

# Silesia Superior

Narratives on Upper Silesia –  
The Multitude of Perspectives





**unipress**

TRANSitions.  
Transdisciplinary, Transmedial and Transnational  
Cultural Studies  
Transdisziplinäre, transmediale und transnationale  
Studien zur Kultur

Volume / Band 14.1

Edited by / Herausgegeben von  
Renata Dampc-Jarosz and / und Jadwiga Kita-Huber

Advisory Board / Wissenschaftlicher Beirat:  
Lorella Bosco (University of Bari, Italy), Leszek Drong (University  
of Silesia, Poland), Elizabeth Duclos-Orsello (Salem State  
University, USA), Frank Ferguson (University of Ulster, Ireland),  
Odile Richard-Pauchet (University of Limoges, France),  
Monika Schmitz-Emans (University of Bochum, Germany),  
Władysław Witalisz (Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland)

The volumes of this series are peer-reviewed.  
Die Bände dieser Reihe sind peer-reviewed.

Renata Dampc-Jarosz / Andrzej Kowalczyk /  
Lucyna Sadzikowska (eds.)

## **Silesia Superior**

Narratives on Upper Silesia –  
The Multitude of Perspectives

With 70 figures

**V&R unipress**



European  
City of Science  
Katowice 2024



Silesian  
Voivodeship

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek  
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;  
detailed bibliographic data are available online: <https://dnb.de>.

The research activities co-financed by the funds granted under the Research Excellence Initiative of the University of Silesia in Katowice. The event is carried out in the City-Region-Academy stream, as part of the celebration of the European Science City Katowice. The event is co-financed by the Silesian Voivodeship – Co-organizer of the European Science City Katowice 2024.

© 2024 by Brill | V&R unipress, Robert-Bosch-Breite 10, 37079 Göttingen, Germany, [info@v-r.de](mailto:info@v-r.de), an imprint of the Brill-Group  
(Koninklijke Brill BV, Leiden, The Netherlands; Brill USA Inc., Boston MA, USA; Brill Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore; Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn, Germany; Brill Österreich GmbH, Vienna, Austria)  
Koninklijke Brill BV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Schönigh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Brill Wageningen Academic, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau and V&R unipress.  
All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Cover image: © Julia Agnieszka Szymala  
Printed and bound by CPI books GmbH, Birkstraße 10, 25917 Leck, Germany  
Printed in the EU.

**Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | [www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com](http://www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com)**

ISSN 2751-8345  
ISBN 978-3-8470-1837-7

## Contents

Upper Silesia. Before and Today – Introduction . . . . .	7
Piotr Boroń	
Upper Silesia: The Processes of a Region’s Creation and Decomposition (Structures of State and Church Administration) . . . . .	11
Piotr Boroń	
Outline of the History of Upper Silesian Industry . . . . .	29
Anna Gomóła	
Meanders of the Longue Durée and Islands of Locality . . . . .	67
Katarzyna Marcol	
Spatial Dimensions of Identity in Cieszyn Silesia . . . . .	95
Kinga Czerwińska	
About Coal Differently: A Reinterpretation of the Post-Industrial Heritage of Upper Silesia in the Context of Socially Engaged Design . . . . .	115
Łukasz Trembaczowski	
Between Economic Restructuring and Just Transition. Social Aspects of Structural Change of Coal Mining Industry in Silesia . . . . .	135
Agata Zygmunt-Ziemianek	
Demographic Aspects of the Silesian Voivodeship: A Retrospective Overview, the Current State, and Projections . . . . .	161
Grzegorz Nancka	
Roman Law at the Beginning of the University of Silesia in Katowice . . . . .	183

