



WACŁAW KORTA

### **A dispute over the name of Silesia**

The question of derivation and notional content of the name of Silesia has over a thousand-year-long history behind it. The first mention of the subject was made in the 11th century by the German chronicler Thietmar. As a participant of the war expedition against Poland launched by Emperor Henry II in 1017 and an observer of events which occurred on the occasion near Niemcza, he noted that the town lied 'in the country of Silesia which inherited its name after one great and very tall mountain'<sup>1</sup>. The chronicler considered the land's name to be a derivation a mountain's name, and, in spite of the fact that he failed to mention this name in his writings, his description is clear enough to leave no doubt that it was Ślęza (*mons Silensis*) he was referring to.

What is especially striking about Thietmar's record is the word 'once' (*olim*), pointing to a remote but somewhat chronologically indefinite origin of this name which was most probably incomprehensible for Thietmar, because he refrained from providing its etymological explanation, just as he did in the case of the name of Niemcza which he considered to be a derivation of the name of the German-born builders of this gord<sup>2</sup>.

The first attempts at reading the sense of the name of Silesia were undertaken only by the Renaissance writers in consequence of the typical for the time growth of interest in the ancient Slavonic history and the popular tendency of contemporary writers to produce works mostly to display their erudite skills, rather than to bring about any scholarly value.

As an example of such approach one may surely mention, for instance, the disquisitions of M. Kromer<sup>3</sup>, who claimed that the names 'Silesia' and 'Silesians' derive from the word 'złazić' (lit.: go down) or those of B. Stein<sup>4</sup>, who, in contrast, claimed the word Silesia to derive from the Slavonic word 'zle' (lit.: bad).

The basis for these kind of ideas were superficial, naive phonetic associations between the name Silesia and common Slavonic words of various meanings. No wonder that at the outset of the 18th century, M. Hanke could provide as many as 9 distinct linguistic explanations of the name of Silesia<sup>5</sup>.

Out of these varied philological ideas, what deserves special attention are the interpretations of the name of Silesia which pointed to its topographical derivation. The

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<sup>1</sup> *Kronika Thietmara*, M. Z. Jedlicki, ed., Poznań 1953, pp. 554–555: 'Posita est autem haec [i.e. Niemcza] in pago Silensi, vocabulo hoc a quodam monte nimis excelso et grandi olim sibi indito'. In another passage, pp. 394–395, he refers to *Slęzanie* as *Cilensi*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 353–355: '...ad urbem Nemzi, eo quod a nostris olim sit condita dictam...'

<sup>3</sup> M. Kromer, *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum*, ed. Pistorius, vol. II, 1583, p. 500.

<sup>4</sup> B. Stein, 'Descriptio tocius Silesiae et civitatis regie Wratislaviensis' (*Scriptores rerum Silesiacarum*, vol. XVII, Breslau 1902, p. 4): 'Slesia vocatur a malo, quod »sle« Sarmatica lingua dicitur'.

<sup>5</sup> M. Hanke, *De Silesiorum nominibus antiquitates*, Leipzig 1702, p. 1 and following. Still at the outset of the 19th century, S. B. Linde (*Słownik języka polskiego*) the word Silesia was associated with 'ślaz' (in English: mallow).



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forerunner of this sort of approach at the turn of the 16th century was K. Celtes<sup>6</sup>, who claimed that the name of Silesia took its origin from the name of the river '*Slesus*', a tributary of the river Odra, which was identified by B. Stein<sup>7</sup> as the river Brynica—dividing Silesia from Lesser Poland in the Będzin-Bytom section—and by some other Silesian historiographers from the later period between the 17th and the 18th century—as the river Olza<sup>8</sup>.

All the aforementioned ideas, independently of their unreliability of purely linguistic nature, had yet another flaw: they associated the name of Silesia with the region's borderland rivers. Therefore, much more interesting and accurate seemed to be the hypothesis proposed by the aforementioned Silesian historiographer M. Hanke<sup>9</sup>, who claimed that the name of Silesia derives from the name of the river Ślęza, a left-bank tributary of the river Odra, joining it in the vicinity of Wrocław.

Hanke's idea was strongly supported by the distinguished scholar of the turn of the 19th century, namely, J. B. Bandtkie<sup>10</sup>, who, in a paper devoted to the matter of the name of Silesia developed the thought of his predecessor by linking with the river Ślęza not only the name of the tribe of *Ślężanie* (as recorded in the 9th century by the Bavarian Geographer), but also the name of Mount Ślęza and its surrounding lands, which—as we can see—contrasts with the views of Thietmar, according to whom it was the Ślęza's name that had chronological primacy over that of the river.

The treatise of J. S. Bandtkie of 1801 was a distinct turning point in the contemporary scholarly inquiries on the origin and etymology of the name of Silesia. For, it was for the first time that the issue was examined in accordance with the contemporary academic procedures, thereby giving the thesis of the Slavonic descent of the name of Silesia a more solid foundation. In spite of—or, perhaps, owing to—this fact, the views of J. S. Bandtkie sparked an unfavourable response among the scholarly community, which gave rise to long-term passionate discussions and, at times, even fervent disputes, which often far exceeded the scope of purely academic issues.

Already in 1829, the disquisition of J. S. Bandtkie on the Slavonic origin of the name of Silesia was questioned by I. G. Worbs<sup>11</sup>, principally on the grounds that—as he thought—Ślęza was too small a river to lend its name to the entire land of Silesia. Worbs put forward an assumption that Silesia owes its name to the aforementioned by Tacitus Lugii-Germanic tribe of Elysia.

J. S. Bandtkie, however, kept defending his thesis, supporting it with further arguments<sup>12</sup>, which, nonetheless, were not convincing enough for I. G. Worbs<sup>13</sup>.

Yet, soon even his disquisitions on the subject of the alleged connection between the name of Silesia and Tacitus's tribe of Elysia had to give way to a more suggestive

<sup>6</sup> K. Celtes, *Quatuor libri Amorum*, Norymberga 1502, sheet 28v.

<sup>7</sup> Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. W. Semkowicz, 'Historyczno-geograficzne podstawy Śląska' (*Historia Śląska od najdawniejszych czasów do roku 1400*, vol. I, 1933, p. 2).

<sup>9</sup> Hanke, *op. cit.*, p. 1 and following.

<sup>10</sup> J. S. Bandtkie, 'Schlesiens Name historisch nicht etymologisch erklärt' (*Schlesische Provinzialblätter*, vol. XXXIV, 1801, p. 257).

<sup>11</sup> I. G. Worbs, 'Noch ein Versuch den Namen Schlesien historisch zu erklären' (*Schlesische Provinzialblätter*, vol. XC, 1829, pp. 313 and following).

<sup>12</sup> J. S. Bandtkie, 'Aus Elysia können die Slawen niemals Silesia gemacht' (*Schlesische Provinzialblätter*, vol. XCI, 1830, pp. 101 and following, 205 and following).

<sup>13</sup> I. G. Worbs, 'Über die Ableitung des Namens Schlesien als Antwort an Herrn Samuel Bandtke' (*Schlesische Provinzialblätter*, vol. XCIII, 1831, pp. 101 and following).



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thesis presented by I. Imsieg<sup>14</sup>, who associated the name of Silesia with the German tribe of Silingi, first mentioned in the II century A.D. by the Greek geographer Ptolemy.

At the root of his claim lied the phonetic resemblance between the tribe's name and the toponym, as well as the conviction that Silesia was settled by Silingi in the 2nd century A.D.—as it was maintained—long before the appearance of Slavs, who were to inherit the name of this land after their Germanic predecessors.

The views of I. Imsieg met with virtually total acceptance of—what is remarkable—both the German and Slavonic scholars, and up till the interwar period they were perceived as the ultimate solution to the issue<sup>15</sup>.

This opinion was eventually to a large extent challenged only by the Polish scholars, historian W. Semkowicz<sup>16</sup> and linguist M. Rudnicki<sup>17</sup>, thanks to whom the thesis of J. S. Bandkie on the Slavonic descent of the name of Silesia, formulated at the outset of the 19th century, was supported by new arguments, at the same time, exposing numerous downsides of I. Imsieg's theory.

Actually, they were also seeking principal evidence to support their claims with linguistic material, and devoted much less attention to archaeological findings, but—instead—they were the first ones to perform its analysis in terms of linguistic rules. As a result they came to a conclusion which rather excluded the possibility to transform the stem of the Germanic word Silingi: 'Sil' into the Slavonic stem 'ślęz' contained in the name of the tribe of Ślężanie mentioned by the oldest written sources: the Bavarian Geographer (*Sleenzane*)<sup>18</sup>, the so-called the document of Prague of 1086 (*Zlasane*)<sup>19</sup> and the name of the river Ślęza confirmed by the bull of Hadrian IV of 1155 (*Selenza*)<sup>20</sup>. At the same time they opined that all the attempts at providing philological explanation of the mysterious name of Ptolemy's tribe of Silingi and their phonetic and and graphic equivalents, known from yet other records, are unreliable and do not provide an explicit answer so as to the German origin of this tribal name. This stand was also supported by linguist W. Taszycki<sup>21</sup>, mainly in response to the arguments presented by R. Mucha<sup>22</sup>, according to whom the river Ślęza could have been initially named Silinga, which in Old Germanic was to mean 'calmly flowing water'. With this in mind, the fact of calling the locally settled tribe Silingi was fully justified.

