

The role of ethnic and linguistic issues in the integration and disintegration of modern-age Silesia (the sub-period between 1618/48 and 1740)

Abstract:

The matter of changes in the ethno-linguistic relations in Silesia evokes a significantly more emotional response from later scholars than those from said period. Contemporary sources approached the issue in a roundabout way or simply marginalised it. Simultaneously, the Silesians considered themselves to be ethnically, possibly also linguistically, distinct from the denizens of neighbouring regions. Nonetheless certain categories relating to the territorial outreach of ethno-linguistic groups held true for Silesia. In this context one can distinguish a division formed at the dawn of Renaissance, dividing Silesia into the left and right shore of the Odra river. This article concerns the Silesian border regions as well. Other aspects are considered as well, ethno-linguistic aspects capable of negating or furthering divisions in Silesia, aspects such as literary works, teaching and usage of language, (German, Polish, Latin) the presence of Polish printed works, as well as Jewish presence. Deliberations on the subject led to the conclusion that the effect of ethno-linguistic relations on the cohesiveness of Silesian society in the late Habsburg era was rather harmless.

Keywords:

ethnicity, language, dialects, borderland, integration, disintegration

In the early modern age, Silesia – famous for its remarkably complex structure and history – was a place where questions on ethnicity and language closely and naturally intermingled with those of identity and regional affiliation. This phenomenon was so deeply rooted in the works of contemporary authors that in some cases both sides of this relationship need to be carefully separated from each other¹.

To begin with, it would be worth turning one's attention to the relationship between the attempts to capture the real ethnic and linguistic image of Silesia of the modern age and the contemporary interpretations of this image, reflected, for example, in historiographical works of the time. Two crucial questions are as follows: 1. What was really happening? 2. How was the situation presented? In this respect,

¹ For a wider context see Fridrich Lichtstern (Lucae), *Schlesische Fürsten-Krone Oder Eigentliche warhafft Beschreibung Ober- und Nieder-Schlesiens*, Franckfurt am Mayn 1685, p. 782, and also p. 314; Nicolaus Henel von Hennenfeld, *Silesiographia renovata, necessariis scholiis, observationibus et indice aucta*, Wratislaviae-Lipsiae 1704, ed. Michael Joseph Fibiger, Cap. VI, pp. 676-804.

it would be difficult to give an explicit answer, and the consequences of this dilemma will be examined in the following lines. Of course, archival materials provide extensive information on the language they were produced in. However, as has been often pointed out in literature of the subject, this criterion is rather unreliable, for it mainly points to the level of linguistic skills presented by individual scribes. Moreover, recently, when comparing various contemporary Slavic languages, and even more so when comparing dialects and sub-dialects (especially from the borderland area), researchers have produced quite opposite findings and conclusions, may it be only for the reason of their distinct nationalities. For example, there were many controversies between Czech and Polish historians over the ethno-linguistic image of early modern Silesia, in particular the Duchy of Cieszyn and Opole-Racibórz². Perhaps nowadays historic records are simply not a sufficient basis to enable researchers to trace the differences between the two languages. Another consideration here would be that, for example, in the 16th and 17th centuries, related varieties of the Silesian-Polish sub-dialect and a group of Ostrava sub-dialects co-existed in the same space of time and were closely interrelated³. Besides, primarily in the case of some earlier linguistic studies, major attention was devoted to onomastics, and especially to personal names. Also, the character of the language being studied could be determined by the ethnic origin or the level of literary proficiency displayed by writers who would either distort the names or even replace them with equivalents in their native language. This possibility is all the more convincing when we consider how little importance was attributed at that time to the form and spelling of personal names, including in printed texts, where, for instance, the names of famous figures would appear several times on the same page, yet each time a different version would be used⁴.

² See i.e.: Andělín Grobelný, *Jazyková hranice a školství na Těšínsku v 18. a v 1. polovině 19. století*, [in:] *K otázkám dějin Slezska. Diskuse a materiály z konference*, ed. *idem*, Ostrava 1956, p. 130; and other texts from this collection. For the characteristics of the Duchy of Cieszyn see the recent publication of: Jaroslav Lipowski, *O třech nářečních slovnících Těšínského Slezska*, [in:] *Śląska Republika Uczonych = Schlesische Gelehrtenrepublik = Slezská vědecká obec*, vol. 5, eds Marek Hałub, Anna Mańko-Matysiak, Dresden-Wrocław 2012, p. 359.

³ Arnošt Lamprecht, *Jazyková situace na širším Ostravsku*, [in:] *Dějiny českého jazyka ve Slezsku a na Ostravsku*, eds Alois Knop, Arnošt Lamprecht, Ladislav Pallas, Ostrava 1967, p. 52.

⁴ See also an apt and informative recent approach to the issue in: Matthias Weber, *Schlesische Literatur von den Anfängen bis zum Jahr 1945*, [in:] *Schlesien und die Schlesier*, ed. Joachim Bahlcke, new edition, München 2000, p. 285, where, in reference to the second half of the 17th century, the author mentions the printer Johann Christoph Jakob of Brzeg, who in Polish publications was referred to as Jan Krzysztof Jakub of Brzeg ('*dem Drucker Johann Christoph Jakob in Brieg [...], der sich in den polnischen Drucken Jan Krzys[z]tof Jakub w Brzegu nennt*'); the title page of one of the local publications proves that Polish versions of names appeared in the works of written literature alongside German ones, depending on the actual need ('*zeigt nicht nur den unproblematischen Umgang mit Personen- und Ortsnamen, die je nach Bedarf in der deutschen oder in der polnischen*

Regarding the connection between the true image of linguistic-ethnic relations within Silesia in the modern period and their portrayal in contemporary writing, what obviously comes to mind is that this question elicited much greater excitement among scholars of later generations, especially during the period of budding modern national consciousness and in the era of nationalism and related antagonisms, that is in Europe in the 19th and the 20th century. For the authors of the early modern age this issue was of a rather marginal importance; this was especially conspicuous in the case of questions of cultural or regional identity, hence it was easier for them – in line with contemporary norms – to copy their predecessors. This complicates the answer all the more so that from the 1570s throughout the following centuries, Silesian historiography benefitted greatly from the contributions of Joachim Cureus – a German historian who identified himself with the concept of the German version of Silesian identity. What deserves mentioning at this point is the fact that in the 17th century and at the outset of the 18th century, Silesian historiography – naturally, its German variety – by means of its authors and titles (i.e. those cited in the latter part of this paper) could have had an integrating influence on the region. This was so regardless of the dubious reliability of the communicated information – even though the reason behind this might have been the so-called ‘mark of contemporary erudition’ or the fact of the authors’ drawing extensively from the output of their predecessors.

The answer to the question of to what extent issues of ethnicity and language may be considered forces that integrated and disintegrated Silesia in the years 1618/48–1740, is all the more complex as at the time, this subject was approached quite differently than it is now. Every now and then a question may emerge, as signalled above, of to what extent this issue was meaningful for contemporary Silesians, or – alternatively – for writers of foreign origin who described it in their works, and to what extent it was important for disputing researchers, writers and ideologues (who also operated within the limits of one country only but in different spaces of time)⁵; to what extent ethno-linguistic diversity was in fact a disintegrating force on a national or local level. In this context, it would be reasonable to

Variante gedruckt wurden, sondern weist durch das schlesisch-polnische Wort «Fárazz» (Pfarrer, poln. proboszcz) auch auf die Besonderheiten des wasserpolnischen Dialektes in Schlesien hin.’). This, most likely did not affect the integrity of Silesia in a negative way (the question of the so-called ‘waterish Polish dialect’ will be addressed later).