Robert Krzysztofik / Iwona Kantor-Pietraga Paths of Transformation in the Silesian Voivodeship. A Geographical Perspective . . . . .	195
Damian Absalon / Kinga Ślósarczyk / Magdalena Matysik / Lucyna Sadzikowska / Mariola Krodkiewska / Andrzej Kowalczyk Changes in Hydrological Conditions in the Rawa River Catchment. Preliminary Natural and Cultural Considerations . . . . .	213
Janusz Janeczek / Mariola Jabłońska Evolution of Air Quality in the Upper Silesian Agglomeration . . . . .	249
Ewa Łupikasza / Aleksandra Renc Air Temperature Trends and Surface Urban Heat Island in the GZM . . . .	269
About the Authors . . . . .	287

## Upper Silesia. Before and Today – Introduction

Upper Silesia (Polish: *Górny Śląsk*, Latin: *Silesia Superior*, German: *Oberschlesien*) is part of the historic land of Silesia, located in southern Poland and northern Czechia, in the upper basin of the Oder River and the initial course of the Vistula. It is difficult to strictly delineate the region's boundaries, as they changed at different times. Upper Silesia emerged from the district divisions of the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries and became a cohesive entity with its proper name in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Notably, the area controlled by the Dukes of Opole can be considered the foundation of Upper Silesia. The Moravian Principality of Opava (which briefly included the Duchy of Krnov) also became part of Upper Silesia, followed by a few smaller states. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, however, the Siewierz Land and the Duchies of Oświęcim and Zator separated from this region. Thus, it can be assumed that historical Upper Silesia is located in the territory of today's Republic of Poland and the Czech Republic, within the Silesian Voivodeship, the Opole Voivodeship, and the Moravian-Silesian Region. The term "Upper Silesia" is often used synonymously with the Silesian Voivodeship, even though almost half of its area is historically part of Lesser Poland. The Silesian Voivodeship encompasses eastern Upper Silesia and part of Cieszyn Silesia, along with regions of historic Lesser Poland (including the Częstochowa region, the Dąbrowa Basin, and the Żywiec region). On the other hand, the Opole Voivodeship – nowadays usually referred to as Opole Silesia – includes the western part of historic Upper Silesia and parts of Lower Silesia (Brzeg, Namysłów). In the Polish public opinion, the term "Silesia" is commonly associated with the eastern part of Upper Silesia, particularly the Upper Silesian agglomeration and the city of Katowice. Upper Silesia is intuitively understood as the Upper Silesian Industrial District, a landscape of mine shafts, waste piles, chimneys, smelting facilities, and compact estates of multi-family houses made of red bricks. However, Upper Silesia is not a uniform region; it is diverse in terms of nature, landscape, and culture. The identity of its inhabitants is also diverse and often complex, since for centuries, this region has served as a socio-cultural borderland where Polish, German, and Czech influences have intertwined.

Throughout history, the term Upper Silesia has been used in various senses, often referring to a region and sometimes to a specific administrative unit. Discussions about Upper Silesia can, and even should, encompass historical, legal, cultural, sociological, natural, and geographical-economic contexts. In 2024, Katowice, the seat of the local Silesian Voivodeship government and the capital of the Metropolis GZM, has been named European City of Science 2024 (ECSK). The title awarded by the EuroScience organization in cooperation with the European Commission was the result of the efforts of the city of Katowice and seven public universities of the Academic Consortium known as Katowice City of Science. The primary goal of ECSK 2024 is to initiate regional transformation through science, provide residents with unrestricted access to knowledge, and make knowledge the key instrument for civil dialogue. Furthermore, the aim of ECSK is to showcase the richness of Silesian science within the context of European research. There is no doubt that without science it will not be possible to improve the quality of life in Silesia. Science is a natural good, more important for the future of the people of Upper Silesia than fossil fuels or related industries, and it could emerge as the region's new industry and power. It has been the intention of the originators and organizers of ECSK 2024 to present the wealth of scientific developments in the Silesian Voivodeship to the broader European research community.

