led to an assimilation that did not involve the complete adoption of the norms of one ethnic group by another. On the contrary, those involved in these relations acknowledged the differences between the two groups. At the same time, in order to avoid conflict it was important to gain knowledge about the other group, thus enabling the stable coexistence of the two communities in the same territory. However, this well-proven hypothesis leaves open the question of how this dynamic process affected regional cohesion. Did it lead to the strengthening of local communities by forcing their members to focus on cooperation in the local context, ignoring the broader regional setting? Or perhaps, on the contrary, the need to mediate between groups of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds stretched beyond local boundaries?

Dynamically changing ethnic relations in Silesia between the 13th and 15th centuries had a mixed impact on the cohesion of the regional community. This diversity ultimately strengthened the sense of the region's separateness from its neighbours. A common administrative framework set up in the 15th century did not, in the eyes of contemporaries, overshadow the specificity of the multiethnicity, multilingualism and inter-ethnic relationships within Silesian society. These were perceived as unique when contrasted with similar phenomena taking place in neighbouring countries. At the local level, the possibility to make reference to the situation in the region as a whole when resolving ethnic conflicts sustained awareness of the importance of the regional dimension in the proper functioning of the local community. This was not a static system. Silesians demonstrated diverse perceptions and attitudes towards multiethnicity and the impact of this phenomenon on the cohesion of various communities operating within the region was diverse as well. A presentation of these phenomena in the context of time and in the pragmatic perspective of the sources describing them paves the way for a new approach towards Silesian multiethnicity as a dynamic phenomenon which does not necessarily take one course throughout the entire territory.

In a 2003 article, Piotr Górecki indicated that the presence of newcomers from Germany in the territory of the Piast realm in the 13th century among the much larger Polish-speaking community led to a particular kind of assimilation. This assimilation did not involve complete adoption of the customs and norms of one ethnic group by another, which would result in a unique union of the two and the emergence of a new ethnic community. On the contrary, Górecki opined that these contacts, which required management of conflict situations, made those who were involved in these relations realize the differences

between the two groups. At the same time, in order to avoid conflict it was important to gain knowledge about the other group, thus enabling stable coexistence of the two communities in the same territory.[1] As we shall see, these arguments, largely based on the analysis of the *Henryków Book*, describe the unique character of a certain stage of contacts between different ethnic groups in the society of Silesia. However, they leave open the question of how this dynamic process affected regional cohesion? Did it lead to the strengthening of local communities by forcing their members to focus on cooperation in the local context, ignoring the broader regional setting? Or perhaps, on the contrary, the need to mediate between groups of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds stretched beyond local boundaries? This might have paved the way for members of certain groups to interpret the elements comprising ethnic background (law, customs) from the perspective of the situation as observed in the whole region. Knowledge acquired this way might then be used in local contexts.

Between the close of the 12th century and the beginning of the 16th century, the upper and middle Odra region became a destination of large-scale migration for newcomers from the Holy Roman Empire. The population living in this area was confronted with new definitions of acceptable cultural behaviour, which from the second half of the 13th century were promoted by local elites as the optimal behaviour for the functioning of the local community. Migrants arriving in Silesia did not constitute a homogeneous community in terms of culture or language. At the close of the 12th century and during the 13th century, despite the diversity of immigrants from German-speaking countries of the Holy Roman Empire, Silesia was also a destination for speakers of Romance languages.[2] Moreover, the presence of Jewish communities in the fortresses, and later in the towns, further diversified the local society.[3] Despite the linguistic, cultural and, to a lesser extent, religious diversity, not necessarily corresponding to social divisions resulting from profession, state, place of residence or social function, all residents were united in their sharing some sort of dependence on the power of local dukes and their officials. Historical traditions and political activity associated with the Piast dynasty created a vision of the regional unity extending beyond local divisions. In such a situation, did the diverse 'ethnicity' of the Odra region's medieval inhabitants affect regional cohesion through the end of the Middle Ages? What is even more important, did the 'national identity' of the Czechs, Poles or Germans that was formed between the 12th and the 14th centuries

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[1] Piotr Górecki, *Assimilation, Resistance, and Ethnic Group Formation in Medieval Poland: A European Paradigm?*, [in:] *Das Reich und Polen. Paralellen, Interaktionen und Formen der Akkulturation im hohen und späten Mittelalter*, eds Thomas Wünsch, Alexander Patschovsky, Ostfildern 2003 (=Vorträge und Forschungen, vol. 59), pp. 447–476.

[2] For basic data concerning source references see Benedykt Zientara, *Waloons in Silesia in the 12th and 13th Centuries*, 'Quaestiones Medii Aevi', 2 (1977), pp. 127–150.

[3] See Ludwig Oelsner, *Schlesische Juden im Mittelalter*, Breslau 1854; Bernhard Brilling, *Die jüdischen Gemeinden Mittelschlesiens. Entstehung und Geschichte*, Stuttgart 1972 (=Studia Delitzschiana, vol. 14).

have any influence on the functioning of the community of the area's inhabitants?[4] Benedykt Zientara pointed out in 1977 that in the Middle Ages national identity was shaped through accepting a vision of the past which was transmitted within a group and contained the idea of the origins of a community. A community built in this way was bonded by a unity, or at least similarity, of customs. The crucial factor, however, in differentiating tribal identity, which did not refer to the relationship of the community with a specific area, from national identity, was the commitment to a specific territory, the homeland. The sense of separateness from the social environment established on those foundations was closely connected with the sense of a community of communication, concerning in particular the language. In demonstrating their affiliation with such a group, both its members and outsiders used a name which, in its appropriate forms, designated the language, territory and people living there. The determining factor for the formation and sustainment of the cohesion of such a group was the functioning of a centre of power whose sovereignty extended over the entire group, or at least over its ideologically critical part, and the use of the concept of an ethnic community for political purposes. Medieval national identity differed from the modern concept in its range, relating merely to a small group of political elites.[5]

This description of a 'national' community in the Middle Ages could equally apply to a regional community. Inasmuch, however, as the people inhabiting a region developed a tradition that emphasized their exclusive relationship with the territory as the indigenous people of that land, they used the collective term for all residents, while being aware of belonging to a larger political body or ethnic community. In the medieval Odra region the situation became complicated as a result of the aforementioned migrations

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[4] Cf. František Graus, *Die Bildung eines Nationalbewußtseins im mittelalterlichen Böhmen*, 'Historica. Les sciences historiques en Tschécoslovaquie', 13 (1966), p. 5–49; Aleksander Gieysztor, *Więź narodowa i regionalna w polskim średniowieczu*, [in:] *Polska dzielnicowa i zjednoczona*, Warszawa 1972, pp. 9–36; Rainer Christoph Schwinges, *'Primäre' und 'sekundäre' Nation. Nationalbewusstsein und sozialer Wandel im mittelalterlichen Böhmen*, [in:] *Europa Slavica – Europa Orientalis. Festschrift für Herbert Ludat zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds Klaus-Detlev Grothusen, Karl Zernack, Berlin 1980, pp. 490–532; Anežka Merhoutová, Dušan Třeštík, *Ideové puvody v českém umění 12. století*, Praha 1985, pp. 47–81; Jerzy Strzelczyk, *Auf der Suche nach der nationalen Identität im Mittelalter. Der Fall Polen*, [in:] *Das europäische Mittelalter im Spannungsbogen des Vergleichs. Zwanzig internationale Beiträge zu Praxis, Problemen und der historischen Perspektiven Komparatistik,* ed. Michael Borgolte, Berlin 2001 (=Europa im Mittelalter, vol. 1), pp. 359–369; František Šmahel, *Idea národa v husitských Čechách*, Praha 2000 (2nd edition). Issues concerning the vision of history promoted in 12th–14th century historiographies shaping medieval nations were synthetically presented by Norbert Kersken, *Geschichtsschreibung im Europa der 'nationes'. Nationalgeschichtliche Gesamtdarstellungen im Mittelalter*, Köln/Weimar/Wien 1995 (=Münstersche Historische Forschungen, vol. 8).

[5] See Benedykt Zientara, *Struktury narodowe średniowiecza. Próba analizy terminologii przedkapitalistycznych form świadomości narodowej*, 'Kwartalnik Historyczny', 84 (1977), pp. 287–311; *idem*, *Świt narodów europejskich. Powstawanie świadomości narodowej na obszarze Europy pokarolińskiej*, Warsaw 1985, pp. 9–28 (German translation: *idem*, *Frühzeit der europäischen Nationen. Die Entstehung von Nationalbewusstsein im nachkarolingischen Europa*, trans. Jürgen Heyde, preface by Klaus Zernack, Osnabrück 1997 (=Klio in Polen, vol. 1)); *idem*, *Świadomość narodowa w Europie Zachodniej w średniowieczu. Powstanie i mechanizmy zjawiska*, [in:] *Państwo, naród, stany w świadomości wieków średnich. Pamięci Benedykta Zientary (1929–1983)*, eds Aleksander Gieysztor, Sławomir Gawlas, Warsaw 1990, pp. 11–26.

and settlement of migrants alongside members of the existing Polish-speaking community. In the course of the 13th and the 14th centuries, migrations across central and eastern Europe strengthened the sense of ethnic-national identity of the residents of the various kingdoms and border regions. A similar situation, negatively affecting the cohesion of the regional community, should also be considered in respect of the inhabitants of the medieval Odra region. Wojciech Mrozowicz in the chapter on regional identity indicates that the literature on Silesian history reflects a sense shared by the residents of Silesia that they belonged to a community broader than the regional one, linked through a common history, and the resulting political consequences for the present. In the case of this study, apart from the hypothetical national bond connecting the residents of the Odra region, it is also necessary to take into account ethnic bonds, meaning a community defined in terms of common language, customs and laws, leaving open the question concerning the nature of its members' territorial frames of reference.[6] Such a distinction between national and ethnic community becomes especially important in the case of a community formed by multiple groups whose members speak different languages and observe different laws, and yet indicate the same area as their territory in geographical and cultural terms. In our case, this territory is the Odra region, called Silesia. However, as we shall see further on, in most cases it is impossible to prove what form of relationship with the 'homeland', if there was any, was seen as characteristic of the communities inhabiting Silesia and perceived as ethnic groups.