⁵ For more information on the subject of this paper (i.e. in relation to the Duchy of Cieszyn) see the following Czech publication: Jiří Stibor, *Těšínská šlechta v proměnách staletí*, [in:] *Šlechtic v Horním Slezsku. Vztah regionu a center na příkladu osudů a kariér šlechty Horního Slezska (15.-20. Století) / Szlachcic na Górnym Śląsku. Relacje między regionem i centrum w losach i karierach szlachty na Górnym Śląsku (XV-XX wiek)*, eds Jiří Brňovják, Waclaw Gojniczek, Aleš Zářický, Katowice–Ostrava 2011, pp. 83-84; see also p. 88.

consider at least the fact that all inhabitants of the contemporary states viewed themselves as compatriots – subject to one supreme ruler and one socio-administrative system – regardless of their ethnic origin or language.

What may also seem quite significant is the fact that by the end of the Habsburg rule, over the entire territory of Silesia, both Czech and Polish were given equal priority in courts, alongside German⁶. To give another example, following the Counter-Reformation, a German and a Polish cleric operated simultaneously in a Catholic parish church situated close to the Polish border in Namysłów⁷. What is more, in 1707, an individual representing the states owned by the Duchy of Cieszyn sought permission to launch an Evangelical printing house that was to print books in Polish – the language used by the local community; the project was turned down by the authorities⁸, but not for ethno-linguistic reasons. Likewise, a widely-publicized (in literature of the subject) ethnic conflict between Polish and German members of the Cistercian nunnery in Trzebnica proved to be spurred by external factors either of a purely institutional-religious or political-administrative nature, or by Habsburg-Polish political relations⁹. The above examples indicate that the issues we are examining in this paper were much less absorbing for the people of the time than one might expect. Instead, their utmost attention seemed to be focused principally on matters that were rather unconnected with ethno-linguistic issues, such as politics and religion.

In view of the foregoing comments, it should be stated that German-speaking Silesians and the Slavic-speaking Silesians considered themselves compatriots. Perhaps, it was more likely for contemporary Silesians to draw a sharper contrast between the terms ‘German-speaking’ and ‘Slavic-speaking’ than between the terms ‘German’ and ‘Slavic’. If this was indeed the case, then this distinction would clearly relate to the sphere of language, not ethnicity. What is remarkable in this context is that at the time it was neither considered important to address this issue nor to

⁶ Marie Gawrecká, *Od podziału Śląska do Wiosny Ludów (1740–1848)*, [in:] *Historia Górnego Śląska. Polityka, gospodarka i kultura europejskiego regionu*, eds Joachim Bahlke, Dan Gawrecki, Ryszard Kaczmarek, Gliwice 2011, p. 182.

⁷ Mateusz Goliński, *Od czasów najdawniejszych do 1740 roku*, [in:] *Namysłów. Z dziejów miasta i okolic*, eds *idem*, Elżbieta Kościk, Jan Kęsik, Namysłów 2006, pp. 141, 163.

⁸ Renata Czyż, *Władza świecka i duchowna wobec książki protestanckiej w księstwie cieszyńskim*, [in:] *Religia i polityka. Kwestie wyznaniowe i konflikty polityczne w Europie w XVIII wieku*. W 300. rocznicę konwencji w Altranstädt, eds Lucyna Harc, Gabriela Waś, Wrocław 2009, p. 222.

⁹ Kazimierz Bobowski, *Rola konwentu cysterek trzebnickich w utrzymaniu polskość na Śląsku w dobie reformacji i kontrreformacji (próba nowego spojrzenia)*, [in:] *Studia i materiały z dziejów Śląska*, vol. 20, eds Krystyn Matwijowski, Irena Sroka, Katowice 1992, pp. 37-38, 41-42, 46-47. For the contemporary religious policies of the House of Habsburgs (apart from the nunnery of Trzebnica) see also: Andreas Kossert, *Ostatni okres rządów Habsburgów (1707-1740)*, [in:] *Historia Górnego Śląska*, p. 167.

discuss it. At the same time, what clearly characterized Silesians was a strong sense of independence – in terms of ethnicity and possibly language – from the inhabitants of all the neighbouring states¹⁰.

Nonetheless, during the period in question, the issue of the territorial range of particular ethno-linguistic groups of Silesia was to a certain degree reflected in local historiography. A work which certainly deserves mention here is one that presents a famous division of Silesia into two sections located at the left and right banks of the Odra river, formulated at the beginning of the Renaissance by the Italian humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini¹¹. Nonetheless, the traditional distinction (from the mid-18th century) between Lower and Upper Silesia does not seem to have had originated in the period of our interest. What is more, the distinction between the Silesian mountainous area of the Sudetes (almost entirely Germanized, as opposed to the Sudeten Foreland which were Germanized only to a certain degree, at least in some areas) and Silesian lowlands (whose ethno-linguistic picture by the end of the period was much more varied)¹² seemed to remain unnoticed. On the other hand, the 19th-20th-century expressions *Wasserpolacken* and *wasserpolnisch* (literally: ‘waterish Poles’ and ‘waterish Polish language’) – now considered rather offensive – used in reference to the inhabitants of Upper Silesia whose language was a mixture of Slavic/Polish and German, were at the time not in the least bit controversial. Indeed, by the outset of the 17th century, Silesians who used literary Polish language in their writing were consciously saturating it with elements of their dialects. Yet, the local variety of Polish was clearly archaic and fossilized, as a consequence of which it was increasingly moving away from what was at the time understood as Polish¹³. A leading representative of this group of Silesian writers who mostly operated in the borderland areas, a vicar, Adam Gdaciuz of Kluczbork (Gdaczusz, ca. 1610–1688; there are different versions of the date of his birth), was bold enough to refer to the critics of his dialect as ‘*Wässerpolowie nádęci*’ (*nadęci* means ‘huffy’ in English) and this epithet clearly suggests that these antagonistic

¹⁰ For linguistic aspects see the following historic publications: F. Lucae, *Schlesiens*, p. 18.

¹¹ See i.e. the following recent publication: Wojciech Mrozowicz, *Dolny Śląsk w latach 1327-1526*, [in:] *Dolny Śląsk. Monografia historyczna*, ed. Wojciech Wrzesiński, Wrocław 2006, p. 126.

¹² For the region of Zielona Góra see the following recent publication: Zbigniew Bujkiewicz, *Rozwój Zielonej Góry od 1740 roku do początków XIX wieku*, [in:] *Historia Zielonej Góry*, vol. 1: *Dzieje miasta do końca XVIII wieku*, ed. Wojciech Strzyżewski, Zielona Góra 2011, p. 303.

¹³ Kevin Hannan, *Naród i język śląski w perspektywie etnolingwistycznej*, [in:] *Górny Śląsk wyobrażony: wokół mitów, symboli i bohaterów dyskursów narodowych. Imaginiertes Oberschlesien: Mythen, Symbole und Helden in den nationalen Diskursen*, eds Juliane Haubold-Stolle, Bernard Linnek, Opole-Marburg 2005, p. 149.

relations extended beyond the ethnic or linguistic sphere¹⁴. As a matter of fact – as it has been noted by one researcher of the modern period – at the outset of the 17th century, the term *Wasserpolacken* was probably used not in reference to the inhabitants of Upper Silesia, but Polish-speaking inhabitants of central Silesia – who resided at the banks of the Odra river – as well as local rafters¹⁵. In 1685, a native Silesian, Frederick Lucae (Frederick Lichtstern) used the commonly-known term *Wasser-Polen* to describe – in a purely informative sense without making any judgement – the sub-group (at least) of Polish-speaking inhabitants not only of the Upper Silesian duchies of Cieszyn, Racibórz, Opole and the Free State of Pszczyna, but also the Lower Silesian duchies of Brzeg, Wrocław, Oleśnica and Free States of Syców, Milicz and Żmigród¹⁶. This approach was maintained until the close of the discussed period. Nonetheless, the role of linguistic intermingling neither seems to be antagonistic nor disintegrating for relations between the inhabitants of ethnically and linguistically varied regions of Silesia and its remaining inhabitants. Moreover, the aforementioned chronicler F. Lucae claimed that most Silesians in fact did not speak German well, especially in some areas of central and Lower Silesia, as well as in the mountains; and that it took a lot of effort to understand them¹⁷. And what were Lichtstern's subsequent – crucial for the discussed subject – views on Upper Silesia? Well, contrary to opinions expressed by his contemporaries from Wrocław, the best German in the entirety of Silesia was spoken in Krnov and Głubczyce¹⁸. The task of tracing linguistic differences between southern areas of Upper Silesia (like Głubczyce, Krnov) of the mid-18th century and its northern stretches (Lubliniec, Olesno) is not in the least an easy one.