<sup>14</sup> L. Imsieg, 'Zufällige Gedanken eines alten Schulmannes über die Ableitung des Namens Schlesiens' (*Schlesische Provinzialblätter*, vol. XCII, 1830, pp. 16 and following).

<sup>15</sup> I. Imsieg's views were supported by the following Slavonic scholars: P. Safarik, 'Myslenky o starobytnosti Slovanu v Europe' (*Casopis cesk. Muzea*, vol. I, 1834, p. 41), who later slightly revised his stand, by raising doubts about whether the name of the river Ślęza originates from the name of the tribe of Silingi, or the other way round, cf. *idem*, *Slovanske starozitnosti*, vol. II, 1937, p. 337; F. Palacky, *Geschichte der Bohmen*, vol. I, 1836, pp. 68–69; J. Rozwadowski, 'Historyczna fonetyka czyli głosownia [języka polskiego]'. *Gramatyka języka polskiego*, Kraków 1923, p. 111. From the German writers only K. Zeuss, *Die Deutschen und die Nachbarstämme*, München 1937, pp. 455, 663 opposed the thesis of I. Imsieg, simultaneously considering as reliable the views on the origin of Silesia expressed formerly by J. S. Bandtkie.

<sup>16</sup> Semkowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 1 and following.

<sup>17</sup> M. Rudnicki, 'Dyskusja na temat nazwy Śląska' (*Slavia Occidentalis*, vol. XVI, 1937, pp. 234 and following).

<sup>18</sup> 'Geograf Bawarski' (*Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. I, Lwów 1864, p. 11).

<sup>19</sup> *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Śląska*, vol. I, published by K. Maleczyński, Wrocław 1956, no. 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 55.

<sup>21</sup> W. Taszycki, *Śląskie nazwy miejscowe*, Katowice 1935, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> R. Much, 'Der Name Silingi' (*Altschlesien*, vol. I, no. 3/3, 1926, pp. 117–121). Cf. also *Geschichte Schlesiens*, 3rd edition, vol. I, Stuttgart 1961, p. 86.



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On their part, W. Semkowicz and M. Rudnicki, on providing evidence on the Slavonic origin of the name of Silesia, connected it with the Slavonic stem '*ślęg*', surviving in the contemporary Polish language in such words as '*ślągwa*', '*sięgnąć*', '*ślęganina*' etc., which means rainy weather, dampness etc. The stem '*ślęg*' has survived in the name of the river Ślęza, Mount Ślęza, the tribe of Ślężanie, and thanks to this name also the name of the entire land of Silesia is fully justified in the etymological sense. For, the Ślęza river basin was once situated in the '*prześlągłe*' (damp) territories. Its German equivalent *Lohe* is of the same meaning<sup>23</sup>. Mount Ślęza, due to its location and the relative height of 500 metres is indeed a '*ślężna*' (damp) mountain, which is confirmed not only by meteorological data, but also by the 15th-century note contained in the chronicle of the monastery of the Virgin Mary on the Sand in Wrocław<sup>24</sup>.

What was also explained was, on the one hand, the question of relationship between the toponyms of the river and the mountain and the name of the tribe of Ślężanie and the region, on the other. What has been brought into mind is that the explanation of this issue provided by Thietmar, according to whom the name of the region was to be lent from the name of the mountain has no practical confirmation whatsoever, for the practice of naming tribes after mountains was a very rare phenomenon. Furthermore, there has been found no evidence that would prove the reverse processes. Quite different is the case of the influence of the riverine topography on the names of tribes. Vast evidence points to the fact that rivers often lent their names to the tribes settled in their neighbourhood. It is highly probable that it was so also in the case of Silesia and the river Ślęza<sup>25</sup>.

This new attempt to explain controversial topographic and tribal names which are the subject of our examination, met with almost unanimous approval of most eminent Polish linguists and has been considered up until this day in the native Polish scholarly literature as the most accurate interpretation of the origin of the name of Silesia, especially from 1955, when linguist S. Rospond published his paper entitled '*Ślęza i jej derywaty*'<sup>26</sup> where he supplemented the findings of his predecessors based on the study of onomastic materials, which shed new light on the entire issue. It was the analysis of these materials, which allowed the author to come to a rather vital conclusion that in the oldest diplomatic records of the 12th and the 13th century as well as in annals and Polish chronicles the name Silesia together with its derivations were mostly based on the Old Slavonic stem '*ślęg*', therefore, what was most often found in these sources were the words *Slesia*, *Slezia*, *Zlensensis* etc. On the other hand, the form Silesia and its equivalents, such as *Silensis*, *Silencianus* etc., suggesting the connection with the tribe of Silingi, were—according to S. Rospond—of later origin, and they became more widespread only in Renaissance, most probably owing to Thietmar, who was said to transform the Slavonic name of Silesia into the Germanic '*Silensia*', though nowhere in his writings do we find an indication for this new name to be in any way connected with Silingi. The scholar closed his study with the explicit conclusion: 'The philological analysis of the entire collection of the oldest onomastic materials unambiguously contradicts the connection of the name of Silesia with that of the Silingi,

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<sup>23</sup> Semkowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> 'Cronica abbatum Beatae Virginis in Arena' (*Scriptores rerum Silesia carum*, vol. II, Breslau 1839, p. 163).

<sup>25</sup> Semkowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> S. Rospond. '*Ślęza i jej derywaty*' (*Onomastica*, vol. XVI, 1955, pp. 8 and following).





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for in spite of the quotations of Thietmar, which are clearly adapted to the German graphic and phonetic form of the German word (*Silensi*) no original 12th–13th-century source mentions the stem »Sil«<sup>27</sup>.

If, in spite of this fact, the point put forward by W. Semkowicz and M. Rudnicki raised certain doubts<sup>28</sup>, this situation may be justified—in my view—with their relatively insufficient focus on the archaeological aspects of the issue. Indeed, W. Semkowicz touched the issue of the difficulty connected with identifying the location of Ptolemy's tribe of Silingi, but he, nonetheless, did not exclude the fact of their possible stay in Silesia, and even permitted the possibility that they inherited their name after the Slavonic tribe of Ślężanie or the fact that the name of Silingi functioned as secondary, foreign name of Ślężanie. As regards the latter case, the term Silingi, recorded in the Spanish sources dating to the the 5th century A.D. could have—according to W. Semkowicz—referred to Slavonic inhabitants of the Ślężanian plains, who 'were pushed to the West by the turmoil of the Germanic migration'<sup>29</sup>. Yet, with this point the scholar went, most probably, too wide of the mark, which is proved by the note of the Bavarian Geographer and a record in the document of Prague, where Ślężanie are mentioned as one of several tribes settling the territory of the upper and middle reaches of the river Odra.

These uncertainties and hesitation resulting from the difficulty to reconcile two mutually contradictory views on Slavonic and Germanic character of the settlement on the banks of the river Ślęza at the outset of the first millennium A.D. have been recently revisited by H. Łowmiański, who tried to solve the problem in a similar manner by putting forward a claim that it is the very name of the Germanic tribe that lies at the foundation of the native form of the name of Silesia and proves the Slavonic character of the region 'in the moment when it was settled by the group of Silingi who were formerly required to assimilate with the Slavonic community'<sup>30</sup>.

The downside of such concept was that, in line with the geographic logic of Ptolemy, it would be more reasonable to seek for the settlements of Silingi not in Silesia but rather in the current territory of Lusatia, and view them as southern neighbours of the tribe of Semnones who were said by Ptolemy to reside between the Elbe and Odra rivers<sup>31</sup>. From there, around the mid-3rd century A.D. did the Silings move, together

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 23. Although this claim is not entirely to the point, the number of examples containing the stem 'Sil' which are omitted by the author is so insignificant that this fact does not change the value of his study in any way. Cf. M. Derwich, 'Testament Bolesława Krzywoustego w polskiej historiografii średniowiecznej' (*Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis, Historia*, vol. XXXIII, 1980, p. 123, footnote 27).

<sup>28</sup> These were expressed in general by Taszycki, *op. cit.*, p. 30, though he opined that the claim that the name Ślężanie originated from the name Ślęza is probable.