This volume aims to present the current work of Silesian scholars from various disciplines, aligning with the goals of ECSK 2024. The transdisciplinary discussion will explore a wide range of research topics related to Upper Silesia, offering contemporary scientific explorations as well as a diachronic view of earlier achievements, methodologies, and issues raised over decades. This multi-author monograph, the first of two planned volumes, aims to present the diversity of scientific research conducted in and about Upper Silesia. The main themes revolve around the following issues: past and present problems of Upper Silesia, in particular in the context of industrialisation and post-industrialisation processes, ecology (climate change, air pollution in Upper Silesia), population and nationality structure, and multicultural issues; past and present monographic and comparative environmental studies; the history of Upper Silesia and the multitude of narratives; the notion of regional identity in a diachronic perspective; symbols of and discourses on Upper Silesia, cultural memory, and places of memory in Upper Silesia; as well as the transgression of Upper Silesia.

The two planned volumes will be published in English and German. The choice of languages reflects not only the nature of the research and its narratives, but also historical approaches to disseminating knowledge about Upper Silesia. After 1945, the region was perceived primarily as a lost 'homeland', presented as a figure of memory rather than a genuine object of scientific exploration. Volume one targets researchers in the natural and social sciences, as well as a broader

audience interested in the demographic, environmental, civilisational and cultural transformations taking place in Europe, offering a contemporary perspective on Upper Silesia and its rich historical and cultural heritage. The contributions collected in the second volume will discuss literary representations of the region, both by German-speaking and Polish authors, focusing on places of memory and its cultivation, alongside the most important aspects of the region's contemporary history, which may be of particular interest to Polish and German audiences. It should be emphasized that the chapters in these two volumes do not cover all research achievements related to Upper Silesia, let alone the multiplicity of narratives about the region. We hope, nevertheless, that they will serve as a catalyst for further reflection, discussion, and comparative research.

In conclusion, the articles included in this volume are the result of a special project<sup>1</sup> and represent the collaborative effort of researchers from the University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland) from various fields, including the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences.

Renata Dampc-Jarosz  
Andrzej Kowalczyk  
Lucyna Sadzikowska

---

1 A special project in the City-Region-Academy band of the European Science City Katowice 2024 entitled Silesia Superior. Narrative über Oberschlesien einst und heute. Die Vielfalt von Perspektiven (Silesia Superior. Narratives on Upper Silesia. A Multitude of Perspectives).



Piotr Boroń (University of Silesia in Katowice)

## Upper Silesia: The Processes of a Region's Creation and Decomposition (Structures of State and Church Administration)

### 1. Introduction

Upper Silesia, like many other historical-geographical regions, has been changing its spatial extent. It is possible to show on its example the emergence of the region as a separated territory, its divisions, as well as territorial changes, the demarcation of sub-regions, and finally the reduction of its conception to a small piece of the original area. The name of the region was adopted from outside, from the area of present-day Lower Silesia, where it was originally linked to the local Ślężanie tribe (Silesians) and the mountain and river Ślęża. Nowadays, the name Silesia is mainly understood as the industrial part centred around Katowice, often omitting the adjective “Upper”, taking it for granted.

For the contemporary recipient, the question of defining and designating the term *Upper Silesia* can pose problems. We understand the term differently for particular periods of history, and its contemporary identification is different. Many new regions have emerged, created on the basis of the former Upper Silesian territory, whose inhabitants do not wish to be counted as part of Upper Silesia, because they form their regional consciousness in opposition to the former, to some extent superior, territorial unit. It is therefore regularly necessary to indicate which area we are talking about, as well as when it was created, how it functioned and, finally, as a result of what processes the region disintegrated.

The following sketch is devoted to the functioning of the region in the structures of state and church administration. There are, of course, many more region-creating factors, but it is impossible to discuss them all here. It is fairly unanimously accepted in science that a region – a historical or historical-geographical land – is a phenomenon that changes over time, which includes territories linked by a common past, tradition and culture, often also by economic, social or religious ties (Johannsson 1999, Kulesza 2014, Semian 2016). One of the main factors constituting regions is administrative divisions, often fostering the development of legal and social ties.