¹⁴ See: Ladislav Pallas, *Jazyková otázka a podmínky vytváření národního vědomí ve Slezsku*, Ostrava 1970, pp. 9 (quotation), 10, 103 (footnote no. 7). Cf. also i.e.: Jan Zaremba, *Polscy pisarze na Śląsku po wojnie trzydziestoletniej*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1969, pp. 122, 168.

¹⁵ Peter Chmiel, *Die sprachlichen Verhältnisse in Oberschlesien in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, [in:] *Kulturraum Schlesien. Ein europäisches Phänomen. Interdisziplinäre Konferenz, Wrocław/Breslau, 18.–20. Oktober 1999*, eds Walter Engel, Norbert Honsza, Wrocław 2001, pp. 180-181, original quotation in German: 'hat der Ursprung des aus dem 17. Jahrhundert stammenden Begriffs «Plebs wasser Polana» kaum etwas mit Oberschlesien zu tun. Viel mehr galt er als Bezeichnung für die polnischsprechende Bevölkerung in Mittelschlesien (entlang der Oder um Brieg und Ohlau) und die Oderflößer'.

¹⁶ F. Lucae, *Schlesische Fürsten-Krone*, pp. 825-826.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 828, original quotation in German: 'Belangende die Teutsche Sprache / so wird dieselbe von den meisten Schlesiern nicht eben zum reinesten ausgesprochen. Vornemlich führet das gemeine Volck im Breslauischen / Schweidnitzschen / Jaurischen / Glogauischen / Lignitzschen / wie auch im Riesen-Gebürge einen verdrüßlichen corrupten accent, also daß ein fremder und reiner [!] Teutscher gnugsam zu thun hat / wenn er die redenden Leute recht verstehen wil / und gar genau attendiren muß'; it was very similar in the case of towns (pp. 828-829).

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 829, original quotation in German: 'Unter allen Schlesiern aber reden die Jägerndorffer und Leobschützer den nettesten accent, und die Teutsche Sprache am reinesten / unangesehen theils Breslauer jenen den Vorzug zu nehmen vermeynen'.

At the time, no attention whatsoever was devoted to the linguistic and ethnic specificity of the Silesian-Lusatian borderland. Although the former existence of historical Sorbian tribes in this territory was a well-documented fact, the question of their language being preserved in the territory of this western stretch of modern Silesia owing to their potential descendants is virtually absent from contemporary records. The same may be said about the ethno-linguistic boundary between Silesia and Bohemia, which was clearly marked out by the Sudetes. Silesian historiography of the time was also oblivious to the County of Kłodzko, which neighboured the historical region of Silesia. In terms of landform, the Silesian-Moravian borderland was to a large extent similar to its Silesian-Bohemian counterpart, but neither the absence of the Sudetes in its south-eastern stretches and specific conditions created by the presence of the Moravian Gate, nor the complex outline of its borders, managed to bring ethno-linguistic questions to wider attention. As for the second half of the 17th century and the outset of the 18th century, it was the strip of land south of Racibórz – formerly a historic border between the Dioceses of Wrocław and Olomuc and, in the 17th-18th centuries, between the Duchy of Opole-Racibórz and Opava-Krnov – that was classified by the contemporary literature of the subject as the transition zone between the Polish- and Czech-speaking areas¹⁹. Yet nothing is known about the zone's potentially disintegrating influence on the ethno-linguistic structure of this south-eastern part of Silesia – especially in the context of its being situated in the immediate neighbourhood of territories dominated by Silesian-Polish and Ostrava dialects and the efforts of the clergy to reach their faithful despite the challenges posed by linguistic diversity. Curiously enough, considerable interest in the issue of language was aroused by the southern, Beskidian part of the Duchy of Cieszyn.

It is worth mentioning that although Silesians of the early modern age were generally aware of the fact that their region was formerly home to ancient Slavic tribes, no particular emphasis was put by them on exploring the unique qualities of their legacy, nor did they distinguish between the descendants of medieval German settlers who arrived in Silesia from various lands of the Reich in the remote past. With regard to present interpretations of past approaches to the questions of language and ethnicity, what may be added is that contemporary neighbours of Silesia called *die Böhmen* or *die Mähren* were not Slavic Czechs or Slavic Moravians, but residents of Bohemia and Moravia; a similar meaning was attributed to the collective personal

¹⁹ Milan Šmerda, *Protireformace a národnostní situace v Horním Slezsku*, [in:] *K otázkám*, p. 105; Alois Knop, Ladislav Pallas, *Dějiny jazyka českého ve Slezsku*, [in:] *Dějiny*, p. 24; Adolf Turek, *Poněmčování Opavska v 16. a 17. století. IV. Mezi Opavicí a Pštinou*, 'Slezský sborník', 48 (1950), No. 8, p. 197-198.

name *die Lausitzer*²⁰. This also shows that what was of crucial importance during the period in question was the so-called ‘country of residence’, and what was generally ignored and considered relatively insignificant was the ethnic and linguistic make-up of its population. The mass influx to Silesia of Polish refugees during the Swedish invasion, in line with ‘the shift in the proportion of ethnic minorities in favour of the Silesian Poles’ (spurred by an almost simultaneous mass emigration triggered by the Thirty Years’ War) are not regarded as particularly destructive for the cohesion of contemporary Silesia²¹. Therefore, Silesians of that time may be said to have formed a united ethno-linguistic group whose different shades emerge only upon closer examination. What was often adhered to by contemporary scribes was the previously-mentioned concept of left- and right-bank Silesia.

Following the year 1740, in line with the aforementioned concept, Silesia was still perceived as being composed of the so-called ‘German side’ (*die deutsche Seite*), referred to as the area ‘on this side of the Odra river’ (*diesseits der Oder*), and the so-called ‘Polish side’ (*die polnische Seite*), referred to as the area ‘on the other side of the Odra river’ (*jenseits der Oder*). It is worth noting here that the right-bank section is classified as the Polish one (see above). As we can see, no room in this division is left for the Czech language²². In fact, the contemporary German literature on Silesia seldom bothered to distinguish between Polish, Czech, Moravian and Sorbian components of the Slavic population²³. Consequently, representatives of these four groups were recognized as Slavs according to a bipolar Slavic-German division. This division may be considered evidence of the firm conviction of contemporary writers – both those highly and less focused on the subject of Silesia – that this was in fact the region’s true ethno-linguistic countenance. Such a conviction would then justify their (and their readers’) lack of interest in the aforementioned Silesian-Lusatian borderland and, perhaps especially, in the Moravian Gate borderland – both of which may be said to lie relatively within their reach. Furthermore, the existence in the Silesian writers’ consciousness of the concept of the so-called ‘Polish side’ shows that they perceived Slavonic and Polish elements as of one whole – associated principally with their eastern neighbours. At the same time, right-bank Silesia, much smaller territorially than its left-bank counterpart and situated at the border with Poland, was described as ‘the other side of

²⁰ This follows i.e. from: F. Lucae, *Schlesiens, passim*.

²¹ A. Herzig, K. Ruchniewicz, M. Ruchniewicz, *Śląsk*, p. 87 (quotation); see also (the lack of evidence for this fact): F. Lucae, *Schlesische Fürsten-Krone*, pp. 826-827. Cf. also: W. Czaplński, *Wpływ*, pp. 154-155; J. Bahleke, *Die Geschichte*, p. 59.