<sup>29</sup> Semkowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> H. Łowmiański, *Początki Polski*, vol. IV, Warszawa 1970, p. 244 and following.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Semkowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 9 and following; E. Simek, *Velka Germanie Klaudia Ptolomaia*, vol. II, Brno 1935, p. 167; Zeuss, *op. cit.*, p. 455; Th. Steche, *Altgermanien im Erdkundenbuch des Claudius Ptolomaus*, Leipzig 1937, p. 92; K. Tymieniecki, *Ziemia polskie w starożytności*, Poznań 1951, p. 687 and following; J. Nalepa, 'Ślęza Góra na pograniczu wielecko-łużyckim' (*Onomastica*, vol. II, 1956, p. 319–322); K. Jążdżewski, *Stosunki etniczne na Śląsku w I tysiącleciu przed n.e. i w I tysiącleciu n.e.*, Katowice 1960, p. 18; Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, p. 250–251.



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with the Burgundians, to the West, and settle in the river basin of Main<sup>32</sup>. This view is, as a matter of fact, supported by H. Łowmiański<sup>33</sup>. That is why, what seems slightly probable is his assumption that a somewhat small group of Silingi had risked isolation from the principal forces of their fellows and ventured alone in the opposite direction, heading eastwards to the vicinity of the river Ślęza, where the ethnic proportions of settlers had been in continuous fluctuation up till the close of the last millenium B.C., and even coupled with acute unrest<sup>34</sup>.

For the reason of insufficient records in the written sources we are unable to provide a full scholarly reconstruction of these transformations, and there, too, exist several different opinions on the subject. The researchers, most often agree so as to the fact that it was ca. the 1st century A.D. that Silesia began to welcome the Germanic tribes who, in turn, were gradually replacing the local inhabitants<sup>35</sup>. Principal agents in this process were to be the Vandals, who flocked in this direction along the Odra river<sup>36</sup> from their original domiciles located, most probably, in the southern coast of the Baltic See<sup>37</sup>. The fundamental differences in the researchers' opinions emerged only when it came to defining the role of Vandals in the prehistory of Silesia. The German scholars were supporting the view that the tribe was to reside in Silesia for several centuries until the moment of their subsequent migration to the south of Europe in the 4th century A.D. and that they were to exert a crucial influence on the culture of both Silesia and its contiguous areas<sup>38</sup>, whose most characteristic evidence is the culture of pit-grave burials. Naturally, Mount Ślęza was to continue to serve as a cult site, adapted in this respect to the needs of the Germanic incomers<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. E. Petersen, *Schlesien von der Eiszeit bis ins Mittelalter*, Berlin–Leipzig 1935, p. 185–186; E. Schmidt, *Geschichte der deutschen Stamme bis zum Ausgang der Volkerwanderung. Die Ostgermanen*, Munchen 1941, p. 131; E. Schwarz, *Germanische Stammeskunde*, Heidelberg 1956, p. 76.

<sup>33</sup> Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, p. 251, 267–268.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Jażdżewski, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. K. Tackenberg, 'Die Bedeutung des Zobtenberges in vorgeschichtlichen Zeit' (*Zobtenjahrbuch*, Schweidnitz 1926, p. 9); B. v. Richthofen, 'Zur Herkunft der Wandalen' (*Altschlesien*, vol. III, 1931, p. 21 and following); M. Jahn, *Die Kelten in Schlesien*, Leipzig 1931, p. 48, 98; Petersen, *op. cit.*, p. 143 (dates the emergence of Vandals in Silesia to the last century B.C.); Ch. Pescheck, *Die fruhwandalische Kultur im Mittelschlesien (100 vor bis 200 nach Chr.)*, Leipzig 1939, p. 146 and following; M. Jahn, 'Die Wandalen' (*Vorgeschichte der deutschen Stamme*, vol. III, 1940, p. 949 and following); J. Kostrzewski, 'Germanie przedhistoryczni w Polsce' (*Przegląd Archeologiczny*, vol. VII, 1946, p. 74 and following).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. M. Jahn, 'Die Wanderung der Kimbern, Teutonen und Wandalen' (*Mannus*, vol. XXIV, 1932, p. 150 and following); idem, 'Die Wandalen', p. 962. The controversial issue is again revisited by Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, p. 244 and following

<sup>37</sup> For the route of migration of Vandals see Petersen, *op. cit.*, p. 143–162; E. Schwarz, 'Die Urheimat der Gofen und ihre Wanderungen im Weichselland und nach Sudrussland' (*Saeculum*, vol. IV, 1953, p. 14 and following); Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, p. 249 and following).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. M. Jahn, 'Herkunft der schlesischen Wandalen' (*Mannus-Bibliothek*, no. 22, 1922, p. 78 and following); R. Tackenberg, *Die Wandalen in Niederschlesien. Vorgeschichtliche Forschungen*, vol. 1/2, Berlin 1925; M. Jahn, 'Die Gliederung der wandalischen Kultur in Schlesien. Schlesiens Vorzeit in Bild und Schrift' (*NF*, vol. VIII, 1926, p. 20 and following); Petersen, *op. cit.*, p. 143 and following; R i c h t h o f e n, *op. cit.*, p. 21 and following

<sup>39</sup> Cf. F. Geschwendt, *Siling der Schlesierberg*, Augsburg 1928, p. 19–20; M. Jahn, 'Westdeutsche Gegenstücke zum Siling-Zobtenproblem' (*Altschlesische Blätter*, 1931, no. 1, p. 2–5); H. Uhtenwold t, 'Die Stiftskirche auf dem Siling' (*Altschlesische Blätter*, 1937, no. 1–2, p. 13); F. Geschwendt, *Der Siling, Land und Volk*, Breslau-Deutsch Lissa 1938, p. 19; idem, 'Neue Untersuchungen an Steinaltertumem des Silinggebietes, Die Hohe Strasse' (*Schlesisches Jahrbuch für deutsche Art und Kunst im Ostraum*, vol. I, 1938, p. 58).



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The role of Germanic tribes in Silesia in the first centuries A.D. is evaluated quite differently by the Polish scholars. Observing the continuity of many characteristics of the culture of Lusatia, through its subsequent stages, starting from the Hallstatt culture up till the 5th century A.D., the residence of Germanic tribes in Silesia is considered as episodic, and the local cultural transformations which were most fully expressed in the culture of pit-grave burials, are treated not as the result of infiltration by alien tribes, but rather as evolution taking place within uniform, basic ethnic substrate<sup>40</sup>.

From archaeological point of view this thesis seems highly probable. Indeed, lately K. Godłowski<sup>41</sup>, following the views expressed somewhat earlier by K. Moszyński<sup>42</sup> and H. Ułaszyn<sup>43</sup>, has attempted to question the presence of the Slavs in Silesia prior to the 6th century A.D., but his conviction has been almost exclusively founded on the reinterpretation of archaeological sources and cultural processes, which, after all—as Godłowski himself admits—are insufficient a basis to let him, alone, solve the dispute on the prehistoric cradle of the Slavs and chronology of their spread across Europe. For the time being, it would be most reasonable for us to maintain a reserved attitude towards this—what needs to be admitted—in many respects innovative and logically structured hypothesis, until we hear a relevant opinion of anthropologists, ethnologists, historians and, most of all, linguists<sup>44</sup>.

Yet, independently of the questionability of the aforementioned issues, the presence of Vandals in Silesia both in the light of the written sources, as well as, to certain extent, archaeological sources, seems indisputable. But the tribe resided in the region until, at most, the 4th century, and this did not concern its entire population, for already in the 2nd century A.D. the Vandals began to gradually withdraw from the lands of Silesia and headed towards the Danube river basin, or, they assimilated with the local people<sup>45</sup>.

It is also difficult to answer the question whether the Vandals constituted a separate entity, at times identified by the scholars as the tribe of Lugii<sup>46</sup> which was known to the ancient writers, or whether—as it has been recently assumed by H.

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. J. Kostrzewski, 'Związki między najmłodszą fazą kultury łużyckiej a kulturą grobów jamowych okresu późnolateńskiego' (*Sprawozdania AU*, vol. XLIII, 1938, p. 178–181); K. Jażdżewski, 'Kujawskie przyczynki do zagadnienia tubylczości Słowian na ziemiach polskich' (*Wiadomości Archeologiczne*, vol. XVI, 1948, p. 106 and following); J. Kostrzewski, *Pradzieje Polski*, Poznań 1949, p. 173 and following; J. Marciniak, 'Cmentarzysko ciałopalne z okresu późnolateńskiego w Wilanowie koło Warszawy' (*Materiały Starożytne*, vol. II, 1957, p. 126); W. Hołubowicz, 'Śląsk w epoce wspólnoty pierwotnej' (*Historia Śląska PAN*, vol. I/1, Wrocław 1960, p. 102, 106–124); Jażdżewski, *Stosunki etniczne*, p. 18–20; J. Kostrzewski, *Zagadnienie ciągłości zaludnienia ziem polskich w pradziejach od połowy II tysiąclecia p.n.e. do wczesnego średniowiecza*, Poznań 1961, p. 65 and following; idem, 'Le probleme du sejour des Germains sur les terres de Pologne' (*Archaeologia Polona*, vol. IV, 1962, p. 7 and following); Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, p. 268 and following

<sup>41</sup> K. Godłowski, *Z badań nad zagadnieniem rozprzestrzenienia się Słowian w V–VII w.n.e.*, Kraków 1979.