## 2. Origins of the Region

The territory which over the centuries acquired the status of a separate region called “Upper Silesia” was concentrated around the Upper Oder river basin, from the Moravian Gate to more or less the area around present-day Brzeg (German: Brieg). In the early Middle Ages (up to the 13<sup>th</sup> century), this area was separated from what was then Silesia, i. e. the land of the Silesians, and later the Wrocław region, by the so-called “Przeseika”, i. e. a belt of dense forests stretching from the Sudeten Mountains through the valley of the Eastern Neisse to the Oder and probably further through the wet forests on the right bank of the Oder to the inter-tribal, and then intra-state, border between Silesia and Greater Poland. The Silesian Przeseika is mentioned as far back as the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Abbot Peter of Henryków, as a belt of forests that surrounded the entire Silesian land, and the former princes did not allow logging and colonisation actions (Stenzel 1854, I, 9, Cap. 110). The area lying behind the Przeseika, looking from the direction of Wrocław, became years later Upper Silesia. The area of the Upper Nadodrże was, at least until the 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century, inhabited by the Slavic tribes of the Opolans, the Golensizi and a tribe with the rather puzzling name of Lupiglaa. Unfortunately, later wars and especially the division of the area in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century between Poland and Bohemia probably led to a dilution of the settlement, and probably also to the collapse of tribal political and administrative structures. These changes can be exemplified by the collapse of all the tribal era castles, probably the centres of the settlement structures of the time. They were replaced by later, already established during the time of the formed statehoods with new urban centres. (Szydłowski 1991, Boroń 2012)

The founder of the territorial foundations of Upper Silesia was a prince from the Piast dynasty, Mieszko the Tanglefoot (Mika 2010, Mika 2011). He was the son of Władysław the Exile, removed from the Polish throne in 1146. Mieszko together with his elder brother, Bolesław the Tall, did not return to Poland until 1163. Duke Mieszko originally received only the land of Racibórz and probably Cieszyn, but he did not stop at this territory, quite quickly taking over the castellanies of Bytom and Oświęcim together with the territories belonging to them. In this way, he gained a territory generating considerable income from the silver and lead mines located there (Boroń, Rozmus 2014, 2015). By taking over these two castellanies, he entered the territory subject to the princes and the bishopric of Kraków. From then on, until the territorial reform of the bishoprics in the Polish lands in 1821, Upper Silesia was partly subject to the Bishops of Wrocław and partly to the Bishops of Kraków.

In 1201, Mieszko the Tanglefoot occupied the land of Opole. In doing so, he united in one hand, and handed over to his successors, the whole of the upper Nadodrże together with the areas lying on the Oder-Vistula watershed. The area

was divided into minor principalities, the border with Lesser Poland changed somewhat<sup>1</sup>, but it began to constitute a compact and separate territory and was perceived as such.

The successors of Mieszko the Tanglefoot did not use the title of Duke of Silesia for many years. This one was reserved for the Lower Silesian line. In use were the titles of the Dukes of Opole, Racibórz, Cieszyn, etc. It was not until the 15<sup>th</sup> century that the term “Duke of Silesia” appeared in their titulature, at first sporadically, then consistently (Dziewulski 1973, Orzechowski 2008). There was even a broadening of the perception of Silesia by the addition of the Bohemian Přemyslids to the group of princes from the Piast line. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the territory around Opava, Bruntal, Krnov and Głubczyce was given to Nicholas, the illegitimate but legitimised son of King Přemysl Ottokar II of Bohemia. After some perturbations, the reign of a lateral line of this dynasty initiated by him became firmly established there. In 1337 the Opava Přemyslids inherited the Duchy of Racibórz, binding themselves more closely to Silesia. They participated in the assemblies of the Silesian princes, the all-Silesian state assemblies, and intermarried with the Silesian Piasts (Seidl 1992).