²² See especially: F. Lucae, *Schlesische Fürsten-Krone*, p. 828.

²³ The Polish, Bohemian and Moravian versions were highlighted especially by: N. Henel von Henenfeld, *Silesiographia renovata*, Cap. VI, p. 803.

the Odra river'. This attitude shows that it was obviously the left-bank, German-speaking part of Silesia, that was considered the actual stem of the Silesian state, whereas its right-bank territories, referred to as eastern borderlands or a frontier territorial strip, were attributed nothing but a peripheral role. No wonder that territories located outside this strip were principally regarded as home to the Polish (or Slavic) community; at the same time they were also regarded – although to a lesser extent and contrary to the general attitude of Silesians towards the Czechs and Moravians – home to the inhabitants of Greater and Lesser Poland (but unlike these territories Bohemia and Moravia were part of the same kingdom together with Silesia).

Naturally, this ethno-linguistic division of Silesia based on the natural course of the river Odra was highly simplistic. Nonetheless, it is highly probable that contemporary Silesians considered it as corresponding – at least roughly – to reality. Yet, curiously enough, even writers themselves admitted at the same time that the left-bank Odra was here and there inhabited by a close-knit Polish-speaking community; at the same time in some, especially rural parts of the right-bank territory, could one witness Polish more or less distinctly blending with German. Perhaps this did not really match some of the local writers' expectations of their homeland, but, nonetheless, in their works we find no evidence whatsoever that they might have considered the situation to have any disintegrating influence on the region; what they only highlighted was the fact of its ethnic and linguistic diversity.

The aforementioned concept of the region's division in two Odra-adjacent parts was addressed by a native Silesian, Jacob Schickfus, in his work of 1625 where he writes that the Polish language was used in the territories between Oława and Kąty Wrocławskie. What Schickfus also highlighted was that the local population was unwilling to abandon the usage of the Polish language²⁴. Curiously enough, no other reference whatsoever to any contemporary or former ethno-linguistic relations within Silesia was found in this voluminous work. Over half a century later this issue was again briefly revisited by another native Silesian chronicler, F. Lucae, who stated that Polish was spoken in the area near the Polish border and in some central parts of the region²⁵. Much closer attention was devoted to the subject in a somewhat later, very extensive work published in the early 18th century by the Wrocław Prior, Michael Joseph Fibiger, who based his study on a famous, though

²⁴ Jacob Schickfus, *New Vermehrte Schlesische Chronica unnd Landes Beschreibung*, Jehna [1625], Das vierde Buch, p. 10, original quotation in German: 'das Bawren Volck sich der Polnischen Sprachen so starck beflisset /daß man es davon nicht bringen oder abwenden kan / wie sehr auch man demselben Völcklein darumb zuredet'.

²⁵ F. Lucae, *Schlesiens*, p. 2198, original quotation in German: 'hin und her mitten im Lande / wie im Ohlausehen viel Polnische Familien wohnen / welche bey ihrer Mutter-Sprache bleiben'.

unremarkable (in terms of volume), *Silesiographia*, produced in 1613 by Nicolaus Henel. Many passages of Fibiger's work were devoted to presenting the superiority of 'Germanness' over 'Polishness' ('Slavonicness'), although his main focus was on cultural, not strictly ethno-linguistic, aspects²⁶. Fibiger also adhered to the above-mentioned division of the region into two – German and Polish – sections, in the context of which he mentioned the villages between Oława and Kąty Wrocławskie²⁷.

As was mentioned above, the south-eastern section of Silesia – the mountainous part of the Duchy of Cieszyn – was also classified as unique in terms of its ethnic (and linguistic) composition. This was mostly due to the presence of Vlach migrants who migrated there from remote parts of the Carpathian Mountains. From the second quarter of the 17th century, the southern part of the Duchy of Cieszyn saw a rapid emergence of new personal and geographical names of an alien central- and east-Carpathian origin²⁸. In spite of the fact that the original local population still dominated over that of the newcomers in terms of number, by the mid-17th century both groups were becoming increasingly socio-culturally, territorially and functionally intermingled. This does not mean, however, that their ethno-linguistic structure was uniform. Over time, the southern part of the Duchy of Cieszyn started to be designated as Wallachia (*Valašsko*). By the first half of the 18th century the Wallachian population had lost all its distinctive features and merged entirely with the rest of the region's inhabitants. The term 'Vlach' has come to refer to the entire local population, yet the original Vlach population retained its particular character by maintaining its specific legal and administrative institutions²⁹. At the time even the local highland shepherds – many of whom were simply outlaws – were not considered a disintegrating force from an ethno-linguistic perspective³⁰.

Ethnic changes may also be observed in the case of other ethnic groups. As a result of conscious political strategies introduced by the Habsburgs, starting from the Thirty Years' War the circles of Silesian nobility, 'mostly its aristocratic section, became much more cosmopolitan'; a new sort of noble family from 'Austria, Italy,

²⁶ N. Henel von Hennenfeld, *Silesiographia renovata*, see i.e.: Cap. VI, pp. 720-721. footnote a.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, Cap. II, pp. 162-163.

²⁸ Josef Macůrek, *Dějiny Slezska od poloviny 14. století do poloviny 18. století (1350-1764) v polských thesích*, [in:] *K otázkám*, pp. 26, 28; *idem*, *Valaši v západních Karpatech v 15.-18. století. K dějinám osídlení a hospodářsko-společenského vývoje jižního Těšínska, jihozápadního Polska, severozápadního Slovenska a východní Moravy*, Ostrava 1959, pp. 196-199.

²⁹ *Idem*, *Valaši*, pp. 12-15, 200-206, 279-280, 292, 302, 329-333.

³⁰ The so-called *hajduks* who originated from the mountainous areas of the Duchy of Cieszyn were described in the fourth quarter of the 17th century by: F. Lucae, *Schlesische Fürsten-Krone*, pp. 271-272; *idem*, *Schlesiens*, pp. 659-660.

France, the Netherlands and Luxembourg' emerged³¹. At the outset of the 18th century, Wrocław was home to merchants and craftsmen of several countries³². However, this did not seem to pose any distinctive threat to the cohesion of the contemporary Silesia either.

Both the rapid development of Silesian Baroque German literature and its significant position in the literary output of the German-speaking part of Europe are well-known facts. It was Martin Opitz (1597–1639) of Bolesławiec who lay the foundations of modern German literature produced in language untouched by macaronic terms and regionalisms. In one of his works dated to 1617 he wrote 'that artistic poetry can be created also in German'³³. Yet, humanist Latin literature was not entirely absent from Silesia before the start of Prussian rule. As the popularity of Opitz's concept gradually gained in strength over time – both across the entire Holy Roman Empire³⁴ and in Silesia – one obvious consequence was that the so-called 'cultured' Silesians felt a growing affinity with the German language. At the same time, they emphasized the fact that Opitz, as well as the most devoted promoters of his literary concepts, descended from nowhere else but their homeland³⁵. Here again we may ask ourselves a vexing question on the reason why these achievements were made right here, in the eastern, German-speaking borderland by its native inhabitants. Independently of the answer, this circumstance must be considered the pivotal force that integrated Silesia as a state which was both capable of such achievements and culturally affiliated with the Holy Roman Empire. A clear and eloquent comment on the issue was expressed in a broader spiritual-artistic context by a scholar who opined that 'the essence of Silesian nature' ('*der Wesensgehalt des Schlesiens*') is, among other things, its Baroque character; and this character was founded on the basis of the local late humanism movement which spurred the total independence of the native literature and determined its uniqueness and close relationship with the natural landscape³⁶. The gradual erasure of such native

³¹ Jarosław Kuczer, *Miasto cesarskie. Zielona Góra za czasów panowania dynastii Habsburgów (1526–1740)*, [in:] *Historia Zielonej*, p. 151.

³² W. Korta, *Historia*, p. 373.