<sup>42</sup> K. Moszyński, *Pierwotny zasięg języka prasłowiańskiego*, Wrocław 1956.

<sup>43</sup> H. Ułaszyn, *Praojczyzna Słowian*, Łódź 1959.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. J. Wyzumski, a review of the paper of K. Godłowski, *Studia Historyczne*, vol. XXIV, 1981, issue 4, p. 669–673.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. L. Piotrowicz, 'Ziemie polskie w starożytności' (*Pamiętnik VII Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków Polskich*, vol. I, Warszawa 1948, p. 183); Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, pp. 268 and following.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. L. Schmidt, *Geschichte der Wandalen*, Leipzig 1901, p. 4 and following; Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, p. 192 and following, 244 and following



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Łowmiański<sup>47</sup>—this name referred to the ethnically-mixed tribal association brought to life in Silesia, and where the Vandals' role, next to that of the Celts and the Slavs, was of rather secondary importance. This association was to be headed by the Celts, who were also said to lend it its name<sup>48</sup>.

Ever greater doubts are raised by the fact of associating the cult site of the Lugii tribe of Naharwals, mentioned by Tacitus<sup>49</sup>, with Mount Ślęza, for there is no certainty whatsoever that this view is accurate. It is founded on the *a priori* assumption that the mountain had played such role at the time. The supporters of this hypothesis associated Tacitus's mention about the sacred site of Naharwals with Ptolemy's holy grove *Limios alsos*<sup>50</sup>, but such view met with strong opposition. Whereas T. Steche<sup>51</sup> situated the *Limios alsos* in Szprotawa on the river Bóbr, J. N. Sadowski<sup>52</sup> sought for it in Greater Poland, near Czarnków and E. Simek<sup>53</sup> by the river Odra, above the mouth of the river Kaczawa.

The information provided by Ptolemy on the subject of territorial distribution of individual tribes was connected with the so-called amber road which lead from the Roman provinces located by the river Danube, through the Moravian Gate and Kłodzko Gate, Kalisz, up to the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. Hence, what was possibly of his greatest interest were, most of all, market villages situated nearby these roads. For this reason, the mention on the holy grove is both puzzling and difficult to justify<sup>54</sup>, unless the grove was, too, located by this road and played the role of an important political centre that was especially worth the attention of travelling Roman merchants<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, pp. 229 and following This view is accepted—though with certain modifications—by Z. Woźniak, *Osadnictwo celtyckie w Polsce*, Wrocław 1970, p. 242.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Simek, *op. cit.*, p. 161; Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, p. 195. Whereas K. Tymieniecki, 'Ze studiów nad starożytnościami słowiańskimi' (*Przegląd Historyczny*, vol. LI, 1950, p. 102); idem, 'Ziemie polskie', pp. 631 and following, considers the name Lugii to either refer to the tribe of Veneti or to a considerable part of this tribe. Jażdżewski, 'Stosunki etniczne', pp. 16–18, claims that Lugii constituted the association of Slavonic tribes. The name of Lugii was to contain the stem 'łęg', just as *Łużyce* (Lusatia), whose name is to be the evidence for the region being once settled by the Lugii.

<sup>49</sup> P. C. Tacitus, *Germania*, published by E. Fehrlé, Berlin 1944, c. 43: '*...apud Naharvalos antiquae religionis lucus ostenditur, praesedit sacerdos muliebri ornatu sed deos interpretatione Romana Castorem Pollucemque memorant, ea vis numini, nomen Alcis nulla simulacra, nullum peregrinae super stitionis vestigium; ut fratres et iuvenes venerantur*'. For the tribe of Naharwals see also, R. Much, 'Naharvali' (*Reallexicon der germanischen Altertumkunde*, vol. III, 1915/1916, p. 504); W. Kuhn, 'Die Besiedlung des Zobtengebietetes' (*Schlesien*, vol. V, 1960, issue 2, p. 70).

<sup>50</sup> K. Ptolemaeus, *Geographia*, published by C. Muller, C. Fischer, published by 2, Parisuis 1901, pp. 67, 1. II, c. 11, 13. 'Limiosaleon' or 'Limios alsos'. Cf. Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–232. The holy place mentioned by Tacitus was associated with the Limios alsos by R. Much, 'Die Germanen' (*Reallexicon der germanischen Altertumkunde*, vol. II, p. 379). His opinion was shared by Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–232.

<sup>51</sup> Steche, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>52</sup> J. N. Sadowski, 'Drogi handlowe greckie i rzymskie przez porzecza Odry, Wisły, Dniepra i Niemna do wybrzeży Morza Bałtyckiego' (*Pamiętnik AU w Krakowie*, Wydż. Filologiczny i Historyczno-Filozoficzny, vol. III, Kraków 1875, p. 27).

<sup>53</sup> Simek, *op. cit.*, vol. III, Brno 1949, pp. 149 and following

<sup>54</sup> These reservations were raised by other scholars, including Steche, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

<sup>55</sup> So are the information provided by Tacitus and Ptolemy explained by H. Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, p. 231 and following; idem, 'Problematy państwa polskiego w nowszych badaniach historycznych' (*Slavia Antiqua*, vol. XXIII, 1979, p. 359), expresses a view that the scope of the holy grove mentioned by Tacitus was to encompass entire Poland. A. Niewęglowski, 'Ośrodk, obiekty i depozyty kultowe' (*Prahistoria ziem polskich*, vol. V, Wrocław 1981, p. 431), does not make any comment on the subject.





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Hence, there is no evidence for the fact that at the times of Roman presence in Silesia, Ślęża continued to play the role of the sacred mountain, and even more so, there is no indication whatsoever that any of the Ślężan statues could have been created by the tribe of Silingi or Vandals and could have symbolized their deities. As a matter of fact, what is known based on the writings of Tacitus<sup>56</sup> is that the Germanic peoples did not create any statues of deities until the 1st century A.D. and that their later representations were of miniature size<sup>57</sup>. Also the scanty proportion of relics of material culture from the Roman period, which could be attributed to the Silesian Germanic peoples, reinforces these doubts even more<sup>58</sup>. So, is it then possible in this case that these were the Germanic peoples to whom Silesia owed its name? As we see, the archaeological findings also seem to turn down this possibility.

Naturally, these judgements result from deliberations in terms of pure probability, for none of the proposals which have been so far proposed to solve the issue of the name of Silesia is supported by a sufficient and fully convincing—from academic point of view—evidence. Creative and bold researchers are welcome to propose further hypotheses, for there is still much left to be found out concerning the issue.

So far, it is possible for us to discuss only one, yet highly original approach, namely, the one of J. Rosen-Przeworska, according to whom the name Silesia derives from Mount Ślęża, which, in turn—comes from the Celtic word '*sulis*' meaning sun. Ślęża was to be the place of cult of the sun deity, symbolized by the sign of a diagonal cross<sup>59</sup>. The Celtic stem '*sul*' was to survive only in its fragmentary form, most notably in the writings of Thietmar, where we find it in the adjective *Silensis* (instead of the correct *S(u)lensis*), in the writings of the Bavarian Geographer: tribal name of *Sleenzane* (instead of *S(u)leenzane*) and in the Czech name *Slesko* (instead of *S(u)lesko*).

Following this line of reasoning, it would be justified to expect the name *Sulingi*, not *Silingi* (*Silingai*) to appear in the works of Ptolemy. The author explains this inconsistency with the fact that the Greek geographer used the Latinized version of the name. If he in fact did so, he would rather refer to them as *Solingi* (from the Latin word *sol* = sun), and not as *Silingi*.

As we can see, the above etymological-linguistic disquisitions bring about many reservations, as they are, clearly, loose combinations and speculations subjected to the *a*

<sup>56</sup> Tacitus, c. 9, writes that the Germanic peoples '*nee cohibere parietibus deos, neque in ullam humani oris speciem assimilare*'.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. G. Kleram, *Handbuch der germanischen Altertumkunde*, Dresden 1836, p. 332; F. J. Mone, *Geschichte des Heidenthums im lichenology Europa*, part 2, Leipzig-Damstadt 1813, pp. 18 and following; Geschwendt, 'Der Siling', pp. 34–35; A. Anwender, 'Religia Germanów' (*Religie świata*, Warszawa 1957, p. 316).