The territorial and political commonality of the Piast and Přemyslids principalities in the areas bordering the Oder probably caused them to be treated as a single entity, but noting also the differences, people spoke of two Silesias (*utraque Silesiae*). This duality was exploited by the Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus, who, after taking over the whole of Silesia, appointed separate officials for Lower and Upper Silesia (Silesia Inferior and Silesia Superior). This division was upheld by the Czech King Ladislaus Jagiellon, who in 1498 granted a special privilege for the entire region, setting the legal basis for the functioning of the Czech administration for several centuries.

### 3. The Creation of the United Duchies of Opole and Racibórz

The reign of Duke John II the Good (Hanusz, 1476–1532) (Łojek 2021) was important for the formation of a unified Upper Silesian core. He began his reign co-ruling with his brother in the Duchy of Opole. During his reign, he accumulated individual surrounding lands in his hand by various means, so that by the end of his life he ruled over almost all of Upper Silesia – except for the duchies

---

1 In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Zbigniew Oleśnicki, Bishop of Cracow, bought out the Siewierz land, creating a separate duchy there. Several decades later, the Polish rulers Casimir Jagiellon and John Albert bought out the Duchies of Oświęcim (1457) and Zator (1494/1513). Within the structures of the Kingdom of Poland, a separate county covering both principalities was created in 1564, called Silesian.

of Cieszyn, where a local dynasty ruled, Oświęcim (bought by the Polish kings) and Opava (incorporated into the Bohemian Crown in 1501).

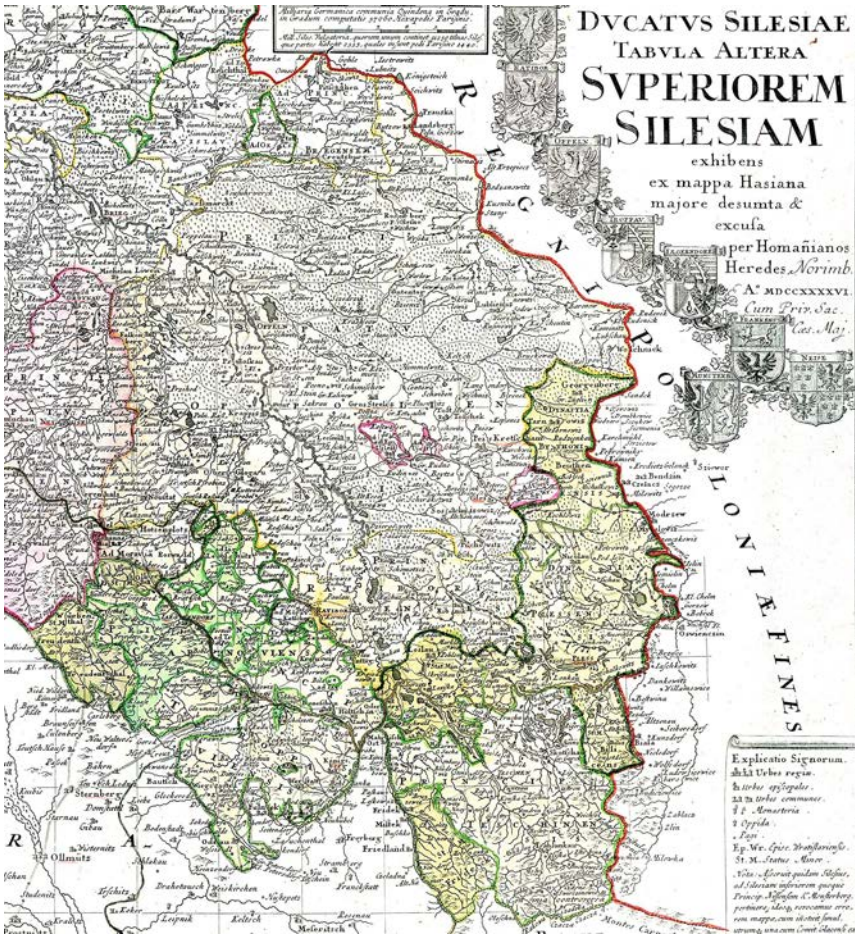


Figure 1. Map of Upper Silesia in the 17<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century featuring the visible extent of the principalities of Opole and Racibórz and the state countries, Author: Public licence.