The discussion about the role of ethnic issues in the history of Silesia has so far been determined by deliberations taking place in medieval studies of the 19th- and 20th-centuries, which on the one hand have concerned the roots of Silesia's German character, while on the other hand have focused on the origin of the 'separation' of Silesians from the Polish national community. Nowadays, both of these trends can be regarded as anachronistic. In this debate, historians applied the concept of the modern nation living in a unitarian state, although they were studying social phenomena taking place between the 12th and 15th centuries, when the organization of societies was dominated by polycentric structures, multi-faceted relationships between social groups differentiated in terms of law.[7] At the same time it cannot be denied that the problems indicated by our

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[6] From the abundant literature on ethnic bonds in the Middle Ages, with an emphasis on the role of language and customs, but also on the function of oral and written narratives as reinforcing a sense of bond, we shall quote Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World*, p. 53 (=New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), Walter Pohl, *Die Germanen*, Munich 2000, pp. 7, 72–78, as well as the comments of Stephen J. Harris introducing issues of ethnicity in the context of early medieval literature, *Race and Ethnicity in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, New York/London 2003 (=Studies in medieval history and culture, vol. 24), pp. 7–10.

[7] For a comparative study on issues related to the migration of settlers from the Holy Roman Empire to the east and the social changes thus caused see the articles in *Historiographical Approaches to Medieval Colonization of East Central Europe. A Comparative Analysis against the Background of Other European Interethnic Colonization Processes in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jan M. Piskorski, Boulder/New York 2002 (=Columbia University Press. East European Monographs, vol. 611). The older German and Polish literature is presented in the volume *Deutsche Ostforschung und polnische Westforschung im Spannungs-*

predecessors played an important role in the history of the community of Silesia. As has already been pointed out, between the last quarter of the 12th century and the middle of the 14th century, the arrival of a large number of migrants from the Holy Roman Empire to Silesia led to a great cultural change. In the period between the time when the dukes of the Piast dynasty started the broad economic reconstruction of their lands (the twilight of the 12th century), and the emergence of Silesia as one province under the rule of the Kings of Bohemia (the second half of the 15th century), the language of the newcomers dominated communication between the residents of the Odra region. This was brought about by the large-scale establishment of towns and villages following western European legal models, which began in the second half of the 13th century and saw significant participation of settlers from the Holy Roman Empire. Over several decades they had come to form an elite of power and wealth in local communities, especially in urban areas. At the same time, they maintained their own separate culture.[8] On the other hand, the knights, who had been increasingly migrating to the courts of the Silesian dukes since the mid-13th century, upheld their own customs despite their ties to local elites. What is more, by adopting these customs and language as the model of court life, the dukes created conditions conducive to gradual adoption of the German language and the behaviour of the arrived knights as the standard for all Silesian knights.[9]

Although the official language used by the Silesian elites of court, knights and burghers until the close of the 14th century was Latin, from the beginning of the 14th century the German language was used with growing frequency.[10] In the 15th century, German was used almost as often as Latin as a language of urban historiography,[11] although, in contrast to the official nature of Latin, it served mostly purposes of dissemination. The move away from Polish in written communication at that time in Silesia points to a specific division of its community. This division did not stem from

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[8] *feld von Wissenschaft und Politik. Disziplinen im Vergleich*, eds Jan M. Piskorski, Jürgenn Hackmann, Rudolf Jaworski, Osnabrück 2002.

[8] A collection of more recent publications concerning city location with the German law in Poland is presented in *Rechtsstadtgründungen im mittelalterlichen Polen*, ed. Eduard Mühle, Köln 2011 (=Städteforschung A 81) containing articles on Silesia by Mateusz Goliński, Stanisław Rosik and Rościsław Żerelik. For a review of the studies see Marta Młynarska-Kaletynowa, *O procesach lokacyjnych miast w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej*, [in:] *Procesy lokacyjne miast w Europie środkowo-wschodniej. Materiały z konferencji międzynarodowej w Lądku Zdroju, 28th–29th October, 2002*, eds Cezary Buśko, Mateusz Goliński, Barbara Krukiewicz, Wrocław 2006 (=Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis, no. 2985), pp. 9–17.

[9] See Tomasz Jurek, *Die Migration deutscher Ritter*, pp. 243–276, *idem*, *Vom Rittertum zum Adel*, pp. 61–67, both publications refer to earlier published literature.

[10] See Tomasz Jurek, *Die Urkundensprache im mittelalterlichen Schlesien*, [in:] *La langue des actes*, ed. Olivier Guyotjeannin, digital publication, address: http://elec.enc.sorbonne.fr/CID2003/jurek, accessed on 5th February 2013.

[11] Volker Honemann, *Lateinische und volkssprachliche Geschichtsschreibung im Spätmittelalter. Zur Arbeitsweize des Chronisten Peter Eschenloer aus Breslau*, 'Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters', 52 (1996), pp. 617-628 and *idem*, [in:] V. Hoennmann, *Literaturlandschaften. Schriften zur deutschsprachigen Literatur im Osten des Reiches*, eds Rudolf Suntrup, Maryvonne Hagby, Franziska Küenzlen, Nine Miedema, Friedel H. Roolfs, Frankfurt am Main 2008 (=Medieval to Early Modern Culture. Kultureller Wandel vom Mittelalter zur Frühen Neuzeit, vol. 11), pp. 333–346.

a lack of non-western patterns for the use of local language in written communication. The example of the neighbouring Bohemia, closely linked with Silesia politically, could encourage authors to reach for the native language. The so-called *Chronicle of Dalimil*, a poem in verse, was written in the Czech language in the early 14th century. It presented a clearly reluctant attitude towards the burghers, or perhaps towards German or German-associated cultural influences in general.[12] In spite of the fact that German was used in 15th-century Bohemia as well as Latin for writing charters and other forms of documentation, there were also numerous charters written in Czech in circulation alongside them (see below). This contrasted sharply with the situation in Silesia. German urban communities were the first to use their local language as a medium confirming their internal cohesion and their distinctness from the external community. Burghers used German to record the legal order which was followed solely by them, referring to the models which were used by their feudal lords, the dukes of Silesia. At the request of Henry III, Duke of Wrocław, in 1261 the Magdeburg council issued to the burghers of Wrocław an extensive legal instruction in German.[13] As a result of this act, in the last quarter of the 13th century the burghers of Wrocław became the first in Lower Silesia to posses and use the norms of city rights written in German.[14] This is evidenced by the legal instruction for Głogów of 1280, issued by burghers of Wrocław at the request of Duke Henry of Głogów.[15] In 1302, an extended version of this instruction was decreed to the burghers as a ducal privilege by Duke Henry of Głogów in person. He also issued a charter in German for the burghers of Głogów, which was the capital city of his duchy. This first known charter written by a Silesian duke in a language other than Latin included-as had four decades earlier the instruction from the councillors of Magdeburg for Wrocław-the fundamental rights and privileges of the urban community.[16] Regardless of the languages used by the residents of the city in their family or professional circles, the language of legal norms defining the shape of life for all of them was to be German.

The symbolic significance of this charter is strengthened by the fact that at that time Henry of Głogów tried strenuously to unite all of Poland under his authority, which was divided into duchies.[17] Officially he used the title of the 'heir to the Kingdom of Poland', which in a document of 1302 was translated as 'eyn Erbe des Kunicriches czu Polennerlant'. In the document this phrase preceded the German version of the traditional title

[12] *Staročeská kronika tak řečeného Dlimila. Vydání textu a vešer'eho textového materiálu*, eds Jiří Daňhelka, Karel Hádek, Bohuslav Havránek, Naděžda Kvítková, vol. 1–2, Praha 1988, vol. 3: Marie Bláhová, *Staročeská kronika tak řečeného Dlimila v kontextu středověké historiografie latinského kulturního okruhu a její pramenná hodnota. Historický komentář. Rejstřík*, Praha 1995. See also Jindřich Toman, *The Question of Linguistic Nationalism in Medieval Bohemia*, [in:] *Langue et nation en Europe centrale et orientale du XVIIIe siécle á nos jours*, ed. Patrick Sériot, Lausanne 1996 (=Cahiers de l'Institut de linguistique et des sciences du langage de l' Université de Lausanne, vol. 8), pp. 349–356.
[13] BUb., No. 20, pp. 18–27.
[14] SUb., vol. 3, No. 381, pp. 248-255; Th. Goerlitz, *Verfassung*, pp. 15-22.
[15] BUb., No. 50, pp. 48–49.
[16] UGUS, No.102, pp. 443–446.
[17] See Tomasz Jurek, *Dziedzic Królestwa*, pp. 48–75.

of the Duke of Silesia, indicating the two capitals of Henry's rule: Głogów in Silesia and Poznań in Greater Poland: 'Herczoge von Zlezien, Herre czu Glogow und czu Pozna'.[18] Undoubtedly, the Duke felt he was a member of the 'political nation' of Poland, while stressing his special relationship with Silesia and Głogów. It did not bother him in this particular case to depart from the tradition of using Latin in the charters, which he had used in other documents that he had issued, including in ones issued to the residents of Głogów.[19] In this case the choice of German was probably determined by the language used in the Wrocław charter of 1280. It is also probable that in 1302 he received the German version of the legal instruction from Wrocław, according to which the ducal charter was prepared. The uniqueness of this situation is further demonstrated by the fact that contemporary charters issued by the municipal authorities of Wrocław were also written in Latin. German was used in them in the second half of the 14th century, but it began to dominate no sooner than in the 15th century.[20] Both the document of 1280 and the one of 1302 were, therefore, unique. This is significant for the issue explored here, as they clearly indicate the existence of a communication community created by the burghers which extended beyond the borders of particular duchies in Silesia. This community was based on ethnicity, and was accepted by its surroundings. Pragmatic considerations, meaning the pursuit of unambiguous formulation of the terms of municipal law, played a decisive role. As analogies with Czech suggest, definitions of Latin counterparts of these terms were not sufficiently precise at that time.[21] This pragmatic use of language, however, provided even stronger emphasis of the linguistic identity of both urban communities (of Wrocław and Głogów) in contrast to Latin, which was commonly used in the region as the language of law. On the other hand, it suggests a cohesion-building role for the ethnic factor, closely blended with the legal factor, within the social space of the contemporary, politically divided Silesia.