<sup>58</sup> Cf. H. Seger, 'Grabungen auf dem Zobtengipfel' (*Altschlesische Blätter*, 1926, p. 3), claims that the traces of Germanic presence in Silesia are very faint. At the same time, lack of Germanic findings in the Mount Ślęża point to the fact that the peak was not inhabited by at the time. The view according to which the Mount Ślęża had been a cult site in the Roman period was sharply rejected by Kostrzewski, 'Zagadnienie', pp. 113–115. According to Woźniak, *op. cit.*, p. 74—who was of different opinion—religious cult was active in Mount Ślęża from the Hallstatt period to the early Piast period. Similar were the views of K. Majewski, 'Polska starożytna a cesarstwo rzymskie' (*Archeologia*, vol. XIX, 1969, pp. 4–5) who addressed the issue somewhat earlier. In her latest study H. Cehak - Hołubowicz o w a, 'Dzieje Ślęży na podstawie analizy ceramiki z wykopów na szczycie' (*Śladami dawnych wierzeń*, Wrocław 1977, pp. 7 and following), supports rather the views of H. Seger and J. Kostrzewski.

<sup>59</sup> J. Rosen-Przeworska, *Les sculptures de Ślęża et le probleme celtique en Pologne*, Warszawa 1961, pp. 23–24; see also 'Przeżytki celtyckie i celto-scytyjskie na obszarze Polski' (*Archeologia Polski*, vol. VIII, 1963, no. 1, pp. 95–96); see also *Tradycje celtyckie w obrzędowości Protosłowian*, Wrocław 1964, pp. 207–209.



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*priori* assumption on the existence of the Celtic cult site on Mount Ślęża<sup>60</sup>. This assumption is also unconfirmed by the archaeological findings<sup>61</sup>, and what is most striking about these is the total absence of any surviving ceramic items from the La Tène period, that is, from the time of the Celtic expansion across Central Europe.

But, independently of this fact the issue of Celtic settlement in Silesia has not been so far proved by the scholars whose opinions on the matter of its existence or non-existence are continuously divided. It is a fact that around the 4th century B.C. the Celts had set out to a far journey in the south-eastern direction, whose main axis was the Danube river. One by one, they conquered Bavaria, Bohemia, Moravia, parts of Slovakia and Austria, western part of Hungary, and headed further to the east, reaching the Balkan Peninsula, and even Asia Minor<sup>62</sup>. They annexed the territories located south to the Sudetes and Carpathian Mountains through which they penetrated the territories situated by the Odra and Vistula rivers. Based on this geographic premise, some archaeologists permitted the existence of larger or smaller Celtic centres in the southern and south-western lands of Poland<sup>63</sup>. It was through the mountain passes of the Sudetes and Carpathian Mountains that the Celts were to spread—either by means of forceful military campaigns<sup>64</sup> or peacefully<sup>65</sup>—the Lusatian culture and take control over the most fertile lands of Lesser Poland<sup>66</sup>, as well as Middle and Upper Silesia<sup>67</sup>, and even

<sup>60</sup> The views of J. Rosen-Przeworska were acutely criticised by J. Kostrzewski, review of the paper 'Tradycje celtyckie' (*Materiały Muzeum Archeologicznego i Etnograficznego w Łodzi, Seria Archeologiczna*, no. 14, 1967, pp. 265–266, 273).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Cehak - Hołubowicz o w a, *op. cit.*, p. 7 and following.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. J. Rosen-Przeworska, 'Problem pobytu Celtów w Małopolsce' (*Archeologia Polski*, vol. I, 1957, pp. 189).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. A. Żaki, 'Celtowie na ziemiach Polski' (*Rocznik Biblioteki PAN*, vol. IV, 1958, p. 30); J. Filip, *Pradzieje Czechosłowacji*, Poznań 1951, pp. 317–318; J. Potocki, Z. Woźniak, 'Niektóre zagadnienia związane z pobytom Celtów w Polsce' (*Sprawozdania Archeologiczne*, vol. VIII, 1959, pp. 83–84); Woźniak, *op. cit.*, pp. 186 and following; W. Hensel, *Polska starożytna*, published by 2, Wrocław 1980, p. 355.

<sup>64</sup> Trackenberg, *Die Bedeutung*, p. 9; W. Antoniewicz, *Archeologia Polski. Zarys czasów przedhistorycznych i wczesnodziejowych ziem Polski*, Warszawa 1928, p. 142; Jahn, *Die Kelten*, p. 98; Petersen, *op. cit.*, pp. 130–142; H. Uhtenwoldt, *Die Burgverjassung in der Vorgeschichte und Geschichte Schlesiens*, Breslau 1938, pp. 35–36; J. Kostrzewski, 'Od neolitu do okresu wędrówki ludów' (*Prehistoria ziem polskich*, Kraków 1939, pp. 288–292); J. Rosen-Przeworska, 'Zabytki celtyckie na ziemiach polskich' (*Światowit*, vol. XIX, 1948, pp. 43 and following); S. Nosek, 'Kultura grobów skrzynkowych i podkloszowych w Polsce południowo-zachodniej' (*Prace Prehistoryczne PAU*, no. 3, 1946, p. 40); K. Jażdżewski, *Atlas do pradziejów Słowian*, Łódź 1948, p. 52; Kostrzewski, 'Pradzieje Polski', pp. 157–160; Tymieniecki, 'Ziemie polskie', pp. 377–379; J. Rosen-Przeworska, 'Problem pobytu Celtów w Małopolsce' (*Archeologia Polski*, vol. I, 1957, pp. 35 and following); M. Aleksiewicz, *Zarys osadnictwa w okresie lateńskim i rzymskim*, Rzeszów 1958, p. 12; Z. Woźniak, 'Chronologia celtyckich cmentarzysk w Polsce' (*Wiadomości Archeologiczne*, vol. XXVI, 1959, issue 1–2, pp. 137–138); Potocki, Woźniak, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–86; Jażdżewski, 'Stosunki etniczne', pp. 12–15; Hołubowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 102–103; J. Potocki, 'La colonisation celtique en Petite-Pologne a la lumiere des fouilles de 1945–1960' (*Archeologia Polona*, vol. IV, 1962, p. 219); Woźniak, 'Osadnictwo celtyckie', p. 187. Whereas A. Żaki, 'Zespół osadniczy Poznachowice Górne pow. Myślenice w świetle badań wstępnych' (*Sprawozdania Archeologiczne*, vol. IV, 1957, p. 128), hesitates whether the Celtic expansion on the territories of Lesser Poland should be considered as military or peaceful. Tenże, 'Celtowie', p. 31–32, writes about Celtic occupation.

<sup>65</sup> The option of the peaceful character of Celtic advent in Silesia—with simultaneous consideration of the possibility of Celtic conquest—was supported G. Leńczyk, 'Na temat pobytu Celtów w Polsce Południowej' (*Światowit*, vol. XXIX, 1962, pp. 251–252).

<sup>66</sup> Cf. J. Kostrzewski, 'Początki kultury ludzkiej' (*Wielka historia powszechna*, Warszawa 1935, pp. 217 and following); idem, 'Od neolitu', pp. 288–292; Rosen-Przeworska, 'Zabytki celtyckie', pp. 43 and following; Kostrzewski, 'Pradzieje Polski', pp. 157–160; S. Nosek, 'Problem celtycki w prehistorii Polski'



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reach for Mazovia and Kuyavia<sup>68</sup>. The evidence for the existence of the Celtic settlements in Poland were to be the findings and the discovery of relics typical for the Celtic culture, such as ceramic ware made on the pottery wheel, ornamental items, coins, dwellings, skeletal graves and various artworks found at Mount Ślęza and its adjacent areas.

Nonetheless, the presence of indisputable evidence for the existence of Celtic culture in certain locations is not enough to prove them also home to the tight network of Celtic settlement, for those of the findings, like coins, ceramic ware or jewellery could have been brought to the spots in the course of trading relations<sup>69</sup>. Much more certain, although still supposed, proves for the existence of permanent Celtic settlements in the South-eastern Poland could be—characteristic for the Celts—skeletal graves with various items, excavated throughout almost the entire European territory that has been proved to be once occupied by the Celts. The largest concentration of graves exists in