Towards the end of his life, Duke John II, having no descendants and wanting to secure his lands, issued a special privilege, the equivalent of a constitutional law, regulating the system of his state. The principalities he owned were henceforth to form a single unit, subject of course to the Kingdom of Bohemia. He designated two capitals, Opole and Racibórz, which were to be the place where tribute was paid to the Bohemian rulers, and also the place where the Sejm of the princi-

palities – the highest legislative authority<sup>2</sup> – was to meet. The Sejm of the principalities gathered representatives of the nobility, and over time it became a state assembly, encompassing lords, knights, clergy and burghers. The governor of the King of Bohemia in the duchies of Opole and Racibórz was to be a nobleman appointed by the ruler, but it was stipulated that this must be a person living in Upper Silesia. The so-called Hanusz' Privilege became the basis for the operation of the state self-government authorities in the area, and was also an additional region-creating factor, shaping regional ties. Its importance was recognised 250 years later by Prussian officials, who, in order to manage the territory efficiently and understand the local conditions, had this legal act translated into German. Several decades after the acquisition of Silesia by Frederick the Great, a translation of this privilege was published in Berlin, together with other documents, in the form of a multi-volume publication entitled *Diplomatische Beyträge zur Untersuchung der schlesischen Rechte und Geschichte*<sup>3</sup>.

In 1532 the Habsburgs took direct control of the duchies of Opole and Racibórz. For 200 years, however, this area was regarded as a not very wealthy, distant province from Prague and Vienna.

It was therefore quite common for this territory to be mortgaged and for separate territorial authorities (Herrschaft) to be established here. As temporary rulers appeared here the Zápolyas, Gabriel Bethlen and later the Vasa dynasty as pledge lords. Emperor Ferdinand (d. 1564), perpetually in need of cash, handed over Upper Silesian towns in exchange for loans. A group of separate state countries also emerged on the border with Poland, which provided the basis for the careers of several prominent aristocratic families. These were, in order of formation: the state of Wodzislaw (1502 – Planknar, Dietrichstein), Pless (1517 – Thurzó, Promnitz, Anhalt-Cöthen, Hochberg), Bytom (1526–1623–1697 – Hohenzollern, Donersmarck), Bohumin (1526–1623–1697 – Hohenzollerns, Donersmarck), Bielsko (1572 – Promnitz, Sunnegh, Sulkowski) – and the small state of Mysłowice (1637 – Mieroszewski family).

2 Polish historical literature uses the term 'sejmik', transferring it from the legal culture of the First Republic. In reality, the sejm of the principalities was an assembly of several states, totally different from the aristocratic reality. (Hatalaska 1979)

3 *Diplomatische Beyträge zur Untersuchung der schlesischen Rechte und Geschichte*, Bd. 3. Berlin 1771, p. 1; *Diplomatische Beyträge zur Untersuchung der schlesischen Rechte und Geschichte*, Bd. 4. Berlin 1773, p. 169n.



Figure 2. Fragment of a map of the Polish-Silesian border in 1726. Records of border mounds refer to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Author: State Archive in Opole.

#### 4. Prussian Times

Significant changes in the state affiliation and administrative divisions of Upper Silesia occurred in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Following the accession of Maria Theresa to the imperial throne, King Frederick the Great of Prussia first offered to help the empress take over the so-called hereditary countries, demanding Silesia in return. He finally seized the region in late 1740 and early 1741. The fighting continued intermittently for many years (the so-called Silesian Wars), with the issue of Silesia only finally settled after the Seven Years' War in 1763 (Treaty of Hubertusburg). Already in 1742, Upper Silesia was divided into Prussian and Austrian parts. Only the southern part of the region with the Habsburgs – Teschen, Bielsko, Bohumín, Opava, and Krnov. Since then, the name Czech Silesia (formerly Austrian Silesia) has often been used. It later included not only the Upper Silesian territory, but also the district of Jeseník, formerly part of Lower Silesia, and Heřmanovice (German: Hermannstadt) in the district of Bruntal, as well as Mnichov (German: Einsiedel) and Železná (German:

Buchbergsthal), belonging to the former Ecclesiastical Duchy of Neisse. Czech Silesia today also includes 26 so-called Moravian enclaves, i. e. small territories on the Silesian-Moravian border, functioning as separate communities since the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, dependent on the bishopric of Olomouc.

Administrative reforms took place in Prussian Silesia, resulting in the establishment of counties and regencies administered by incoming Prussian officials. The Upper Silesian regency was initially located in Oppeln and later moved to Brieg. However, all activities of the Prussian administration were subordinated to the government and central offices in Berlin. Sejmiks of the nobility and municipal self-government were abolished.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a short-lived but significant incorporation of territories on the Polish-Silesian border took place. The areas of Siewierz, Pilica and Żarki, acquired as a result of the Third Partition of Poland and previously belonging to the Province of Kraków, were consolidated into a separate province, which was named New Silesia (Neuschlesien). This province lasted only a dozen years (1795–1807), but the search for minerals undertaken by the Prussian Higher Mining Office led to the start of mining and industrial production in the area, making it economically similar to the territories of the eastern part of Upper Silesia. The result of these activities, initiated by Minister Friedrich Wilhelm von Reden, was the later creation of the so-called Dąbrowa Basin.

After the Napoleonic Wars, and especially after the state reforms introduced since the defeat in 1806/07, the Silesian Province (Provinz Schlesien) was established in 1816 with its capital in Breslau, and within it the regency for Upper Silesia. Oppeln became the capital of the regency, although this was not obvious from the start. Brieg, Ratibor and Gleiwitz were considered. Due to the small size of Gleiwitz, it was even envisaged that it would be expanded, creating plans for an administrative and residential district.

The territory of this regency (Regierungsbezirk Oppeln) became synonymous with Upper Silesia in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A conspicuous symbol of the belonging of particular localities became the obligation to use the regency designation in texts next to the name of the locality – in this case the abbreviation O/S – Oberschlesien.

As a result of the administrative reform of 1816, areas hitherto associated with Lower Silesia were added to the Oppeln Regency. The Duchy of Neisse, which belonged to the Bishops of Breslau, had already been abolished. The bishop's duchy had already been divided between Prussia and Austria after the First Silesian War in 1742. By a cabinet order of the Prussian King Frederick William III of 28 February 1816, the Silesian Province was established, with four districts: Breslau, Liegnitz, Reichenbach and Oppeln. The Oppeln Regency included, among others, the districts of Neisse and Grottkau, excluding Wansen included