In comparison with the situation in the neighbouring Bohemia, the German language had been used in Silesian documents slightly earlier. However, an increasing amount of documents issued in local languages at the expense of Latin over time is visible in both countries. In both cases, the turning point is at the close of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century. In Bohemia, the significance of the German as well as Czech languages alongside Latin in written documents was growing steadily.[22] Meanwhile, in

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[18] UGUS, p. 443.

[19] The exceptions are two charters known only from summaries and copies: for the Hospital of the Holy Spirit at Ścinawa of 1296, known from a charter of 1444, with spelling that suggests a translation rather than original quote, and for the clothiers from Góra of 1304 (a copy of 1586, lost), see Tomasz Jurek, *Dziedzic Królestwa*, No. 28, p. 142; No. 67, p. 150.

[20] See BUb., *passim*.

[21] Ivan Hlávaček, *Die Nationalsprachen in den böhmisch-mährischen Stadtkanzleien der vorhussitischen Zeit*, [in:] *La langue des actes*, digital publication, address: http://elec.enc.sorbonne.fr/CID2003/hlavacek accessed on 5th Febuary 2013.

[22] Věra Uhlířová, *Zur Problematik der tschechisch verfaßten Urkunden der vorhussitischen Zeit*, 'Archiv für Diplomatik', 11/12 (1965/1966), pp. 469–544; Ivan Hlávaček, *Zum Phänomen der Sprachbenutzung im böhmischen diplomatischen Material bis zur hussitischen Revolution*, [in:] *The Development of Literate*

the original territory of Silesia, that is in the lands governed by the dukes whose title was 'duces Slesiae', the only language used in writing besides Latin was German. On the other hand, documents in Czech appeared in the 15th century, in the duchies of the southern Odra region, in what was later Upper Silesia. The scale of this phenomenon, however, was not large and it differed significantly from the situation in Bohemia. Among 629 preserved documents which circulated among various institutions in the territory of Upper Silesia between 1401–1450, the vast majority were written in Latin and German. Only 32 of them were written in Czech, nine of which were issued by institutions and individuals from outside of Silesia.[23] Others were mostly issued by the Dukes of Opava from a side line of the Přemyslid dynasty and in the territory of a duchy subordinate to them.[24] Equally numerous documents in Czech were issued by the Dukes of Cieszyn of the Piast dynasty, and the entities operating within their duchy.[25] This resulted from the distant location of the duchy, which lied next to Opava, the southernmost of the Silesian lands. Of unique character were the charters issued by Conrad of Oleśnica, Bishop of Wrocław. His chancellery issued charters in Latin and German, but in 1438 one of them was written in Czech. Its content is fairly standard, and it refers to the pledge of the bishop's properties in Jelcz in Lower Silesia. The choice of the language must have been determined by the requirements of the recipient of the charter, tenant Milota of Raduně, and his relatives from the Duchy of Opava.[26] However, this case clearly indicates that ethnic autonomy reflected also in the preferred language of legal documents was not an obstacle to the implementation of significant forms of economic and social activity in relationships with individuals representing a different cultural circle. The official trilingualism of the Duchies of Opava and Cieszyn in the 15th century, which had no equivalent in other territories of Silesia, did not lead to the isolation of the local people and their rulers. It is enough to indicate that the Dukes of Cieszyn were for many years simultaneously the rulers of Głogów, and their daughters were the superiors of the Abbey of the Order of Saint Claire in Wrocław.[27]

Analyzing the situation in Bohemia, Ivan Hlaváček pointed out that the introduction of a particular local language alongside Latin into documents was associated not so much with the ethnicity of the issuer, whether a duke, a lord or a city elite, but with the ethnic character of the entire social environment. In this context, the predominant usage of German in charters issued by all legal entities observed in Silesia in the 15th century, considering the extremely rare appearance – apart from the southern lands,

Mentalities in East Central Europe, eds Anna Adamska, Marco Mostert, Turnhout 2004 (=Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, vol. 9), pp. 289–310.

[23] _Regesty listin uložených v Horní Slezsku. Regesty dokumentów przechowywanych na Górnym Śląsku_, vol. 2: 1401–1450, edited by team led by Antoni Barciak, Karl Müller, Opava-Opole-Katowice 2011, Nos 85, 103, 157, 315, 317, 486, 502, 524, 617.

[24] _Ibidem_, nos. 323, 350, 361, 487, 488, 519, 558, 562, 564, 610, 629.

[25] _Ibidem_, nos. 429, 454, 525, 542, 545, 547, 570, 572, 592, 605, 624.

[26] _Ibidem_, no. 503, p. 191.

[27] See Patrycja Gąsiorowska, _Klaryski z dynastii Piastów_, 'Nasza Przeszłość', 94 (2000), pp. 119–134.

which were more strongly associated with Czech culture – of other local languages would indicate unification of the region's ethnicity. This is contradicted, however, by testimonies in sources from the second half of the 15th century, which clearly refer to two language communities in Silesia: German and Polish (see below). It is more likely that the growing significance of the German language reflects the ousting from the life of the Silesian community of those legal norms which had been rooted in the old, Polish-language tradition. Polish may still have been the language of everyday life for many people, but German was gradually becoming the language for describing the world of social norms, in relation to religious life as well. In Silesia, a pragmatic bilingualism and (in exceptional cases) trilingualism was a factor offering cohesion, because it did not exclude non-dominant cultural traditions from the regional community.

Language may have been a unifying factor for the community, taking into consideration the elites that accepted certain norms in terms of official communication. However, in relation to people who did not create or practice the law, but were merely subject to it, questions concerning the negative impact of ethnic divisions on the sense of cultural and ethnic bonds with other residents of the province could be considered rhetorical. Separation from the social environment resulting from cultural otherness is most evident in the example of the history of the Jews in Silesia. As in other parts of central Europe, they lived in urban spaces clearly identified by their contemporaries, often with specific terminology. From the mid-13th century, they were tolerated and protected by the authorities as a source of capital ensuring financial market liquidity.[28] When economic, political or religious tensions were heightening within local communities, they fell victim to brutal persecution and were officially removed beyond the framework of community life.[29] A classic example are the persecutions that affected the Jewish community of Silesia in 1453. That year, Jews living in several Silesian cities located in the duchies under direct rule of the King of Bohemia were accused of desecration of a Host. These events were linked with sermons given in these urban centres or nearby by John of Capistrano. Persecutions were of an official character and their core was constituted by legal proceedings. These led to the confiscation of property, death sentences or the exile of Jewish

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[28] With regard to Silesia see an analysis by Marcus Brann that remains accurate, *Geschichte der Juden in Schlesien*, vol. 1–5 (until 1526 r.), Breslau 1896–1907 (=Jahresbericht des Jüdisch Theologischen Seminars Fraenckel'scher Stiftung for 1896, 1897, 1901, 1907), about decentralized settlement in Wrocław see Marta Młynarska-Kaletynowa, *Wrocław w XII-XIII wieku. Przemiany społeczne i osadnicze*, Wrocław 1986, pp. 52–56, about the situation in Legnica, Silesia's second-largest, see Mateusz Goliński, *Jews in Medieval Legnica – their Location in Municipal Area*, [in:] *Jews in Silesia*, eds Marcin Wodziński, Janusz Spyra, Cracow 2001, pp. 17–32. For the history of the Jews in medieval Poland see Roman Grodecki, *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce do końca XIV wieku*, [in:] *idem*, *Polska piastowska. Pisma pośmiertne*, ed. Jerzy Wyrozumski, Warsaw 1969, pp. 595–702 and Hanna Zaremska, *Żydzi w średniowiecznej Polsce. Gmina krakowska*, Warsaw 2011. In relation to Cracow, but in a broader comparative perspective see Hanna Zaremska, *Jewish Street (Platea Judeorum) in Cracow: the 14th – the first half of the 15th c.*, 'Acta Polonie Historica', 83 (2001), pp. 27–56.

[29] See Marek Cetwiński, *Narodziny antysemickich stereotypów. Pogromy Żydów na Śląsku w XIV-XV wieku*, [in:] *idem*, *Śląski tygiel*, pp. 299–314.

citizens, and ultimately to the issue of a royal privilege for Lwówek Śląski (1454), Wrocław (1455) and Świdnica (1457) forbidding Jewish settlement in these cities.