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(*Sprawozdania PAU*, vol. LII, 1951, pp. 144–445); A. Żaki, 'Z badań nad kulturą celtycką w Małopolsce' (*Archeologiczne Rozhledy*, vol. VII, 1955, pp. 799 and following); Rosen-Przeworska, 'Problem pobytu Celtów', pp. 35 and following; Żaki, 'Zespół osadniczy', pp. 125–130; idem, 'Celtowie', pp. 24–26; Aleksiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 12; Potocki, Woźniak, *op. cit.*, pp. 87–91; Woźniak, 'Chronologia', pp. 137–138; Potocki, *op. cit.*, pp. 208 and following; Woźniak, 'Osadnictwo celtyckie', pp. 191 and following; W. Hensel, *U źródeł Polski średniowiecznej*, Wrocław 1974, p. 83; Z. Woźniak, 'Starsza faza kultury lateńskiej w Polsce i jej oddziaływanie' (*Prahistoria ziem polskich*, vol. IV, Wrocław 1979, pp. 209 and following); idem, 'Młodsza faza kultury lateńskiej w Polsce i jej oddziaływanie' (*Prahistoria ziem polskich*, vol. IV, Wrocław 1979, pp. 255–263); J. Kotlarczyk, 'Celtyckie święta i kopce małopolskie' (*Z otchłani wieków*, 1979, no. 2, pp. 142 and following). The existence of Celtic settlement in Lesser Poland was sharply questioned by R. Jamka 'Kilka uwag o kulturach celtyckiej i puchowskiej w Małopolsce' (*Archeologia Polski*, vol. II, 1958, pp. 113–114). Also Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, pp. 190–191, is not convinced whether the Celtic settlement in Lesser Poland had indeed taken place, nonetheless, he permits such possibility.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. H. Seger, 'Schlesische Funde der vorromischen Eisenzeit' (*Schlesiens Vorzeit in Bild und Schrift*, vol. VI, 1896, pp. 401 and following); G. Lustig, 'Die vorgeschichtlichen Steinwalle am Zobtenberg' (*Altschlesien*, vol. I, 1926, p. 182); Tackenberg, 'Die Bedeutung', p. 9; Jahn, 'Die Kelten', pp. 36, 40, 100, 101; Petersen, *op. cit.*, pp. 130–134; Kostrzewski, 'Początki kultury', pp. 217 and following; Uhtenwold t, *Die Burgverfassung*, p. 36; Kostrzewski, 'Od neolitu', pp. 288 and following; M. Jahn, 'Neue Keltenfunde aus Mittelschlesien' (*Altschlesien*, vol. IX, 1940, pp. 112); W. Hoffman, 'Neue Keltenfunde aus Mittelschlesien' (*Altschlesien*, vol. IX, 1940, pp. 10 and following); Rosen-Przeworska, 'Zabytki celtyckie', p. 43; Kostrzewski, 'Pradzieje Polski', p. 166; Filip, *op. cit.*, pp. 296 and following; idem, *Keltové ve střední Evropě*, Praha 1960, p. 63; Żaki, 'Celtowie' p. 30; Potocki, Woźniak, *op. cit.*, pp. 81 and following; Woźniak, 'Chronologia', pp. 121, 137–138; Hołubowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 102 and following; J. Orosz, 'Z badań nad rzeźbą na górze Ślęzy k/Wrocławia' (*Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, vol. XXIV, 1962, p. 358); Rosen-Przeworska, 'Tradycje celtyckie', pp. 177 and following; B. Czarska, 'Celtyckie cmentarzysko szkieletowe, koło wsi Sobocisko, pow. Oława' (*Wiadomości Archeologiczne*, 1966, issue 1–2, pp. 88 and following); Woźniak, 'Osadnictwo celtyckie', pp. 186 and following; Hensel, 'U źródeł', p. 83; Woźniak, 'Starsza faza', p. 209 and following; E. Gąssowska, 'Uwagi o chronologii Łysej Góry' (*Rocznik Świętokrzyski*, 1975, pp. 96–97); J. Rosen-Przeworska, *Spadek po Celtach*, Wrocław 1970, pp. 71–88; Hensel, 'Polska starożytna', p. 355; Z. Woźniak, 'Górny Śląsk' (*Prahistoria ziem polskich*, vol. V, Wrocław 1981, pp. 252–254).

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Rosen-Przeworska, 'Zabytki celtyckie', pp. 43 and following; also, 'Tradycje celtyckie', pp. 40 and following; also, 'Spadek po Celtach', pp. 39 and following. He categorically rejects the views of the Celtic settlement in Central and Northern Poland. J. Kostrzewski (citation from the review of the paper by J. Rosen-Przeworskiej, 'Tradycje celtyckie'..., p. 269). A. Żaki, 'Celtowie', p. 30 questions the view on the existence of Celtic settlements in Mazovia; when it comes to Kuyavia he considers the matter to be uncertain. Z. Woźniak, 'Osadnictwo celtyckie', pp. 164 and following considers the Celtic relics in Mazovia and Kuyavia to be a result of commercial and cultural relations. Cf. also T. Makiewicz, 'W kwestii osadnictwa celtyckiego na Kujawach' (*Archeologia Polski*, vol. XVIII, 1973, issue 1, pp. 213–218).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Woźniak, 'Osadnictwo celtyckie', pp. 164 and following; Łowmiański, *op. cit.*, pp. 190–191.



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Middle Silesia, within the Wrocław–Oława–Strzelin triangle, that is, in the location of the most fertile local soils which had once fostered the growth of agriculture<sup>70</sup>. To date, as many as 63 such graves have been discovered. These, too, are located in agriculturally rich territories of Upper Silesia, nearby Racibórz, Głubczyce, Koźle and Prudnik, but they are much less numerous<sup>71</sup>. In Lesser Poland only 6 graves that were proved to be Celtic have been found so far<sup>72</sup>.

Nonetheless, the graves containing items that are characteristic for the Celtic culture may not be always considered, without any reservations, evidence on the existence of permanent and tight network of Celtic settlement, for these might have been prepared only occasionally, for individuals like Celtic merchants who were fallen by death unexpectedly on the road or while their short business stays among the local communities.

If larger centres of Celtic population had in fact existed, there would have been more clear traces of their presence in Silesia, most importantly, in the shape of typical Celtic items which are so frequently discovered in the territories that are certain to be the places of their habitation. The Celts, for instance, used to surround their dwellings with defensive structures such as walls, land embankments and ditches, which are known both from archaeological excavations and from the accounts of J. Caesar, who referred to these fortified settlements found in the Celtic Gaul as cities (*oppida*). What he meant by this was not only cities in the strictest sense of the word, but also special fortified settlements (*refugia*), providing temporary shelter to the local community and their belongings and protecting them from immediate danger<sup>73</sup>. Such objects have been found, for instance, in Bohemia and Moravia. The surface of some of them, like i.e. Hradiště u Zbraslave, Hradiště u Stradonic, Staré Hradisko, Hrazany u Ultově or Lhotice reaches from 20 to ca. 170 ha<sup>74</sup>. At the same time—so far—similar fortifications are not

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<sup>70</sup> According to Woźniak, 'Osadnictwo celtyckie', pp. 188–189, the annexation of Middle Silesia was to be made easier for the Celts thanks to the scant number of the inhabitants of the territories nearby Wrocław, decimated in the second half of the 4th century B.C. in consequence of unfavourable climate change which transformed local soils into boggy grounds. Why then, did the Celts ignore this obstacle? At the time, also Upper Silesia was to be sparsely populated and even covered in wilderness. Whereas Z. Bukowski, 'Charakterystyka znalezisk tzw. scytyjskich' (*Prahistoria ziem polskich*, vol. IV, Wrocław 1979, pp. 203–204), attributes this depopulation of Upper Silesia in the Late Hallstatt and Early La Tène periods to the consequences of the Scythian invasion.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Seger, 'Schlesische Funde', pp. 401 and following; Jahn, 'Die Keltent' pp. 10 and following, 99 (map); Petersen, *op. cit.*, pp. 136–140; Jahn, 'Neue Keltenfunde', pp. 112 and following; Hofmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 10 and following; Kostrzewski, 'Pradzieje Polski', p. 166; Rosen-Przeworska, 'Problem pobytu Celtów', p. 43; Żaki, 'Celtowie', p. 30; Potocki, Woźniak, *op. cit.*, p. 81; Woźniak, 'Chronologia', pp. 121 and following; Hołubowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 102 and following; Czerska, 'Celtyckie cmentarzysko', pp. 88 and following; Rosen-Przeworska, 'Spadek po Celtach', pp. 85–88.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Rosen-Przeworska, 'Problem pobytu Celtów', p. 60; Żaki, 'Celtowie', pp. 22 and following; Potocki, Woźniak, *op. cit.*, pp. 87 and following; Woźniak, 'Chronologia', p. 122; Potocki, *op. cit.*, p. 208; Łowmiański, 'Początki Polski', pp. 190–191; Woźniak, 'Osadnictwo celtyckie', pp. 108 and following; idem, 'Małopolska' (*Prahistoria ziem polskich*, vol. V, Wrocław 1981, pp. 255, 261). K. Majewski, *Archeologia*, vol. I, 1947, p. 218, doubts whether the graves in Janowice, displayed by the advocates of the view on the permanent Celtic settlement in Southern Poland are indeed of Celtic origin. Cf. also Leńczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

<sup>73</sup> E. Konik (Gajusz Juliusz Cezar, *Wojna galińska*, Wrocław 1978, pp. X–XI).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. J. Bohm, *Nase najstersi mesta*, Praha 1946, pp. 1 and following; Filip, 'Pradzieje', pp. 326 and following; idem, 'Keltove', pp. 289 and following; idem, *Keltske civilisace a její dedictvo*, Praha 1960, pp. 90 and following; Leńczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 258.