³³ Marta Burbianka, *Z dziejów drukarstwa śląskiego w XVII wieku. Baumannowie i ich spadkobiercy*, prepared by Helena Szwejewska, Wrocław 1977, p. 95.

³⁴ For more information on the initial reception of M. Opitz's 1624 publication in the native German-speaking states see also: H. Heckel, *Geschichte*, p. 198.

³⁵ See contemporary approaches in the following works: F. Lucae, *Schlesische Fürsten-Krone*, pp. 767-768; *idem*, *Schlesiens*, p. 2199; N. Henel von Hennenfeld, *Silesiographia renovata*, Cap. VI, pp. 802-803, also Cap. VII, p. 55.

³⁶ Arno Lubos, *Geschichte der Literatur Schlesiens*, vol. 1, München 1960, p. 401, original quotation in German: '*hat zum ersten Mal die Stammeseigenart in der Literatur, die Vereinigung von Landschaft und Schrifttum, das Selbständigwerden des schlesischen Schrifttums, zum Ausdruck gebracht*'.

poetry from the literary map of Germany, which came as a result of the redefinition of aesthetic norms at the outset of the 18th century³⁷, did not revoke this fact.

Twentieth-century Polish literature on the subject accentuated the fact that it was Jan Kochanowski (1530-1584), the precursor of modern Polish literature, who had a crucial impact on contemporary Silesian literary contributions. What is remarkable is that local 17th-century Polish literature still closely resembled its 16th-century equivalent, most notably in terms of meaningful innovations introduced by Kochanowski³⁸. However, it is difficult to find this undoubtedly important phenomenon meaningful in the context of the main subject of this paper; as a matter of fact, this literature was produced exclusively by scholars (and artists) who were members of – to name the title of a famous contemporary Wrocław literary series – the Silesian Republic of Scholars (Schlesische Gelehrtenrepublik), who may be here described as a group of aesthetes with no particular influence on the general public whatsoever. Moreover, Polish literature of the subject also mentions the crucial impact of Kochanowski's output on the achievements of Wenzel Scherffer von Scherffenstein – a poet and translator of Kochanowski's epigrams and songs – who originated from Głubczyce and whose second profession was that of an organist in the castle church in Brzeg (1603-1674)³⁹. According to German researchers, Scherffer von Scherffenstein was a particularly devoted lover of Polish culture⁴⁰. This opinion is repeated by a Polish connoisseur of the subject, who wrote that Scherffenstein's work is evidence of the harmonious co-existence of the German and Polish ethnic groups in Silesia⁴¹. By analogy, it seems apt at this point to make a comment on the unique impact of the Slavic (Polish) character on literary contributions of the 17th-century German-speaking Silesian mystics, in particular, John

³⁷ Tomasz Jabłecki, *Śląski przyczynek do rozkwitu stylu wykwińskiego w poezji niemieckiej przelomu wieków XVII i XVIII*, [in:] *Z Gorzanowa w świat szeroki... Studia i materiały ofiarowane Profesorowi Arno Herzigowi w 70-lecie Urodzin*, eds Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, Marek Zybura, Wrocław 2007, p. 161, footnote 1.

³⁸ Here: U. Gumuła, *Literatura*, pp. 15-18, 48-49, 84, 127, 130. Cf: also the following recent publication: Beata Stuchlik-Surowiak, *Sylwetka Samuela Ludwika Zasadiusa na tle środowiska religijno-kulturalnego XVIII-wiecznego Cieszyna*, [in:] *Śląska Republika*, vol. 4, Wrocław 2010, p. 206.

³⁹ See i.e.: Wincenty Ogrodziński, *Dzieje piśmiennictwa śląskiego*, prepared for printing by Ludwik Brożek, Zdzisław Hierowski, Katowice 1965, p. 79.

⁴⁰ Arno Lubos, *Deutsche und Slawen. Beispiele aus Schlesien und anderen Ostgebieten*, Wien 1974, p. 63, original quotation in German: 'ist [...] unter den deutschsprachigen Barockdichtern der offenkundigste Freund des polnischen Volkstums gewesen'.

⁴¹ Mirosława Czarnačka, *Dialogische Regionalität. Kulturelle und kommunikative deutsch-polnische Wechselbeziehungen im Schlesien des 17. Jhs.*, [in:] *Kulturraum*, p. 63, original quotation in German: 'Seine Gedichte sind [...] literarische Zeugnisse des friedlichen Zusammenlebens von deutschem und polnischem Volk in Schlesien'. For more information on Scherffenstein see i.e.: Jan Piprek, *Wacław Scherffer von Scherffenstein, poeta śląski i polonofil XVII wieku*, Opole 1961, especially pp. 10-12, 121-122, 149-150, 159, 165-170, 206-236.

Scheffler (1624-1677)⁴² – better known by the pseudonym of Angelus Silesius – the son of a Cracow burgher who migrated to Wrocław. Curiously enough, this question has been seriously contested in the recent years⁴³. It is nonetheless worth mentioning yet another issue described as ‘an extremely interesting but a rather neglected contribution to the shaping of 17th-century Polish-German relations’: when – following his conversion to Catholicism – J. Scheffler became a keen religious polemicist, his ‘Protestant opponents [...] more often than not referred in their publications to his [Scheffler’s] Polish roots with the intention of weakening his position’. In consequence, Scheffler was ‘heavily irritated with these repeated insults [...]’⁴⁴. Perhaps his critics were giving expression to the contemporary stereotypical concept of Catholic Poles? Another researcher expressed the following view: ‘his opponents wanted to cast a shadow on his morals and they suspected him of engaging in relationships with „Polish wenches”’ – young ladies who came to Wrocław as seasonal workers and whom he provided with spiritual and medical care⁴⁵. In this context, this latter approach may not necessarily be connected with the issue of ethnicity.

The testimony of John Christian Günther (1695-1723), a Baroque poet from sub-Sudetes Strzegom, may be interpreted in yet another way. During his adolescence, when he was probably not very familiar with Slavic speech, he wrote later in a letter to his beloved of Kluczbork that the melody of her Polish language (the sound of which he normally could not stand) pleased him much more than the sound of Romance languages (*‘Dein Polnisch, das mir sonst so rauh und widrig klingt, / Beschämt durch Deinen Mund den Wohl-Laut Welscher Zungen’*)⁴⁶. This rather negative first impression (see above) is hardly evidence of German-Polish Silesian linguistic antagonisms, all the more so in that it corresponds to the way of thinking and style of expression that was typical of Günther the poet.

The development of local literature may be to some extent connected with the emphasis of Silesian educational institutions on teaching Latin and German. In the

⁴² W. Ogrodziński, *Dzieje*, p. 80.

⁴³ See: Tomasz Sapota, *Angelus Silesius – wpływ potrójnej tradycji na myśl śląskiego mistyka*, ‘Palas Silesia’, 2 (1998), No. 1, pp. 35-37; Cezary Lipiński, *Poeta poetów. Studia nad polską duchowością religijną na przykładzie recepcji Angelusa Silesiusa*, Zielona Góra 2011, pp. 89-99. Cf: also following earlier publication: *Silesiaca. Wybór z dzieł pisarzy śląsko-niemieckich XVII wieku w tekstach oryginalnych i polskich przekładach*, eds Marian Szyrocki, Zdzisław Żygulski, Warszawa 1957, p. 42.

⁴⁴ C. Lipiński, *Poeta*, p. 97.

⁴⁵ Marianna Borysiak, *W kręgu Johanna Schefflera w latach 1649-1654*, [in:] *Dawna kultura literacka na Śląsku. Zbiór studiów*, eds eadem, Adam Galos, Wrocław 1994, p. 45.

⁴⁶ Quotation from: Eberhard Hilscher, *Der schlesische Europäer John Christian Günther*, [in:] *Kulturraum*, p. 92.

aforementioned work by Opitz (1617) we read that ‘Greek and Latin, following the period of their great prosperity, have gradually degenerated and become extinct – which was a vicious attack against the sanctified mission of education’⁴⁷. Yet, this did not deter both Protestant and Catholic gymnasiums from delivering humanist programmes in Latin⁴⁸.