Religious motivations underlying the quickly-aroused hostility, discussed together with the events, were perceived by contemporary historians as an element of a larger mechanism of sublimation of negative social emotions. Recent studies by Mateusz Goliński also indicate an additional and powerful economic stimulus for the actions of both royal officials and urban communities. The result of the *pogroms* was, on the one hand, annulment of debt obligations of Christians to the Jews; on the other hand, there was confiscation of Jewish property by the King and city authorities.[30] While this event was the largest in scale, it was not the first such act by Silesian burghers against the Jews, who were well aware of the reasons for this behaviour. In the spring of 1349, the Jews living in Wrocław informed the councillors that 'timent sibi propter famem communem'.[31] In fact, that year witnessed riots and persecution of the Jews, whose property was transferred the city and royal authorities.[32] The Jews were plainly the archetypal Other in the Christian regional community of Silesia. However, the nature of their otherness was deeper than just ethnic. It was connected with the role they played according to their Christian fellow residents in the order of the Universe stemming from religious beliefs. Their fate cannot, therefore, be an analogy for the relationships between Christian ethnic groups, which clearly identified their representatives – at least up to a point – but showed no desire to provoke conflict arising from diversity.

The first clear evidence of the division of the Christian community living in the Odra region along ethnic lines – save the debatable message of Thietmar of Merseburg concerning the residents of Niemcza[33] – is the foundation charter issued in 1175 by Boleslaus I the Tall, Duke of Silesia, for the Abbey in Lubiąż. Here we read that the Cistercians settled in the monastery had the right to bring to their landed property settlers from 'Teutonia', where their mother monastery Pforta was located ('quod est in Theotonia super Salam fluvium'). These 'Teutons' were to be eternally exempt from all 'iuris Polonici' burdens. On the other hand, 'Poloni' who did not belong to any other estate and became peasants (*coloni*) subject to the abbot were to pay tribute to him alone.[34] This did not mean their status was made fully equal with that enjoyed by German settlers, but only implied a limitation on their services, which from then on were to be provided only to the monastery. Analysis of the charter is complicated due to the fact that alongside 'Germans' and 'Poles' it uses a third term to define the population living in a certain area. The

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[30] M. Goliński, *Wrocławskie spisy zastawów*, pp. 7–17 (here also previous works).
[31] BUb., no. 189, p. 169.
[32] *Ibidem*, p. 170.
[33] See Thietmar, VII,60, pp. 554–555; Stanisław Rosik, *Der Christianizierungprozeß von Schlesien am Anfang des 11. Jahrhunderts nach der Chronik des Thietmar von Merseburg*, [in:] *Geschichte des christlichen Lebens im schlesischen Raum*, Teilband 1, eds Joachim Köhler, Rainer Bendel, Münster 2002 (=Religions- und Kulturgeschichte in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa, vol. 1), pp. 191–198 and the article by S. Rosik in the present publication.
[34] SUb., vol. 1, No. 45, p. 28.

witnesses to the document issued by Boleslaus, 'Duke of Silesia', were to be 'Misico dux maximus et princeps cum clero et populo Polonie'. These 'clerus et populus' were not qualified in terms of ethnicity, but through their relationship with Poland as a political entity of a traditional character. The hierarchy described in the document was clear: the Duke of Silesia was subordinate to the princeps and the most supreme duke ruling Poland. To the latter were subjected all – regardless of differences in social status – who were connected with Poland. The names 'Theotoni' and 'Poloni' in this document were indicative of the autonomy of groups of people who were equally dependent on the ruler. He determined the way in which they had to live under his rule. As Mieszko ruled the clergy and the people of Poland, so Boleslaus ruled the clergy and the people of Silesia. The ethnic autonomy of both groups was felt by the author of the document so clearly and unequivocally, and so integrally encompassing entire populations, that it required reference to proper names describing their communities. This community was composed in equal parts of members of different family, business and state social groups. The keystone of this dual community structure remained Boleslaus, the lawmaker who assigned places to all the subjects in his duchy. For him, and within his duchy, they were all equal as residents of Silesia.

Division of the region's population into two groups not only persisted in later years, but even grew stronger, overshadowing everything that they shared. The charter of 1175 envisaged only the possibility to embed Germans in the landed property of Lubiąż Abbey. However, the charter of Henry I the Bearded describing and approving the status of this property in 1202 explicitly emphasized that the Germans receiving their privileges from him lived 'in possessionibus eorum [i.e. monachorum Lubensium – P.W.] segregatim a Polonis'.[35] They were entitled to a special procedure for the settlement of disputes before a court of appropriate jurisdiction and in rulings restricted to them. The unique position of the Germans in the then social order in Silesia – without prejudging their numbers in the Silesian estates at the beginning of the 13th century – is proved by a passage in the same document from Henry I describing the privileges of other subjects of the Abbot of Lubiąż. They were 'Poloni vel aliarum nationum homines'.[36] The dictate's author did not allow for speculation. The abbot's landed property, and thus in a broader sense Silesia, was inhabited by many 'nations', but while others shared the legal status of the Poles (in this case they were subject to the same laws as other subjects of the Church in Henry's duchy), the Germans had a special place reserved. This legal separation of the Germans – or more broadly, the settlers under German law (*ius Theutonicum*) – from other residents was not unique to Silesia at that time. It could also observed during nearly the exact same period in Moravia, bordering with Silesia,[37] and also later in Hungary.

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[35] *Ibidem*, No. 77, p. 51.
[36] *Ibidem.*
[37] SUb., vol. 1, No. 91, p. 63; *Codex Diplomaticus et Epistolaris Moravie*, vol. 2, ed. Antoni Boczek, Olomouc 1839, no. 17, p. 22.

This did not lead to the disintegration of the Silesian community at the beginning of the 13th century for at least two reasons. First, the dependence of the position of the Germans on the power of the duke as a guarantor of their position in society had continued since 1175 and was strongly emphasized, and the ducal officials clearly took care that they should be thoroughly included in legislation applicable to them. As a result, although they were separated from the general public, they were inscribed in the generally applicable legal system. Secondly, and of potentially greater significance, their numbers were initially rather scarce. For years the landed property of Lubiąż had been an exception. Apart from this entity, until the second decade of the 13th century there was little mention in charters about settlement of tightly-knit groups of Germans in the estates of the Church or of the dukes of the Odra region. Even in the great Cistercian abbey in Trzebnica founded by Henry I, in 1203 the duke applied separate law to the settlement of so-called 'guests' – 'hospites', but most of them bore Slavic names and came from local settlements. In the absence of ethnic terms relating to them alone, it can be inferred that they were 'local' inhabitants of Silesia who spoke the local language.[38]

Nonetheless, in the same group we may observe interesting exceptions. Besides Dalko, Boguchwał, Radosz and Siestrzewit there was also – mentioned in one sentence among the foregoing as given to the abbey in Trzebnica by the Duke – a certain 'Bertholt filius Riner'.[39] Among the various names another conspicuous one is also the son of a duke's 'guest', nameless, whose father was 'Lodvicus'.[40] It is possible to indicate other names besides those, less obvious due to their phonetic inscription, which may have been carried by people with non-local cultural roots. Clearly, the duke used the term 'guests' for settling both his own subjects and newcomers with new laws established on an ad hoc basis. He created new a social group with a specific position in the legal system, rendering it unnecessary to emphasize their ethnic affinity. On the contrary, what is evident is rather a consciously constructed cohesion of small groups merged only through economic responsibilities, without any other reference to their origin, language or culture.[41] This corresponds precisely with the term used in the document for the Lubiąż Abbey – 'other nations', that is 'strangers' settled in Silesia with the status of guests, residing in small numbers among the dominant local community, blended in with the 'Polish nation'. The situation was different for the newcomers, who settled in tightly-knit groups. Walloons thus occupied in the first quarter of the 13th century the entire district of Wrocław, named the 'Walloon district' after them. In their case, the process of assimilation is difficult to grasp. The oft-cited example of Albert with Beard, a Silesian knight, son of a Walloon woman from Wrocław and a knight who had arrived from

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[38] SUb., vol. 1, No. 93, p. 64.

[39] *Ibidem.*

[40] *Ibidem*, p. 65.

[41] A functioning model of the asset in Trzebnica at the close of the 12th and in the 13th century was presented by Roman Grodecki, *Książęca włość trzebnicka na tle organizacji majątków książęcych w Polsce XII w.*, 'Kwartalnik Historyczny', 26 (1912), pp. 433–474; 27 (1913), pp. 1–66.

Germany, indicates that at the close of the 12th century 'foreigners' kept their distance from local elites. Only the dynamic changes occurring in the course of the 13th century enabled in Albert's generation complete assimilation of the children of newcomers with the local elites of Silesia.[42] At the same time, the ongoing legal and physical separation of the Germans, who settled whole communities in large and well-organized groups, from the Poles led to a deepening and consolidation of ethnic divisions within the Silesian community.