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yet known to have been found anywhere in Poland<sup>75</sup>. Some researchers were convinced that they are located in Silesia: i.e. on Mount Ślęża, in Bezdziechów, Cieszyn, and most importantly in Nowa Cerekwia nearby Głubczyce<sup>76</sup>, but these are ungrounded assumptions, which in the case of Nowa Cerekwia have proven to be utterly false<sup>77</sup>. For, what was indeed discovered was an open settlement containing elements of dwellings (30–40) with walls painted in horizontal white and red stripes, pottery furnace full of clay vessels and a vast number of other items characteristic for Celtic culture and proving the existence of a dense local settlement, as well as developed agriculture, craft and commercial exchange the settlers were engaging in.

What is striking both about the findings at Nowa Cerekwia, the items found in a number of Celtic graves excavated throughout Silesia and about other relics from the La Tène period is that they were lacking tools that were so typical for the Celtic culture, and, most importantly, armours that were so frequently discovered in the Moravian oppida<sup>78</sup>. After all, these would be the relics that seem to be most expected to be discovered together with the graves, if we establish, in line with the views of some archaeologists, that the Celts were coming to Silesia in large numbers and settled among the local Lusatian peoples in dense communities. The fact that the local peoples were not eradicated or driven out of the Sudetes and Carpathian Mountains<sup>79</sup> seems to be proven by the continuity of Lusatian culture in Silesia in the La Tène period, where clear Celtic influences were visible<sup>80</sup>. The extinction of the the La Tène culture in Lower Silesia took place most probably the middle part of the La Tène period (C), when—according to Z. Woźniak<sup>81</sup>—the Celtic settlement was replaced with the incoming peoples of the Przeworsk culture. However, we do not know whether the Celts were totally driven out. Scholars permit the possibility that some part of their population remained in Silesia and blended with the incoming population of Przeworsk<sup>82</sup>. In the southern part of Upper Silesia, the Celtic settlement was to last up until the final stage of the La Tène period<sup>83</sup>.

<sup>75</sup> Żaki, 'Z badań nad kulturą celtycką', pp. 799 and following; idem, 'Zespół osadniczy', pp. 126 and following permitted the existence of this type of defensive structures in Tyniec and Poznachowice Górne. Of similar opinion were Potocki, Woźniak, *op. cit.*, p. 90. This views were rejected by Jamka *op. cit.*, pp. 113–114, oraz Leńczyk, *op. cit.*, pp. 258 and following. The latter claimed that Tyniec was home to a Lusatian hill fort (*grodzisko*) similar to that in Ślęża, whereas the gord (*gród*) in Poznachowice Górne he considered to be an early medieval structure. Similar was the approach of J. Gromnicki, review of the paper by A. Żaki, 'Celtowie' (*Archeologia Polski*, vol. VIII, issue 1, 1963, p. 143).

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Petersen, *op. cit.*, p. 140; Uhtenwold t, 'Die Burgverfassung', p. 36; Filip, 'Keltowie', p. 63 (map); Żaki, 'Celtowie', pp. 24–26; Potocki, Woźniak, *op. cit.*, p. 87; Hołubowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–104; Potocki, *op. cit.*, p. 209 (map); Łowmiański, 'Początki Polski', pp. 252–254; Woźniak, 'Górny Śląsk', pp. 252–254; Cf. also Gromnicki, *op. cit.*, p. 143, who doubts in the existence of Celtic settlement in Cieszyn.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. B. Czerska, 'Osada z okresu późnolateńskiego koło Nowej Cerekwi w powiecie Głubczyce' (*Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego*, series A, no. 18, *Archeologia Śląska*, vol. III, Wrocław 1959, p. 66). The existence of Celtic oppidum in Nowa Cerekwia was permitted i.e. by Filip, 'Pradzieje Czechosłowacji', fig. 17 (map); Bohm, *op. cit.*, p. 44. Cf. Woźniak, 'Górny Śląsk', pp. 252–254; idem, 'Osadnictwo celtyckie', p. 90.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Rosen-Przeworska, 'Problem pobytu Celtów', p. 43; Leńczyk, *op. cit.*, pp. 251–252.

<sup>79</sup> So maintain Potocki, Woźniak, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Hołubowicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 102–106; Leńczyk, *op. cit.*, pp. 251–252.

<sup>81</sup> Woźniak, 'Starsza faza', p. 217; *idem*, 'Młodsza faza', p. 249.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Woźniak, 'Osadnictwo celtyckie' pp. 231 and following.; Rosen-Przeworska, 'Tradycje celtyckie', pp. 34 and following.; Woźniak, 'Młodsza faza', pp. 250–251.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Woźniak, 'Młodsza faza', p. 252.



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In the light of what has been said above, the existence in Silesia of a number of small open Celtic settlements seems to be an irrefutable fact, the most convincing example of which are the discoveries in Nowa Cerekwia<sup>84</sup>. What is, nonetheless, striking is the insignificant number of settlements identified as typically Celtic ones. According to the scholars one such site is to be located in Middle Silesia, namely, in Radłów nearby Oława, 12 altogether in Upper Silesia and Opava Silesia, none of which, besides Nowa Cerekwia, have left the sphere of mere speculation; and these are Klisino, Klisino Małe, Michałowice (all located in the former powiat of Głubczyce), Gościęcín, Ligota Mała, Roszowski Las, Roszowice, Błazejowice, Łany, Miejsce Odrzańskie (all of them in the former powiat of Koźle), as well as Małaszowice Małe nearby Grodkowo<sup>85</sup>.

Even only for this reason we need to abandon the argument supporting the alleged Celtic origin of the name Silesia, which was to be proved by the monumental statues located on Mount Ślęza. It is, naturally, impossible for us here to focus on describing in detail the issues connected with their genesis and function. It would be, nonetheless, sufficient to say that they appear to be much older than it is suggested by J. Rosen-Przeworska<sup>86</sup>. What also needs to be rejected, are the views that the signs of diagonal cross, which occur so frequently within the area of Mount Ślęza are vestiges of Celtic presence. For, these symbols had been known already in the Neolithic era and continued to be used, in various purposes, up till the contemporary period. Much evidence points to the fact that the Ślęzian crosses date to the Middle Ages and that they have nothing to do with the Celtic cult of the sun<sup>87</sup>.

Bearing all the aforementioned facts in mind, what needs to be stated is that the Celtic influence was too insignificant to introduce significant changes to the local culture, and, even more so, to leave a clear trace of the Celtic presence, manifested, among others, in the names of localities, which—as maintain J. Rosen-Przeworska<sup>88</sup> and J. Orosz<sup>89</sup>—were to survive until this day in Slavified forms.

The hypothesis on the Slavonic origin of the name of Silesia has gained special meaning following the takeover of power in Germany by the Nazis, who embarked on a quest to erase all traces of Slavonic history of Silesia, in order to further reinforce their nations' conviction of being entitled to the ownership of these lands. One of the ways to achieve this aim was replacing the names with Slavonic stems by those with German-sounding stems<sup>90</sup>.

The name of Ślęza was one of the most famous examples of this dubious practice. This is confirmed, among others, by the German materials devoted to this very issue,

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<sup>84</sup> Most extreme view in this respect is presented by K. Majewski, 'Krytyka wydawnictw PTA' (*Archeologia*, vol. II, pp. 441 and following), who totally rejected the view of the Celtic settlement in the lands of Poland. Similar stand was taken by: A. Żaki, 'Kwestia zasiedlenia Podkarpacia przy końcu epoki brązu i w początkach epoki żelaza' (*Sprawozdania PAU*, vol. I, 194.9, no. 10, pp. 647 and following); Jamka, *op. cit.*, pp. 113–114; Leńczyk, *op. cit.*, pp. 251–252.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Woźniak, 'Osadnictwo celtyckie', the map no. 1, 2 and pp. 281 and following.

<sup>86</sup> I have discussed this issue in detail in the monograph devoted to Mount Ślęza, which is currently in printing.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Rosen-Przeworska, 'Tradycje celtyckie', pp. 207, 208 footnote 20, she claims that Celtic stems are to be found in the following names of localities: Radunia—Rhadaurius, Radauea; Brzeg = Briga; Legnica—Lugudunum; Niemcza = Nemeti; Ślęza = Sulis.

<sup>89</sup> Orosz, *op. cit.*, p. 358, extends this list by Krapkowice = Carrodonum.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. K. Fiedor, *Walka z nazewnictwem polskim na Śląsku w okresie hitlerowskim 1933–1939*, Wrocław 1966.