It was in Silesia, i.e., in the Protestant six-grade gymnasium of Brzeg – one of the leading schools launched following the Thirty Years’ War – that a major emphasis was put on the teaching of Ciceronian Latin; its students, starting from the second year of their education, were banned from using their native language – only foreigners were allowed to speak German in order to improve their linguistic skills⁴⁹. In the third quarter of the 17th century, the teaching programme of another major school in Silesia – an Evangelical ducal-municipal (later only municipal) gymnasium in Legnica, included – along with German – also Latin and Greek⁵⁰. A uniform programme of all 17th-century Jesuit colleges (i.e. in the Bishopric town of Nysa) focused on classical literature and a thorough teaching of Latin; students also learned Greek and Hebrew there, yet scarce attention was devoted to contemporary languages⁵¹. According to the educational policies introduced in the year 1643, until the 18th century both urban and Protestant Wrocław gymnasiums focused mostly on teaching Latin, Greek and Hebrew. A considerable emphasis was also placed on teaching students to speak and write – both letters and poetry – in Latin and German⁵². Yet, by the mid-17th century it was considered inconvenient to focus on teaching Latin; at the outset of the following century the townspeople complained that ‘their children were not being taught the language well enough’⁵³. Contrary to traditional views on education there soon emerged a trend to shift the focus towards issues of a more practical value – namely the contemporary native language and other living languages that were particularly useful at everyday business and social occasions. In 1706, the Oleśnica gymnasium introduced a modernized version of the teaching programme: during the two initial years of education

⁴⁷ M. Burbianka, *Z dziejów*, pp. 94-95.

⁴⁸ Norbert Conrads, *Ephraim Ignaz Naso von Löwenfels – der verhinderte schlesische Herodot*, [in:] *idem, Schlesien in der Frühmoderne*, p. 221.

⁴⁹ *Historia Śląska*, vol.1, part 3: *Od końca XVI w. do r. 1763*, ed. Karol Maleczyński, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1963, p. 564.

⁵⁰ Lucyna Harc, *Oświata w Legnicy w XVIII wieku*, [in:] *Tradycje nauki legnickiej. Konferencja naukowa z okazji 480. rocznicy założenia uniwersytetu w Legnicy, 12 października 2006 r.*, ed. Stanisław Dąbrowski, Legnica 2007, p. 130.

⁵¹ Bogumiła Burda, *Szkolnictwo średnie na Dolnym Śląsku w okresie wczesnonowożytnym (1526-1740)*, Zielona Góra 2007, pp. 55-56.

⁵² M. Burbianka, *Z dziejów*, pp. 56-57.

⁵³ *Historia Śląska*, p. 565.

students had to focus mostly on mastering practical German, and towards the end on perfecting their Latin and German oratory skills⁵⁴. Only two years later, the pioneering Oleśnica gymnasium was joined by the so-called Academy of Knights of Legnica, where, alongside German – almost an exclusive medium of school communication – students also participated in mandatory lessons of French (the language associated with circles of high society, i.e. diplomacy) and Italian, and optional lessons of Latin and Greek⁵⁵. Yet, in spite of this fact, ‘schools of Latin’ were much more highly valued than ‘schools of German’, which is proved by the example of Świdnica (1707–1708);⁵⁶ following the thirty-year period of turmoil, French teaching was re-launched in the local Evangelical grammar school⁵⁷. At the close of the discussed period and at the threshold of the Enlightenment, Silesian education showed symptoms that seemed likely to support the growing attachment of the educated youth to the dominant German language, at the expense of their ties with ‘cosmopolitan’ Latin. However, whenever necessary, Slavic languages were also taught, just like in the Jesuit gymnasium in Opole (which operated from 1668), whose students, besides Latin and German, also spoke Polish⁵⁸. At the outset of the 18th century, the local collegiate school educated its students almost exclusively in Polish – the only exception was the choral singing lessons taught in German; at the same time, the first independent German school in the Upper Silesian town of Opole was approved for operation as late as in 1714⁵⁹.

What was crucial from the perspective of the functioning of the ‘Silesian-Polish’ language was the development of inter-linguistic relationships between Silesia and its eastern neighbour. Intense commercial contact between Silesian burghers (especially Wrocław merchants) and Rzeczpospolita led to the foundation – thanks to their efforts – in 1666 of the Wrocław municipal ‘Polish’ school, which operated continuously until the very end of the discussed period and where future merchant had the opportunity to master, among others, the Polish language

⁵⁴ Lucyna Harc, *Olsnographia Johannaes Sinapiusa*, [in:] *Johannes Sinapius, Olsnographia oder Eigentliche Beschreibung des Oelßnischen Fürstenthums in Nieder-Schlesien*. Vol. 1-2: Leipzig und Franckfurt, 1706-1707, ed. Lucyna Harc, Wrocław 2012. Digital version: e-Biblioteka Historyczna, vol. 4, p. 16; German version: *eadem, Die Olsnographie von Johannes Sinapius*, [in:] *ibidem*, pp. 62-63.

⁵⁵ *Eadem, Oświata*, p. 139; Norbert Conrads, *Gründung und Bedeutung der Ritterakademie Liegnitz in habsburgischer Zeit (1708-1740)*, [in:] *idem, Schlesien in der Frühmoderne*, p. 280.

⁵⁶ See: Małgorzata Morawiec, *Z badań nad historią gospodarki i kultury miasta Świdnicy na przełomie XVII i XVIII w.*, [in:] *Dawna kultura*, pp. 95-96.

⁵⁷ B. Burda, *Szkolnictwo*, p. 76; more extensive information on the usage of particular languages in contemporary schools see *ibidem*, p. 52-77.

⁵⁸ Zdzisław Lec, *Szkolnictwo jezuickie na Górnym Śląsku do kasaty*, [in:] *Kultura edukacyjna na Górnym Śląsku*, ed. Antoni Barciak, Katowice 2002, p. 124.

⁵⁹ Rudolf Nieszwiec, *Szkola kolegiacka w Opolu do sekularyzacji*, [in:] *Kultura*, p. 58.

– which was particularly useful in their later business career⁶⁰. Polish was also taught in the school of Byczyna, whose peak of popularity came in the second and third quarters of the 17th century⁶¹. Young German-speaking Silesians who were willing to master Polish sought their chance to do so from as far as the eastern borderlands. They mostly studied in the nearby towns of Kluczbork and Wołczyn, but sometimes also on the other side of the border – in Poland⁶². People with the right connections used all their powers to establish their children at the courts of the nobility in Rzeczpospolita. The group of young men who were sent beyond the eastern border to perfect their level of Polish included the last member of the Piast dynasty; George William, Duke of Legnica and Brzeg, – who died in 1675 at the age of 15 – studied Polish at the request of his father, Christian, who himself spoke this language very well⁶³. Although this local Piast line had been Germanized long before, its representatives had no reason to shun the speech of their ancestors; their attitude was naturally met without the slightest opposition from their subjects in the duchies – which were soon to be orphaned by their masters – and from the residents of remaining parts of Silesia. As we can see, for some Silesians Polish – alongside Latin – had assumed the status of the first foreign language⁶⁴. Nonetheless, this almost certainly did not negatively affect their bonds with their native land of Silesia.

The existence of a considerable group of German-speaking Silesians who were willing to master Polish spurred the production of relevant literary publications. In 17th- and early-18th-century Silesia, several textbooks for learning Polish with a special focus on German-speaking students were issued, among other things, upon the request of the Wrocław city council⁶⁵.