This phenomenon was evident by the mid-13th century as a result of economic reforms introduced by Silesian dukes. However, only in the second half of the 13th century did the migration of peasants, burghers and members of poor and middle-class knightly families lead to the emergence of a peculiar duality of society. This duality and coexistence of the Poles and the Germans was not viewed uniformly by Silesian elites. A view on the history of Silesia favourable to newcomers is presented in a well-known account of the author of the Silesian *Polish Chronicle* (*Chronica Polonorum*), probably written in the late 13th century in the monastery in Lubiąż. It described the alleged battle of Studnica (Rothkirch) between the sons of Henry I the Bearded: Henry II the Pious, and Conrad, who 'hated Germans' and wanted to expel the few living in Silesia. Henry II was supposed to fight together 'cum Theutinicis advenis, tam agricolis quam militibus, quos aliunde congregaverat', while Conrad fought the battle 'congregatis ex diversis provinciis Polonis'. Henry won, and countless Poles died at the battlefield.[43] Thus, the narrative presented could be a reflection of ethnic conflicts, but it more probably showed the dislike and fear felt by people of German origin outnumbered by the Poles. A certain reluctance of the author of *Chronica Polonorum* towards the Poles and his attempt to emphasize the importance of the Germans and imperial power is also visible in other parts of his work.[44] Particularly intriguing is his suggestion that Henry II was supposed to fight only at the head of a small group of Germans of diverse status against Conrad, who led Poles gathered from 'various provinces' but not from Silesia. The chronicler does not mention what the Poles living in Silesia were doing at that time. In this form the story, regardless of its origin, reflected a specific perception of the consequences resulting from fear and hostility towards others: those feelings had no right to shatter the peace in the region. For his hatred, Conrad was punished with a defeat, but the defeated ones were not Poles from Silesia.[45] A little less than a century after this account, a different interpretation of the events can be found in the work of Canon Peter of Byczyna, the author of *The*

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[42] For information about Albert see Marek Cetwiński, *Rycerstwo śląskie do końca XIII w. Biogramy i rodowody*, Wrocław 1982, p. 63, C.4; Tomasz Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo na Śląsku do połowy XIV wieku*, p. 195.

[43] *Kronika polska*, ed. Ludwik Ćwikliński, [in:] *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 3, p. 647.

[44] See Przemysław Wiszewski, *Dlaczego cesarz został kuchcikiem, a Piastowie przestali być królami? Przyczynek źródłoznawczy z historii mentalności i polityki XIII-wiecznych Ślązaków*, [in:] *Klio viae et invia. Opuscula Marco Cetwiński dedicata*, ed. Anna Odrzywolska-Kidawa, Warsaw 2010, pp. 91–98.

[45] See Benedykt Zientara, *Konrad Kędzierzawy i bitwa pod Studnicą*, 'Przegląd Historyczny', 70 (1979), pp. 27–55 and further in T. Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo*, p. 121.

Chronicle of Dukes of the Poles (*Chronica principum Poloniae*), written for the Silesian Duke Louis II of Brzeg in the second half of the 14th century, whose attitude towards the presence of the Poles in Silesia was favourable. According to that story, Henry II relied on the Germans but he assembled his army from all the inhabitants of Silesia, including the Poles.[46] On the other hand, Conrad led the army of the 'Poles' without specifying their territorial affiliation. Naturally, the outcome of the battle was the same in both versions, but the overtone of the later relation was slightly different than that of the earlier work. Here, the sanctity of the cohesion of the regional community was emphasized more strongly, with a clear emphasis on its dual nature. The Poles from outside could have posed a threat to the community, but the Poles in Silesia were equal partners of the local Germans.[47]

The two differing views of the chroniclers might either reflect the diversity of opinions on the multi-ethnicity of Silesia in general, or reveal the changes happening over time. While in the 13th century the Germans in Silesia could still feel insecure, the coexistence of both ethnic groups in the 14th century is a fact and the threat of aggression was not really felt from any of them. Nonetheless, it must be clear that in both cases the sense of belonging to the Silesian community transcended all ethnic differences. The cultural identity of Silesian knights and the elites of other lands governed by the Piast dynasty had already diverged at the end of the 13th century. Joint political and economic activity, as well as family ties, had led to the formation of a specific group. Their neighbours from the west identified them as Poles, and for the residents of the Piast duchies outside Silesia they were Germans.[48] Silesian knights constituted an ethnically complex group, perceived as consisting of representatives of two cultural circles and deliberately accentuating this dichotomy.[49] However, even though it cannot be ruled out that in the history of Silesia in the 13th and 14th centuries there were social tensions of ethnic origin, in the sources there is no evidence to support this thesis. Undoubtedly, the autonomy of the newcomers and the later coexistence of two ethnic groups were recognized. Still, there is no correlation between ethnic and political divisions. There is also no case in which national bonds would be preferred over regional – or rather local – loyalty towards political communities, duchies and rulers. The approach to ethnic issues as secondary in the context of the objectives and functioning of the whole community is clear in the actions of Duke Henry I the Bearded. This pioneer in supporting large-scale settlement of Germans in Silesia had no doubt that when he fought against the Archbishop of Magdeburg for the land of Lubusz, he was fighting 'contra Theutonicos', as it was written in his charter.[50]

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[46] 'Henricus cum Theutonicis tam advenis quam eciam Polonis militibus et aliis, de locis quibus potuit recollectis', *Kronika książąt polskich*, p. 487.

[47] See Przemysław Wiszewski, *Henryk II Pobożny. Biografia*, pp. 85–87.

[48] Marek Cetwiński*, Polak Albert i Niemiec Mroczko,* pp. 62–65.

[49] Tomasz Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo*, p. 122 quoted an example of the knights of the Głogów land appearing in confederation with the cities as 'Polen und Ducze gemeynlichen' in 1334 and in 1410.

[50] SUb., vol. 1, No. 305, p. 225, No. 314, p. 231.

But neither for him nor for his German subjects was that a threat of ending cooperation. Similarly, half a century later it was nothing unusual for the Canon of Byczyna that the Silesian Poles fought shoulder to shoulder with Silesian Germans alongside their hero, Henry II, against the evil Conrad supported by Poles who came from other lands.

In this context it is worth drawing attention to the profound change in the situation of newcomers from Germany within the community of Silesia which occurred in the 13th–14th centuries. Observing the effect of their entry into the local community, historians automatically and not entirely consciously accept the notion that the newcomers had intended from the start to settle there permanently. Starting from the observations of legal norms that appear in written sources, they describe the social situation while omitting a significant factor which was the uncertainty of the newcomers' situation. Moreover, the uncertainty was of a dual nature. It referred to both their own assessment of their position in a new place and to the expectations of the person who extended the invitation, who could not be certain how long the newcomers would remain under his sovereignty or in his social environment. While for the poorer newcomers it might have been hard to leave the newly obtained possessions and livelihoods, 13th-century mayors and village administrators, urban elites and knights showed considerable mobility. They wandered from duchy to duchy within the borders of Silesia, and they moved freely beyond its borders. Tomasz Jurek, tracing the fate of the knights who came to Silesia between the 13th and the first half of the 14th centuries, estimated that about one third of them stayed there temporarily, from a few weeks to five years.[51] Such precise data are at our disposal neither for burghers nor for peasants. For economic reasons, their mobility was probably lesser, especially after the end of the great economic changes occurring between the 13th and the first half of the 14th centuries. Nevertheless, of significance for this discussion is the fact that the vast majority of newcomers decided to stay despite the fact that it was relatively easy to leave Silesia. This means that they chose to accept the existing social reality with full awareness, including their position as strangers in a Polish-speaking legal and economic order, as this was where they could accomplish their most important objectives. Behind these decisions lay economic and prestige-related motives, while the pragmatic reasons for the newcomers' arrival to Silesia influenced the way in which they were perceived in the context of the surrounding environment. The position of the first generation of newcomers in the eyes of outsiders is evaluated in a passage from a bull of Pope Innocent III to Duke Henry I the Bearded of Silesia of 1217. In this bull, the pope wrote of the dispute between the Duke and the Bishop of Wrocław concerning the collection of tithe 'a quibusdam Teutonicis, qui de novo ad illius terre inducti fuerant incolatum'.[52] What is striking is the choice of an ambiguous phrase: 'ad incolatum illius [i.e. ducis] terre',[53] which could have meant both bringing

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[51] T. Jurek, *Obce rycerstwo*, pp. 20–21.
[52] SUb I, No.153, p. 111.
[53] See J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae latinitatis lexicon minus*, Leiden 1984, p. 522.

settlers 'to settle in his land' and 'to populate his land' from the beginning, that is to live on land that had not yet been inhabited. In the context of the economic objectives behind the duke's actions suggested in the bull, as he was expanding the area of arable land, the latter interpretation seems more likely. This in turn pointed to the issue of their otherness, or perhaps 'novelty' constantly raised in the contemporary discourse on the theme of the newcomers' position, which was emphasized by the fact that they settled lands that previously had not been cultivated or permanently settled.

As time passed and the multi-ethnicity of society was more widely accepted, the memory of the first period of settlement, which was a time of immersion into the new community, could have faded, gradually replaced with a vision of cooperation with Silesians. This does not mean, however, that the deep historical differences between the newcomers and the Poles had been duly forgotten by all. Not in the least. Two interpretations of the battle of Studnica presented by two chronicles have already been compared above, and they prove to have perceived and described ethnic otherness in different ways. Now we will describe yet another source, one which concerns the way medieval Silesians perceived the moment of encounter between the two ethnic groups. In the second half of the 14th century the Cistercian monastery in Lubiąż still followed the traditional way of thinking about the difference between the newcomers and local residents. However, a very important point in the ensuing discussion arose – the ethnic aspect played no major part in this narrative, contrary to the oft-repeated opinion of medievalists.[54] In a work known today as *The Verse of Lubiąż* (*Versus lubenses*), an anonymous monk described the early days of the monastery. In this narrative, the monks who came from the home abbey in Pforta were supposed to have encountered local people participating in heathen cults and unfamiliar with the basic amenities of civilization. This situation was to be changed no sooner than with the activities of the Cistercians. The juxtaposition concerns the relationship between the monks, newcomers from Pforta, and the generally recognized 'gens Polonie' who 'pauper fuit haut operosa'. There is no further indication whether the changes that transformed Lubiąż into a thriving economic landed property took place due to the settlers brought from Germany. It was solely the monks who accomplished this with their own effort and work, which is to say: with the local people.[55] We also do not know if the anonymous author wanted the phrase 'gens Polonie' to hold

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[54] German historiography used *Versus lubenses* to emphasize the importance of German 'Kulturträgern' to civilize the primitive Polish population in Silesia. From the 1970s, some medievalists from Germany supported researchers who indicated the topical nature of the themes used in the work and the lack of archaeological evidence for the picture painted of how backward the areas transferred to the abbey at the time of the foundation were (see notes by Siegfried Epperlein, *Zur Mittelalterforschung in der DDR – eine Reminiszenz,* [in:] *Mittelalterforschung nach der Wende 1989,* ed. Michael Borgolte, Munich 1995 (=Historische Zeitschrift, Beiheft 20), pp. 65–66). Polish researchers often treated the work as an example of German chauvinism, biased and discrediting the Poles, see review of the literature in: Konstanty Klemens Jażdżewski, *Lubiąż. Losy i kultura umysłowa śląskiego opactwa cystersów (1163–1642)*, Wrocław 1992, pp. 113–114.