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kept in the Wrocław section of the State Archives. According to these sources the efforts to alter the name of Zobten, Zobtenberg, were launched in 1934. More eager enthusiasts of this idea kept wilfully introducing the names of Siling or Silingberg, which alluded to the Germanic tribe of Silingi. In one of the documents, dated to the 5th of June 1934, Wrocław optician Adolf Heindrich asks archaeologist F. Geschwendt to justify the fact of him using the greeting 'Silingheil' in the letter to the central office in Berlin. The addressee reprimanded Heindrich for using this inappropriate expression, which—in his view—had 'eineii judischen Beigeschmack'. In response, the optician justified himself by clinging to the fact that Silesia lies too far from Palestine for the Jews to have any influence whatsoever on its name. This time, Berlin's reaction was less sharp. Permitting the possibility of the Germanic origin of the name Siling, attention was brought to the fact that the contemporary name of the mountain—Zobten—is so widely known internationally that there is no point to change it<sup>91</sup>. F. Geschwendt's response to this statement is unknown, but his stand regarding the restoration of the old Germanic name of Mount Ślęza was—as we shall see below—no other than favourable.

The earliest surviving official documents devoted to the issue of renaming Mount Ślęza come from the year 1934. These include the petition of June 13th issued by the Landesamt für vorgeschichtliche Denkmalpflege oraz Zobtener Gebirgsverein and addressed to the Oberpräsident of the Silesian province with the ordering him to replace the name Zobten by Siling. The document explains that the name Zobten derives from the Slavonic name of the village of Sobótka, and that the appropriate (and much older) name (Slenz, Zlenz) recorded in the medieval sources is the Slavonic version of the original name of Mount Siling, connected with the tribe of Silingi who resided in Middle Silesia from the 1st to the 4th century A.D. The authors also claim that the restoration of the mountain's original name is of crucial meaning for the borderland Slavonic province surrounded from two sides by Slavonic territories. For, only this act would be powerful enough to convince all classes of Silesian society that the traces of the Germanic past of Silesia had survived until the contemporary times. The efforts in this respect are of major importance also from the perspective of foreign policy, for their successful conclusion would have been a warning for potential revisionists and a sign that the attempts to isolate even part of Silesia will meet with stern and strong resistance of the local community<sup>92</sup>.

Despite these weighty arguments it is somewhat surprising to find out that the Oberpräsident of the province eventually did not consent to replace the name Zobten with Siling, for—according to his opinion—the citizens of Silesia did not in fact consider the name Zobten to be foreign<sup>93</sup>.

Disappointed initiators of the nomenclatural shift did not give up. They decided to consult their case with several scientific institutions, archaeologists and historians specializing in Silesian history. These included Preussisches Staatsarchiv, whose document of the 19th of May 1936 presented a rather indecisive opinion on the matter. For one thing, the document highlights the fact that as early as in 1927 G. Lustig argued that the mountain should be called Siling. For another, what is brought to attention is that in the light of the arguments presented by W. Semkowicz, who, in turn, favoured the

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<sup>91</sup> Municipal Division of the Silesian Province (Wydział Samorządowy Prowincji Śląskiej), State Archive in Wrocław, cat. no. 662, no. 184.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 195, 196.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 233.



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Slavonic genesis of Ślęża, the issue remains open. Apart from that, it further stated that the change of the name of Ślęża would not be enthusiastically accepted by the local community, for they are used to the name Zobten. At the same time, the replacement of the name Zobten with the name Siling would entail the necessity to rename the province of Schlesien into Silingen. Eventually—as we read in the answer—even if one assumes that the name Zobten is of Slavonic origin, its form is German. Therefore, if the changes were to be made consistently, one would also have to change the name of Wrocław (Breslau), for this word is also obviously of Slavonic derivation<sup>94</sup>.

F. Geschwendt was of different opinion. In his official letter of the 28th of June 1938 to the organization Bund Deutscher Osten, Kreis Breslau-Land, he tries to justify the need to change the name Zobtenberg to Silingberg on the basis of several arguments. First and foremost he adhered to political-ideological as well as practical aspects of such change. He, namely, wrote that from the outset of the national-socialist revolution both at the meetings of the Nazi party-members and at the meetings of related associations, only the word Siling is used. This name is also used in the local writing, as well as in Silesian schools of all types. Geschwendt claimed that the proposed name was regularly used up till the 14th century, and only under the influence of the name Sobótka had it been changed into Zobten. The name Siling is a relic of Germanic language in Silesia, and for this reason it deserves major attention. The name Siling is the legacy of the Germanic tribe of Silingi who inhabited Silesia in the remote past and even if their predecessors had made a certain contribution into the ancient culture of Silesia, it was only thanks to Silingi that Silesia gained its supreme status as their religious centre. Eventually—as continues F. Geschwendt—the act of renaming Ślęża is of primary importance for the entire German East. Owing to this new name all the residents of Silesia would become aware that their roots date back to the Germanic antiquity and that the German nation of the Third Reich is re-establishing the connection to its ancient culture<sup>95</sup>.

F. Geschwendt's arguments proved convincing for the Bund Deutscher Osten, which is confirmed by a letter of the 28th of June 1938 showing the organisation's full support towards his position<sup>96</sup>. The efforts to rename the mountain from Zobten into Siling were also favoured by E. Petersen and H. Uhtenwoldt<sup>97</sup>.

In spite of this large-scale campaign and engagement of German scholars and representatives of political organizations, the supreme authorities of the Silesian province refused to change their mind on the matter, and the name Zobten and Zobtenberg was being used officially up until 1945<sup>98</sup>. Naturally, it was not forbidden to address to the mountain as Siling or Silingberg; more eager advocates of these new names, including German scholars continued to use them in their papers, thereby participating in the nationalistic propaganda, which had nothing in common with academic research.

At the same time, there exists certain circumstantial evidence that this propaganda was not all that much successful among the local inhabitants of the Ślęża

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 234.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 288, 291.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 293.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 255.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 246. In the document issued by Landrat on the 5th of June 1936 for the Zobtener Gebirgsvereins we read that in connection with the negative attitude of Oberpräsident of the province and Preussisches Staatsarchiv towards the project of renaming Mount Zobten there is no chance for its successful conclusion.





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region, who should be perhaps most interested in the issue of its name. For instance, on the 25th of June 1936, someone called Emmy Haertel addressed a letter to Professor M. Jahn, where she informed him that certain academic circles in Poland are becoming increasingly interested in the process of renaming Silesian localities, this including Mount Ślęza. As a means of example, she described the event that took place nearby Sobótka, about which she got to know from her relations during her stay in the town: Not so long ago, when a group of Polish students arrived for a short stay nearby Mount Ślęza, their tutor, who engaged in a conversation with the director of the local labour camp was to say that changing the local names would not be of much use to the Germans, for Mount Ślęza had been a Polish, not a German cult site, and that it would not be long for Poland to once again regain all of Silesia, up to Wrocław. For, Emmy Haertel did not manage to receive the answer to the question she directed to her informers on whether they know what was the reaction of the camp director, she considered that the locals were rather convinced of the Polish origin of Mount Ślęza. Ms. E. Haertel expressed her surprise with the fact that no proper report was issued in this matter 'an eine hoehere Stelle' in order to bring it to the attention of the Reich's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the same time, she suggests Professor M. Jahn that the students' tutor must have been a supporter of the theory of J. Kostrzewski on the indigeneity of Slavonic peoples. He also suspected that the group of Poles came to the spot for the purpose of espionage, which was familiar not only to the Polish authorities in Silesia but also in Warsaw<sup>99</sup>.

M. Jahn cordially thanked Ms. E. Haertel for the information and asked for the names of people that took part in the Sobótka incident. He was most interested in obtaining more details on the director of the labour camp and the address of the institution<sup>100</sup>.

E. Haertel, having fulfilled Jahn's request, only a dozen or so days later was able to inform the curator of archaeological monuments' office that she had personally requested the wife of doctor Kanke of Sobótka to write a letter to the director of the local labour camp asking him to reconstruct the exact statement of the aforementioned Pole on the 'sacred Polish mountain'<sup>101</sup>.

The Sobótka incident, thanks to E. Haertel and other interested parties, was soon publicized. It reached the administration of the Lower Silesian Provincial Association (Verwaltung des Niederschlesischen Provinzialbandes) headed by the Oberpräsident of the province, who communicated it also to the Bund Deutscher Osten and to Sturbannfurer Muller<sup>102</sup>.

E. Haertel together with other Silesian nationalists alike was most probably waiting for the local authorities to issue appropriate decisions in this matter. Yet, we do not know any further details connected with this fact, because of the lack of relevant sources. One thing we may be certain of is that the efforts to change the name of Mount Ślęza did not prove to be completely successful. What posed difficulty in this respect were to some degree the extraordinary results of research carried out by the Polish scholars, as well as the events of the following years, which—also from the political

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 238.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 242, 243.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 247.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 248.



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point of view—rendered the discussion on the origin of the name of Mount Ślęża pointless.