By the mid-17th century the demand of Polish-speaking Silesians for printed works of Protestant literature was satisfied mainly by neighbouring Poland. Later on, these publications were produced mainly locally, mostly in the borderlands – but enjoying the full freedom of the Evangelical confession – feudal Duchies of Brzeg

⁶⁰ M. Czarnecka, *Dialogische Regionalität*, p. 58. See the following contemporary publication: F. Lucae, *Schlesiens*, p. 2198, who stated that other commercially useful languages (apart from Polish), such as French and Italian were taught in Wrocław by professionals.

⁶¹ F. Lucae, *Schlesische Fürsten-Krone*, p. 827; *idem*, *Schlesiens*, p. 581, 1426. Cf. also i.e.: Beata Stuchlik-Surowiak, *Twórczość Jerzego Bocka na tle kluczborsko-byczyńskiego środowiska kulturalnego z XVII wieku*, [in:] *Śląska Republika*, vol. 3, Wrocław 2008, pp. 295-296.

⁶² Mirosława Czarnecka, *Deutsch-polnische Kommunikation im plurinationalen Kulturkontext des Barock*, [in:] *Kulturgeschichte Schlesiens*, vol. 1, p. 362.

⁶³ *Eadem*, *Dialogische Regionalität*, p. 58.

⁶⁴ See: Kalina Mróz-Jabłocka, *Znajomość języka polskiego jako egzystencjalna konieczność wrocławskiego środowiska kupieckiego w XVII wieku*, [in:] *Z Gorzanowa*, especially pp. 151, 159.

⁶⁵ W. Ogrodziński, *Dzieje*, p. 73.

(for a certain period) and Oleśnica with printing houses located in their capital cities; Wrocław also stood out against other towns in terms of the production of literary works in Polish⁶⁶. The issue of ethnicity was not of slightest importance in this case – constant demand translated into constant supply; from a religious – no less significant – point of view, this activity also contributed to the strengthening of Lutheranism, whose position across Silesia was at the time generally in serious question. This clearly shows that in the case of the borderland region of Kluczbork-Byczyna in the of Duchy of Brzeg it was the bilingual Protestantism that cemented the German and Polish communities in the face of the Counter-Reformation (*‘Deutsche und Polen vereint und gerade in Anbetracht der Gegenreformation ein starkes Bewußtsein der Zusammengehörigkeit geschaffen hatte. Die Geschichte des Protestantismus der Stadt und des Herzogtums Brieg [...] gibt geradezu exemplarische Auskunft über die von der Konfession hergestellten Verflechtungen zwischen den Völkern’*), including, for instance, through contact with German- and Slavic-speaking Evangelicals of Cieszyn⁶⁷.

Germanization – which casually emerged in Silesia along with the top-down re-Catholicization following the Thirty Years’ War, and met no particular resistance of the local community – had a rather neutral influence on the region’s cohesion⁶⁸. The only conspicuous consequence of the increased exposition of Slavic-speaking Silesians to the German language is that it led to an even closer integration within the German-speaking communities which were at that point already dominant in many parts of Silesia. However, around the mid-17th century, Duke Silvius Nimrod, a Protestant ruler of the Lutheranzed Duchy of Oleśnica, which was home to a relatively high proportion of Polish-speakers, decided that the clergy need to be obliged to master both Polish and German;⁶⁹ half a century later John Sinapius of Oleśnica mentioned in one of his descriptions of the duchy ‘that the Polish language holds a permanent place [...] in the liturgy of many Evangelical churches’⁷⁰. It is nonetheless worth mentioning that at the turn of the 18th century Latin was gradually being replaced in ecclesiastical documents by German⁷¹, which may also be regarded as favourable for the process of further integration of already-heavily-Germanized Silesia.

⁶⁶ *Historia Śląska*, p. 577.

⁶⁷ A. Lubos, *Deutsche*, p. 63.

⁶⁸ For the position of the Czech language in contemporary duchies and towns of Upper Silesia see i.e.: Adolf Turek, *Poněmčování Opavska v 16. a 17. století. III. Na území bývalého knížetství Krnovského*, ‘Slezský sborník’, 47 (1949), No. 1, p. 42, No. 2, pp. 128-129, No. 4, p. 323.

⁶⁹ M. Borysiak, *W kręgu*, p. 42.

⁷⁰ L. Harc, *Olsnographia*, p. 45; German version: *eadem*, *Die Olsnographie*, p. 90.

⁷¹ K. Hannan, *Naród*, p. 149.

The takeover in 1623 of the state of Bytom (later the Free State of Bytom) by the Austrian noble family of Henckel von Donnersmarck resulted in a series of protests from the local Polish-speaking residents regarding the choice of Bytom's new official language, for this role since the 16th century had been fulfilled by as many as three languages: Czech, German and Polish⁷². The following was written a few decades ago about the region of Opole (whose characteristics became much more diversified in consequence of the Thirty Years' War) by a Polish historian:⁷³ 'Native Germans kept isolating themselves from the Polish community as they did before'⁷⁴. Apart from the question of whether the community he mentioned was purely Polish or composed of Poles and Czechs, it is worth considering whether, if this isolation really had taken place, it might have been linguistically- (and not ethnically-) motivated. In 1696, the German-speaking minority of Opole amounted to less than a third of the town's entire population, and that of Racibórz (in the third quarter of the 17th century) – to a fourth. Ethno-linguistically-motivated disputes between members of local Catholic communities swept each of the principal towns of the duchy: at the turn of the 18th century this occurred in Opole and in the second half of the 17th century – also due to significant inequalities in material status – in Racibórz⁷⁵.

The Silesian Jewish community of this period operated under specific socio-economic conditions. Besides their typical activity involving frequent contact with royal courts, they also earned their living through inn-keeping and door-to-door selling, thereby posing a threat to the material superiority of the bourgeoisie as well as impairing the functioning of the entire feudal economy. Therefore, the scope of their activity was mostly limited to the right-bank Upper Silesia, due to its lower level of urbanization and specific character of trade and agriculture⁷⁶. By the 17th century a large officially-registered Jewish religious community had already settled in the Lower Silesian town of Głogów and the Upper Silesian town of Biała, near Prudnik.⁷⁷ Curiously enough, when it comes to the second of these localities, Jews

⁷² *Acta miejskie Tarnowskich Gór od końca XVI wieku do roku 1740*, ed. Alina Kowalska, Katowice 1993, pp. 10-12.

⁷³ Cf. for Opole: Maria Nawrot, *Język polski w zabytkach cechowych miasta Opola*, Wrocław 1965 (=Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis, No. 36, Historia 9), pp. 162-168.

⁷⁴ W. Dziewulski, *Dzieje*, p. 53.

⁷⁵ M. Šmerda, *Protireformace*, pp. 103-104; Władysław Dziewulski, *Kościół katolicki a polskość na Śląsku od czasów najdawniejszych do Wiosny Ludów*, 'Kwartalnik Opolski', 4 (1966), p. 95.

⁷⁶ Leszek Ziątkowski, *Między niemożliwym a koniecznym. Reformy państwa pruskiego w końcu XVIII i na początku XIX wieku a proces równouprawnienia Żydów ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem sytuacji na Śląsku*, Wrocław 2007, pp. 112-119; *idem*, *Żydzi na Śląsku – pomiędzy tradycjami polskimi i niemieckimi*, [in:] *Rzeczpospolita między okcydentalizmem a orientalizacją*. Vol. 1: *Przestrzeń kontaktów*, eds Filip Wolański, Robert Kołodziej, Toruń 2009, p. 396.

⁷⁷ Leszek Ziątkowski, *Żydzi w Lubinie przed 1945 r.*, [in:] *Z Gorzanowa*, pp. 234-235; *idem*, *Żydzi na Śląsku*, p. 395. For the repeated protests of the Głogów burghers against the Jewish residents see

constituted a considerable proportion of its total population. By the second half of the 17th century the group of Jewish-community-friendly towns was unofficially extended by Wrocław. It may be said that the presence of Jews in the greater part of the territory of Silesia had a rather neutral impact on the issue of the ethnic cohesion of the local population.