[55] *Versus lubenses*, [in:] *Monumenta Lubensia*, ed. Wilhelm Wattenbach, Breslau 1861, p. 15.

ethnic content. It is just as likely that he was trying to use this expression to emphasize geographical differences: the monks came from Pforta to Poland, and the local people were characterized by the aforementioned unfavourable traits. Finally, the phrase 'gens Polonie' is very similar to the term 'Polonia populus' known from the foundation charter for the abbey of 1175, which was kept there for the whole time it existed. As mentioned above, the term was used in the charter mainly to emphasize social relations with regard to a wider political order, moving the context of ethnicity into the shadows. It is worth noting that the author of *Versus lubenses* did not contrast the monks as the Germans with local residents as Poles. He could have done so, as he called Casimir I the Restorer, the supposed founder of an earlier Benedictine monastery in Lubiąż, 'the King of the Poles'.[56] Apparently, however, from his point of view it was irrelevant to this perfect narrative whether 'the people of Poland' were ethnically homogeneous ('the Poles') or diverse. The practical objective of *The Verse of Lubiąż* was to prove that the monks owed their wealth to nobody but themselves. Even the family of the founder dukes provided them with only a humble beginning. The division of the community in *The Verse of Lubiąż*, so apparent, runs not along ethnic but rather community boundaries, with extreme emphasis on the rank of the group 'we', that is the Cistercians, as opposed to 'they', that is everyone outside the order and convent. It fit perfectly into the universal narratives about the early days of monasteries, which were also popular in Silesia. Written down after centuries, these stories emphasized the bravery of the first monks as well as both the wildness of nature and vulgarity and poverty of the local people.[57]

The ambivalent nature of the perception of ethnic diversity is brilliantly captured by the narrative of the *Henryków Book*, which was written in two stages: one shortly after 1268 and the second around 1310. Its authors, two Peters, Abbots of the Cistercian monastery in Henryków, which was a daughter monastery of Lubiąż, were aware of the ethnic diversity of the people surrounding the monastery in their times and before. They had to be aware of that, because this diversity implied peculiar legal practices regarding real estate transactions. The *Henryków Book* was written largely with the aim of defining and protecting the rights to the properties of the monastery.[58] Hence, the first of the authors, Peter (III), describing in the 1270s the way in which the monastery obtained the village of Bobolice, repeatedly indicated that it resulted from acting 'more polonico' of the duke and the current owners of the property, as well as members of the latter's family. This 'Polish custom' required that four men who were imprisoned for their crime

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[56] *Ibidem*, p. 14.

[57] See Siegfried Epperlein, *Mit fundacyjny niemieckich klasztorów cysterskich a relacja mnicha lubiąskiego z XIV wieku*, 'Przegląd Historyczny', 58 (1967), pp. 587–604; Robert Bartlett, *Tworzenie Europy,* transl. Grażyna Waługa, trans., Poznań 2003, pp. 234–236 (original: *The Making of Europe. Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change 950–1350*, 1993). With regard to Silesia see Przemysław Wiszewski, *Zakonnicy i dworzanie – tradycje fundacji klasztorów w średniowiecznym dziejopizarstwie śląskim (XIII–XV w.)*, [in:] *Origines mundi*, pp. 179–198.

[58] Piotr Górecki, *A local Society in Transition. The 'Henryków Book' and Related Sources*, Toronto 2007, pp. 13–15.

by the duke, mentioned by name, were to pay a fine if they wanted to avoid death for their offences. If these owners wanted to sell their village in order to obtain money to buy their rescue from death, by 'Polish custom' they had to ask their relatives for permission beforehand.[59] The right of repurchase (*ius retractus*), that is the primacy of family members in the sale of properties,[60] well-known from numerous testimonies from the lands under Piast rule, was without fail associated by Abbot Peter with the correct ethnic group. Strong emphasis of the connection with a particular ethnic group is clear especially in the context of legal terminology known from other sources describing the same principle. These sources consistently used the phrases *ius propinquitatis* and *ius proximitatis*. Only Abbot Peter treated this particular rule as a part of *ius/mos polonicum*.[61]

The *Henryków Book* also offers many examples of the complex mechanisms behind the reception of ethnic-based multiculturalism by the inhabitants of Silesia. A man named Michał, son of Dalibór, who – as the Slavic name of his father shows – knew very well the culture of the Polish ethnic group, owned a landed property at the border of the monastery gardens. And as, according to the writings of Abbot Peter, that Michał 'studebat sepius claustrum gravare', he settled 'Theutonicos' in this land. This turned out to be a huge problem for the monks, since as a result 'corizabant sacris diebus mulieres et puelle in pomerio nostro'. The dances of German women posed a threat to the monks' morality, and the monks' consent to that behaviour could in time lead to 'in consuetudinem senescunt', bringing the most terrible danger to the souls of the residents of the monastery. Therefore, Abbot Bodo urged Michał to change landed properties, giving him other land estates in exchange. The abbot bought the lands from the Germans and removed them from the disputed area.[62] In the ducal charter of 1254 quoted in the *Henryków Book* confirming the exchange and purchase of land from the Germans, there is no mention of the dances in the garden. This was probably an element of the oral tradition cherished in the monastery, which justified the not particularly beneficial-in the eyes of posterity-deal made by the abbot. This tradition is important to the issue discussed here, because it sustains the memory of 1) the distinctiveness of *Theutonicos* from the rest of the world's population, 2) the novelty of the customs brought in by them, 3) the gradual change in the nature of these customs from novelties brought in by strangers into local habits typical for the area's residents.[63]

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[59] *Liber fundationis claustri sancte Marie Virginis in Heinrichow*, I,4, p. 124.

[60] See the classic study by Zygfryd Rymaszewski, *Prawo bliższości krewnych w polskim prawie ziemskim do końca XV w.*, Wrocław–Warszawa 1970, for whom the *Henryków Book* was one of the most important sources.

[61] On *ius polonicum* in the *Henryków Book* see *ibidem*, pp. 10–12.

[62] *Liber fundationis claustri sancte Marie Virginis in Heinrichow*, I, 7, pp. 132–133.

[63] On this passage of the *Henryków Book* in the context of the pragmatic aspect of the narrative of Abbot Peter referring to moral values see Marek Cetwiński, *Corizabant mulieres et puelle in pomerio nostro. 'Księga henrykowska' o słabościach natury ludzkiej*, [in:] *Mundus hominis – cywilizacja, kultura, natura. Wokół interdyscyplinarności badań historycznych*, eds Stanisław Rosik, Przemysław Wiszewski, Wrocław 2006 (=Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis no. 2966, Historia 175), pp. 221–229.

The author of the form of the narrative analyzed here was Abbot Peter (III), closely linked to the German-language culture.[64] However, he apparently did not identify himself and his fellow monks with 'Germans' in general, nor did he treat them in any special way as compared with the group of local Polish residents.[65] He skilfully used Polish in his narrative following the course of events concerning small parts of monastic landed properties. His narrative unveils complex toponomastic processes, in which ethnically-developed cultural elements concerning the residents surrounding the monastery played a significant role.[66] Thus, writing about the name of a forest which in his 'apud modernos' times was called 'Bucuwin' – 'Bukowina', he pointed out that its initial name was completely different. Boleslaus I the Tall, the founder of Lubiąż, shared the 'suis rusticis' land, including this interesting portion, with a peasant named Głąb (*Glamb*). The peasant grubbed out the forest in a place which is now called 'Magnum Pratum, in Polonico vero Vela Lanca [that is Great Meadow]'. And the whole area (*circuitus*) of the forest was named Glambowitz – Głąbowice, that is the lands of Głąb and his descendants, 'qui nomen eadem silva hodierna die apud quosdam Polonos obtinet'.[67] It is worth noting that although each of the names mentioned by the monk from Henryków came from the Polish language, 'Bucowine' was a name used commonly irrespective of the ethnic affiliation of the speaker. However, in Polish circles a separate tradition was still followed which bound the name of the area with the already-absent peasant called Głąb and his descendants.

On the other hand, the traditional name of this area derived from the Polish language could have been replaced by a generally accepted name of German origin, as a result of the actions of one of its owners. So it was with 'Heinrichow', (Polish Henryków), which was created following the unification of several estates clustered around the dominant estate, named Januszowo ('Ianusowe, Ianusov') after the original owner, a knight ('militellus') named Janusz. Over time and in difficult circumstances his lands were taken by another *militellus*, whose name was Heinricus. Although this name is of Germanic origin, in 13th-century Silesia it did not determine the ethnic affiliation of its owner.[68] Nonetheless, the link between this particular Henry with German-speaking culture is indicated by the fact that his land was called 'Heinrichow' – 'Heinrichau', in accordance with the rules of the German language. The name of the entire settlement was

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[64] See Piotr Górecki, *A local Society*, pp.17–19.