It seems reasonable to note that in connection to the principal focus of this paper, literature on the subject (especially Polish) has highlighted the co-existence of several varieties of the Polish language wherever possible; at the same time, it may be said that the chances of confrontations between them were particularly slim. It has been pointed out by one modern researcher that, although the ethnic relationship between Silesians and Czechs was not particularly strong, there possibly existed a certain degree of linguistic-communicational proximity between these two groups in the Upper Silesian part; outside the eastern and south-eastern borderlands the influence of Polish language was much less noticeable on the level of the entire country, which was rather dominated by the politically and culturally consolidated sphere of German⁷⁸. In the final analysis, when it comes to Upper Silesia, it is worth pointing out that throughout the centuries this borderland area was home to a number of co-existing and interrelated languages, which included the archaic Polish dialect as well as the German, Czech and Moravian languages⁷⁹. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that the above discussion provides a rather insignificant number of arguments that would support the thesis that the disintegrating role of the ethno-linguistic sphere in modern Silesia was clearly standing out against that of its neighbours (curiously enough the County of Kłodzko – located towards the south of the region, and currently included in the territory of Silesia – seems to be completely left untouched in this matter⁸⁰). The fundamental division of Silesia according to the flow of the river Odra into right- and left-bank territories was not an issue in this respect. Indeed, there were incidental cases of antagonism between the local Polish- and German-speaking communities (just in

the recent publication by: Jarosław Kuczer, *Podstawy prawnej egzystencji społeczności żydowskiej księstwa głogowskiego w okresie rządów habsburskich (1526-1740)*, [in:] *Religijność na polskich pograniczach w XVI–XVIII wieku*, ed. Dariusz Dolański, Zielona Góra 2005, pp. 104-111.

⁷⁸ See: Jarosław Malicki, *Slezské jazykové spektrum a kategorie okraje z středu ve vývoji komunikace společnosti zemi Koruny české ve 14. až 18. století*, [in:] *Śląska Republika*, vol. 2, Wrocław 2006, p. 23.

⁷⁹ P. Chmiel, *Die sprachlichen Verhältnisse*, p. 186, original quotation in German: 'Das mehrsprachige Land galt Jahrhunderte lang als ein klassisches Beispiel für eine Grenzregion, in der mehrere Sprachen nebeneinander existierten: ein altpolnischer Dialekt, Deutsch, Tschechisch und Mährisch. Sie beeinflussten zwar einander, wie das bei sprachlichen Kontakten auf einem verhältnismäßig kleinen Raum üblich ist, ohne sich jedoch gegenseitig zu bekämpfen'.

⁸⁰ See: Jacek Dębicki, *Wybrane zagadnienia z nowożytnej Ziemi Kłodzkiej (1459-1742)*, currently in printing.

the territory of Upper Silesia, they occurred in the state of Bytom and in the Odra-adjacent towns of Opole and Racibórz). Perhaps in this context, although in a slightly different sense, we could refer to the aforementioned example of the renowned poet Angelus Silesius. Yet, even more evidence for the so-called ‘minor harmfulness’ of the ethno-linguistic diversity emerges from the inquiries of many researchers who focused on the subject earlier in history⁸¹. It would seem that ethno-linguistically-motivated conflicts were really a rare occurrence in the period in question⁸². In the modern period, these issues were approached quite differently to how they are, sometimes, today. A question that still remains unanswered is whether the neglecting of ‘national’ languages by the church liturgy and religious spirituality, and their particular enforcement in the Lutheran Church, really had an impact on the (mutual) cohesion of the German- and Slavic-speaking Silesian population. Generally speaking, even if the sound of the Polish language was unpleasant to the ear of the contemporary German-speaking Silesians, they, nonetheless, purposefully learned it and used it – even if only for the purpose of official communication (trading and preaching). In turn, the process of migration of young Silesians to Poland in order to perfect their foreign language skills did not disrupt the German culture, which – at the end of the discussed period – was constantly developing and gaining in strength.

It seems that the period of the Habsburg reign over the territory of Silesia was also more or less free of ethno-linguistic issues that would disrupt its uniform character. Except for offering Silesians the possibility to master the Polish language, which was particularly useful in professional relations, neighbouring Poland probably did not present any other risks to the ethno-linguistic cohesion of Silesia;⁸³ nor did the local business activity of the representatives of the Polish nobility⁸⁴. For the inhabitants of various parts of Silesia, the German-Slavic duality was a perfectly natural state of things⁸⁵ (even in spite of incidental animosities) they were unwittingly becoming aware of as they grew older. Perhaps even this duality was so

⁸¹ As regards the north-western Silesian borderland, see a recent critical opinion of this approach expressed by: Dariusz Dolański, Małgorzata Konopnicka-Szatarska, *Rola religii w przenikaniu się kultur na Środkowym Nadodrzu w okresie od XVI do XVIII wieku*, [in:] *Religijność*, p. 95.

⁸² Cf. Paweł Musioł, *Piśmiennictwo polskie na Śląsku do początków XIX wieku*, Opole 1970, p. 83.

⁸³ This cohesion was left unharmed by a circumstance (connected with the towns of Greater Poland situated at the Silesian border) presented by: F. Lucae, *Schlesische Fürsten-Krone*, p. 827.

⁸⁴ For a general description of (Upper) Silesian-Polish relations see recent publication by: Marek Cetwiński, *Die Beziehungen des schlesischen Adels zu Polen*, [in:] *Adel in Schlesien*. Vol. 1: *Herrschaft*, pp. 299-304.

⁸⁵ For more information on the Duchy of Oleśnica at the turn of the 18th century see the relevant quotation from *Olsnographia* by J. Sinapius in: M. Czarnecka, *Deutsch-polnische Kommunikation*, p. 362.

deeply rooted that some of its aspects were left undiscovered by them throughout their entire lives. When it comes to the possible innate dual ethno-linguistic character of the Silesian capital city of Wrocław, this issue is not confirmed by the contemporary literary sources. Naturally, the dominant German-speaking section of the Silesian community could have remained under the considerable influence of fellow German-speakers of other lands that neighboured with Silesia; however, this potential relationship is very hard to trace.

What is especially distinctive is the handicap of the Upper Silesian section of the region, which was obviously not a pro-integrating factor. In terms of the quality of education, leading institutions were located in Lower Silesia (Wrocław, Brzeg, Legnica, Nysa; also, in terms of the quality of Polish language teaching, Byczyna and possibly the neighbouring Kluczbork). The Germanization of Slavic Silesians was rather more frequent than the Slavization of its German counterparts, which was a rather obvious result of the numerical superiority of the German ethnic group, the related strength of the German language and pro-German (to a certain degree) education. In turn, the assimilation of the members of the Upper Silesian Slavic community to the German-speaking culture during their educational or for career visits to Lower Silesia (where this culture was dominant) may be classified as a pro-integrating factor. We may not, however, exclude the possibility that not only the partially ethno-linguistically-mixed eastern ends of Lower Silesia but, most importantly, the much of the territory of Upper Silesia could have been simply regarded by the (vast) majority of German-speaking Lower Silesians as rather unattractive.

Lower Silesia was also home to many writers of both German and Polish ethno-linguistic backgrounds. The latter ones resided mainly in Wrocław and (in the second half of the 17th century) near Kluczbork in the Duchy of Brzeg. In Upper Silesia writers mostly settled in Cieszyn (in the second and third decades of the 18th century), where they migrated from the area of Byczyna and Kluczbork⁸⁶. At the time, this state of things was not subjected to any criticism. The output produced by the local community of the German-speaking Baroque and post-Baroque fiction writers was a particularly integrating force. Curiously enough, the German-speaking writers of Silesia seemed to ignore the issue of the co-existing local dialects.

In view of the above findings, it may be stated that the impact of the ethno-linguistic relations of modern Silesia did not generally disrupt the cohesion of its community.

⁸⁶ See i.e.: J. Zaremba, *Polscy pisarze*, pp. 10-24, 171.