[65] On the contrary, he sometimes pointed to the problems of the monastery that resulted from the activity of the Germans in Silesia, despite the clear treatment of German in the *Henryków Book* as the language which was commonly used by Peter and the recipients of his work, the monks of Lubiąż. See P. Górecki, *Assimilation*, pp. 458–459.

[66] On numerous fragments included in the *Henryków Book* containing information about the origin and meaning of place names in the area of the monastery see Piotr Górecki, *Communities of Legal Memory in Medieval Poland, ca. 1200–1240*, 'Journal of Medieval History', 24 (1998), pp.140–146.

[67] *Liber fundationis claustri sancte Marie Virginis in Heinrichow*, I,8, p. 134.

[68] On the 13th-century phenomenon of adopting German names by Silesian knights connected with Polish-speaking culture (the names derived from their dukes, mainly Conrad and Henry) see Marek Cetwiński, [Review:] *Benedykt Zientara, 'Henryk Brodaty i jego czasy', Warszawa 1975,* 'Sobótka', 31 (1976), No. 3, p. 492.

sealed by the decision of Abbot Mikołaj. He took over Henry's land and cut down a tree which stood in the middle of territory, and in doing so he changed the entire arrangement of the names existing in this land. The fallen tree was the sycamore tree – in Polish *jawor* – which gave its name to the brook Jaworzyca ('the daughter of the sycamore tree'). That brook flowed through the village when it was still called Januszów. The last trace of the original, Slavic toponymy was gone. Next, for the sake of Duke Henry, the founder, he named the entire neighbourhood Heinrichow, stretching the toponomastic custom so far reserved only for this part of the area.[69] Accurately recording the unique character of Silesian multiculturalism, Abbot Peter indicated the processes of assimilation and persistence of cultural traditions of distinct ethnic groups. However, neither did he in any way offer an evaluation of this situation, nor did he emphasize the moments in which the diverse ethnic background of the local cultures could have lead to conflict. Even if, as in the case of the cutting down of the eponymous tree – the sycamore – we can speak of violence whose consequences symbolically affected the acculturation of the local Polish population. For the chronicler, the significance of the culture of a given group of people was defined only through the pragmatic context of their relationship with the abbey. Similarly as in the case of the narrative of *Versus lubenses*, ethnic issues were of secondary importance when confronted with the needs of the local society. At the same time, problems arising from ethnic differences between cultures were identified and resolved by reference to supra-local structures, such as *ius polonicum* and its regional context, presented by experts in that law. Ethnic distinctiveness was inconvenient at that time for the local community, but through their identification in the context of the history and characteristics of the region it could not only be overcome, but actually used for the good of an interested group.

We shall note, however, that between the 14th and the first half of the 15th centuries, not everyone perceived cultural diversity as a fact that did not require evaluation. Ludolf, the Abbot of the monastery of Canons Regular in Żagań, writing about the convent at the time of his predecessors, mentioned scandalous habits developed by the brothers. Living at first in a rural monastery in Nowogród Bobrzański, they were then transferred to the abbey in Żagań, the capital of the duchy. Yet 'fratres (…) de campis silve in medium populi translati, silvestres adhuc in moribus erant'. Their numerous transgressions against monastic morality also stemmed from the fact that 'nam et plures fratrum Poloni erant in Newinborg, quorum proprium est plus bibere quam orare'.[70] It should be added, however, that this allusion concerning a distinguishing characteristic of the Poles (*proprium est*) did not further affect the narrative of the chronicle, in which issues of ethnicity play no part, for the evaluation of the monks from the rural provostry as deprived of some particular characteristics of civilized people was of a limited ethnic basis. It was

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[69] *Liber fundationis claustri sancte Marie Virginis in Heinrichow*, I,2, pp. 118–119.
[70] *Catalogus abbatum Saganensium,* ed. Gustav Adolf Stenzel [in:] *Scriptores rerum Silesiacarum,* ed. idem, vol. 1, Breslau 1835, VIII, p. 184.

rather in large part due to contrasting the residents of the city, who were more advanced in terms of civilizational standards, with the rural population in general.[71] Identification of the population of the city at the time of Abbot Ludolf with German culture and the population of the countryside with Polish culture led to the realization that the Poles living in the provostry of Nowogród Bobrzański were really so different in their habits that they could be perceived as 'silvestres in moribus'.

This situation is perfectly illustrated by miniatures adorning the so-called *Schlack-enwerth Codex* from the second half of the 14th century, which presents scenes from life of Saint Hedwig of Silesia. Especially noteworthy is the miniature depicting the meeting of Henry I the Bearded with his future father-in-law, the Count of Andechs, giving him his daughter, Hedwig, as a wife. The unknown author showed German knights and courtiers accompanying the Count alongside the representatives of Henry's court. The differences are striking – the members of Duke Henry the Bearded's court are different from the Germans in every respect: in hair, dress and type of arms. Henry and his family stand out against them, as they always presented by the standards of the German court.[72] On the other hand, the miniatures of the battle of Legnica from the same codex show the knights accompanying Henry II, son of Henry the Bearded, as fully following the standards of western knights.[73] The coats-of-arms of the knights clearly indicate that all of the families taking part in the battle, with no exception, descended from local elites of Polish culture.[74] Although half a century had passed since the beginning of the migration of Germans to Silesia, and a century since assimilation of newcomers changed into acculturation of the local community, the separateness of the two communities was still felt. The local residents, Silesians-Poles, differed from the people of the west and from Silesians of immigrant descent. Nonetheless, these differences were shrinking. The epicentre of the cultural influences that were shifting this reality towards acculturation of the local population was to be the duke's court.[75]

Researchers studying the history of the Silesian knights uniformly highlight the unique character of the transformation of the local Polish-speaking elites at the turn of the 12th and the 13th centuries into knights cultivating behaviour typical for the elites of the west in the 15th century. This did not mean, however, that elements of the customs

[71] See Anna Pobóg-Lenartowicz, *Silvestres in moribus erant. O wyższości miasta nad wsią na przykładzie kanoników regularnych z Żagania*, [in:] *Człowiek, sacrum, środowisko*, ed. Sławomir Moździoch, Wrocław 2000 (=Spotkania Bytomskie, vol. 4), p. 235–242.

[72] See Tomasz Jurek, *Fryzura narodowa średniowiecznych Polaków*, [in:] *Scriptura custos memoriae*, Poznań 2001, pp. 635–651; Przemysław Wiszewski, *Dlaczego Henryk syn Bolesława Wysokiego został Brodatym, czyli wokół różnych znaczeń brody księcia*, [in:] *Wędrówki rzeczy i idei w średniowieczu*, ed. Sławomir Moździoch, Wrocław 2004 (=Spotkania Bytomskie, vol. 5), pp. 41–59.

[73] Jakub Kostowski, Jacek Witkowski, *Książę Henryk II Pobożny i bitwa legnicka w ikonografii (XIII–XX w.)*, [in:] *Bitwa legnicka. Historia i tradycja*, ed. Wacław Korta, Wrocław–Warsaw 1994, pp. 283, 297–298.

[74] Tomasz Jurek, *Herby rycerstwa śląskiego na miniaturach Kodeksu o św. Jadwidze z 1353 roku*, 'Genealogia. Studia i Materiały Historyczne', 3 (1993), p. 32.

[75] M. Cetwiński, *Polak Albert i Niemiec Mroczko*, pp. 68–69, the beginning of this process stretches to the rule of Duke Boleslaus I the Tall.

or legal status of the local knights linked to the Polish cultural milieu had been completely abandoned. Even in 1337, the knights of the Góra district agreed to approve of King John of Luxembourg as their supreme master on condition that they would be treated 'prout alii principes Polonie vasalli sui habent'.[76] According to Tomasz Jurek, knights who were entitled to land and jurisdiction under Polish law resided in Silesia as late as in the 15th century.[77] Differences in the legal situations of individual knights had no greater significance for the functioning of the regional community. However, the particular position of an entire tight-knit group settled in a territory defined by administrative boundaries could weaken the sense of cultural unity of the elites of the region in favour of local ties.[78]

If, however, in the Silesian sources, especially those of the 15th century, we can point to statements presenting a reluctant attitude towards other nations, in particular against the Czechs, but also against the Poles, it would be very hard to identify any clearly negative assessment of Silesian community members because of their ethnic affiliation. This did not mean, of course, the actual absence of ethnic-related conflicts among the medieval Silesians. As was mentioned above, they were, however, of an exceptional character and were usually associated with periods of deep political and social tensions, and consequently with destabilization of the society's normal functioning. Although this was well illustrated by the aforementioned persecution of the Jews, we have already mentioned that these events cannot be used as an analogy for relations between groups of different ethnic affiliation united by their professed religion. However, an interesting message may be found in a short note from the second half of the 15th century in an annal written by a monk from Lubiąż, concerning the conflict which erupted in his mother convent in 1468: 'In die Appolonie virginis facta est contencio magna in monasterio Lubensi inter polonos monachos et almanos'.[79] Unfortunately, we can say nothing more about this conflict. Waldemar Könighaus, author of a monograph on the medieval history of the monastery in Lubiąż, suggested that it was a dispute between the Silesian monks – the ones living 'in Polonia' in the eyes of John Bartwa, the Hungarian-born monk who wrote the note – and strangers from outside Silesia, that is from Germany.[80] This assumption can neither be excluded nor confirmed. However, as John Bartwa became a monk in Lubiąż as late as in 1471, he must have described these events either on the basis of oral history or on previous records written by monks, which suggests that either this event was firmly embedded in the monks' memory, or that it was important to ensure it was not forgotten. In both cases, the ethnic nature of the conflict was emphasized

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[76] LUBS, vol. 1, No. 23, p. 146.
[77] T. Jurek, *Vom Rittertum zum Adel*, pp. 69–70.
[78] See also the chapter on social groups by P. Wiszewski included in this volume.
[79] *Annales lubenses*, [in:] *Monumenta Lubensia*, p. 23.
[80] Waldemar P. Könighaus, *Die Ziesterzienserabtei Leubus in Schlesien von ihrer Gründung bis zum Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 2004 (= Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau. Quellen und Studien, vol. 15), pp. 109–110.

while its actual cause was ignored, which suggests that the ethnic aspect of the dispute within the convent was such an extraordinary phenomenon that it overshadowed the reason behind it. Thus, the opinion may be ventured that although ethnic-related conflicts might have arose in Silesia (including in monasteries), they were of an extraordinary character, and they were long remembered as such, though without clear evaluation by participating parties. This lack of assessment, however, was not due to any hesitation in passing judgement on the behaviour of ethnic groups. When the army of the Polish king Casimir Jagiellon ravaged the villages of the abbey in 1474, Bartwa did not hesitate to say that it happened '*per perfidos polonos*'.[81] However, the Poles that he referred to, similarly to the narratives describing the battle of Studnica written in the preceding two centuries, were not Silesians.

As there was a wide panorama of different social groups in medieval Silesia, the world-view of the majority of them remains unknown to us. Representatives of the Church and government institutions formulated official written statements describing their perceptions of the surrounding community. However, most residents of the Odra basin had no such possibility. Their opinions are revealed to us accidentally, on the margins of legal proceedings, through analyzing the popularity of certain iconographic motifs. However, these kinds of sources have yet to be sufficiently explored in order for us to conduct discourse on the subject. Inevitably we can only speak of random information giving us the chance to look at a few examples of the relationships between social groups in Silesia which involved a display of ethnicity. Therefore, on this basis it is difficult to identify trends that would apply to the whole community.

Nevertheless, it is striking that almost all sources from this period show a clear and lasting ethnic diversity of the whole community, emphasized by contemporaries, particularly the distinction between Germans and Poles. At the same time it is evident that the region and the local Silesian community were unified without denying this diversity.[82] This phenomenon may be perceived from the perspective of the languages used for communication. From the 13th century at least three of them were frequently used by the residents of the Odra region: German, Polish and Latin. We hasten to add that German was initially used in the form of dialects spoken by the newcomers in their home regions. The process of language convergence to the form typical of Silesia took place over the 14th century and the first half of the 15th century, but the lack of sources makes it difficult to grasp its course.[83] On the other hand, the variety of Polish used at the time

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[81] *Annales lubenses*, p. 23.

[82] I discuss the aforementioned example of the knights of Góra district in the chapter on social groups, where I point to the tendency appearing in the mentioned charter to treat the community of the district as a whole, indicating the particular legal status of knighthood but without breaking the ties linking them with the rest of the community.

[83] See *Anfänge und Entwicklung der deutsche Sprache im mittelalterlichen Schlesien*, eds Gundolf Keil, Josef Joachim Menzel, eds., Sigmaringen 1975 (=Schlesische Forschungen, vol. 6); Winfried Irgang, *Elemente der deutschen Sprache im Schlesischen Urkundenbuch*, [in:] *idem, Schlesien im Mittelalter.*

was very similar to the Czech language. It is possible that this similarity facilitated communication between people who knew the language of the indigenous residents and representatives of Bohemia, as well as with residents of Bohemia during frequent visits to the Czech Basin. This also meant a further, though somewhat random, extension of the language skills possessed by the inhabitants of Silesia. In our analysis of the *Henryków Book* we pointed out that its author, Abbot Peter, had a great but rather passive knowledge of Polish. Although his mother tongue was undoubtedly German, and the scholarly language was Latin, he understood Polish words and phrases and quoted them as evidence for his narrative. He crossed the borders of languages without any hesitation, not using them as markers for divisions within the local community.[84] We may observe a similar phenomenon taking place two years later in Wrocław. During the conflict with the King of Bohemia, George of Podiebrad, in December 1467 the city received two letters from the king: one in Latin, the other one in Czech. A witness to those events, Johann Frauenburg from Zgorzelec, noted that the letter in Latin was read by an urban writer, Peter Eschenloer, but this letter 'vulgarisata fuit' by him. We can only surmise, judging by Peter German's written version of the chronicles of the history of the city during the wars with that king, that he had translated the document into the local dialect of German. What is more interesting is the fact that the Czech letter was not translated to the residents of Wrocław – at least this witness to the event did not bother to mention if it had been, although he described its content.[85] We may thus assume that, while Latin was already considered by the elites of Wrocław to be a foreign language, Czech was perceived as comprehensible and colloquial, along with the local version of German. The phenomenon of Czech-German bilingualism in late medieval towns in Bohemia was already pointed out many years ago by Czech researchers.[86] In Silesia, we are dealing with the of at least four spoken languages – those spoken by Christians (German, Polish, Czech) were complemented with Hebrew. This multiplicity of languages was not visible in only the private sphere, but also in legal matters, strengthening the cultural distinctiveness of ethnic groups. However, it was not necessarily the case that this diversity supported trends that could be destructive for the regional community.

When preparing a history of the Kingdom of Bohemia and a historical and geographical description of Europe at the close of the 15th century, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini repeatedly raised issues connected with Silesia. Although they had never been his primary focus, he provided us with two pieces of information crucial for our subject. In describing the geography of Europe, he mentioned a division of the population of Silesia

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Siedlung – Kirche – Urkunden. Ausgewählte Aufsätze, eds Norbert Kersken, Jürgen Warmbrunn, Marburg 2007, pp. 481–494.

[84] See P. Górecki, *Assimilation*.

[85] Volker Honemann, *Kanzlei, Stadt und Kultur im Leben und Werk des Johann Frauenburg von Görlitz*, [in:] *idem*, *Literaturlandschaften*, p. 254.

[86] Emil Skála, *Vznik a vývoj česko-německého bilingvismu*, 'Slovo a slovesnost', 38 (1977), pp. 197–207; F. Šmahel, *Idea národa*, pp. 22–24, 267–268.

according to a language criterion. In his opinion most people used German, but Polish prevailed in the area on the right bank of the Odra river. He added, however, that this did not mean that the Odra was a border river for the reach of the German language, because in its lower reaches residents used German on both sides of the river.[87] Such an approach would imply that Aeneas' informers – beeing outsiders – noticed a clear rupture of the regional community along ethnic lines. Linking them to a particular area strengthened this effect, creating the impression of the existence of two distinct cultural and territorial units. The author, however, was not consistent in this regard. In *History of Bohemia* he clearly wrote that the Kingdom of Bohemia 'ad orientem vergens latus Moravi obtinent et Sclesitarum natio, septentrionem iidem Sclesitae ac Saxones, qui et Misenenses et Thuringi appelantur'.[88] The *natio* of Silesians was then, in his opinion, some entity inhabiting the lands at the edge of Bohemia, between Moravia and Saxony. However, we should refrain from saying with excessive certainty that in Piccolomini's view ethnic divisions were not relevant to the existence of a regional community ranked higher in the hierarchy of the individuals who created the community. That same author added just one passage later that the territory bordering Czech lands was none other than 'Theutonum terra'.[89] From his point of view, Moravia was a separate administrative entity and its borders with Hungary, Rus and Poland were not Czech borders. We will therefore conclude that the author and his informants perceived the people of Silesia as a unity, emphasizing Silesian affinity with 'Germanic provinces' and the whole Holy Roman Empire. The language spoken by the population did not, in their eyes, play a significant role in the classification of the entire community, because as a region, as '*natio*', it belonged to the greater community of the residents of the Holy Roman Empire, the Germans. Writing about Silesians and Silesia at the close of the 12th century, Master Vincent Kadłubek classified them within the community of Poles subordinate to the authority of the Piast dynasty, also without exploring potential ethnic divisions of the community. Three centuries later the situation was similar, what had changed was only the view of the writers, for whom the residents of the Odra region should comprise a community of a higher order.

Dynamically changing ethnic relations within the community living in Silesia had a mixed impact on the cohesion of the regional community. While further research remains to be done, we can venture the opinion that this diversity ultimately strengthened the sense of separateness of the region from neighbouring ones. Simple facts, such as that a common administrative framework over the entire community had been set up in the 15th century and that benefits could be achieved from joint political activity, did not, in the eyes of contemporaries, overshadow the specificity of the multiethnicity, multilingualism and

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[87] See Wojciech Iwańczak, *Problematyka śląska w 'Historii czeskiej' Eneasza Sylwiusza Piccolominiego*, [in:] *Korzenie wielokulturowości Śląska*, ed. Antoni Barciak, Katowice 2009, p. 142.

[88] *Aeneae Silvii Historia Bohemica*, eds Dana Martínková, Alena Hadravová, Jiří Matl, Praha 1998 (=Fontes rerum regni Bohemiae, vol. 1), p. 8.

[89] *Ibidem*.

inter-ethnic relationships within Silesian society, whose character had been perceived as unique when contrasted with similar phenomena taking place in neighbouring countries. Similarly, at the local level, the possibility to appeal to the situation in the whole region when resolving ethnic conflict sustained awareness of the importance of the regional dimension for the proper functioning of the local community. This was not a static system: in the way Silesians perceived multiethnicity we may see diverse attitudes; the impact of this phenomenon on the cohesion of various communities operating there between the 13th and the 15th centuries was diverse as well. Presentation of these phenomena in the context of time and in the pragmatic perspective of the sources describing them pave the way for a new approach towards multiethnicity as a dynamic phenomenon, which does not necessarily have one purpose and one course for the whole of Silesia. Only detailed study, however, will allow us to verify the hypotheses posed above.