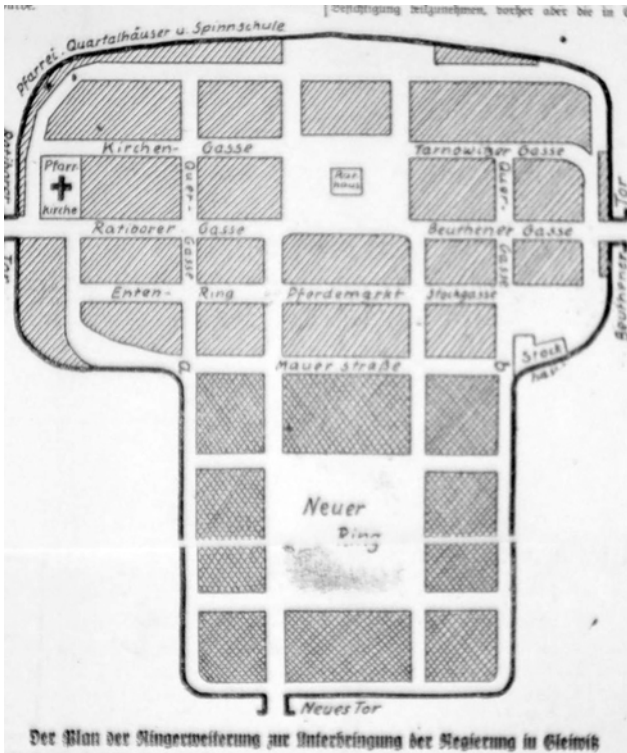


Figure 3. 1816 extension plan of Gliwice for the planned capital of the regency, Author: State Archive in Katowice, Gliwice Branch.

in the Ohlau District<sup>4</sup>. The district of Kreuzburg was also to be included in the Oppeln Regency. The requests of the local inhabitants resulted in a change of the royal decision and leaving Kreuzburg and its surroundings within the Breslau Regency. However, shortly afterwards, in 1820, the Kreuzburg county was incorporated into the Oppeln Regency, which became the basis for its inclusion in the Upper Silesian area<sup>5</sup>.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially its second half, was a time of revolutionary changes in the economy, settlement and communications in both actual Upper Silesia and Austrian Silesia. The industrial clusters emerging in the east of the Oppeln Regency, in the area of Gleiwitz, Beuthen or Kattowitz, and in the north-east of Opavian Silesia, in the area of Ostrau, Karwin or Bohumin, changed the network of regional connections and demographic relations. In tandem with the emerging

4 *Bekanntmachung*, den Wirkungskreis der Regierungen der Provinz Schlesien betreffend, Amts-Blatt der Königlichen Oppelnschen Regierung pro 1816, Bd. 1, Oppeln 1816, p. 10n.

5 Amts-Blatt der Königlichen Regierung zu Breslau, Bd. 11, Breslau 1820, p. 113.

industry, a new transport network developed. The first new transport route became the Klodnitz Canal, connecting the mines and steelworks in the vicinity of Gleiwitz and Zabrze with the Oder River and, by shipping on the Oder, with the rest of Prussia. Another move was the construction of a network of beaten roads in the east of Upper Silesia. Finally, in 1846, the Upper Silesian Railway (Oberschlesische Eisenbahn) was put into service, reaching the state border at Myslowitz. The eastern part of Upper Silesia thus gained numerous connections, not only with other areas of the Prussian state, but above all with the nearest territories, also belonging to the Oppeln Regency. The administrative structure did not change until 1918, although there were changes in the network of districts and local administrations.

## 5. Divisions of Upper Silesia in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century – Decomposition of the Region

Significant changes in territorial structures occurred after Germany lost the First World War. The Polish independence movement in Upper Silesia led to three uprisings and a plebiscite supervised by the superpowers. The result was the division of the industrialised territory into Polish and German parts. An autonomous Silesian Voivodeship with its own parliament and treasury was established on the territories taken over by Poland in 1922. Katowice became the capital of the Voivodeship. Earlier still, in 1919, there was a war between the newly formed states of Czechoslovakia and Poland over Teschen Silesia. In February 1919, a demarcation line was drawn, extending the area belonging to Czechoslovakia. After several months, the borders were shifted even further in favour of Czechoslovakia by incorporating the so-called Zaolzie, inhabited mostly by Poles, into this state. The rest of Teschen Silesia and the Bielsko area were incorporated into the already mentioned Silesian Voivodship.

Territorial changes also occurred on the German-Czechoslovak border. As a result of the Treaty of Versailles, the area around Hlučín (Hultschin), formerly belonging to the Oppeln Regency, was ceded to Czechoslovakia. This decision was justified by the use of the Moravian language by the local population. The Czechoslovak side made larger demands, including Ratibor and Rybník, but eventually only received an area of 317 km<sup>2</sup>.

The annexation of part of Upper Silesia to Poland led to a distinction being made between Polish and German Upper Silesia. The Polish narrative began to use the term Opole Silesia. This replaced the term German Upper Silesia. An example of such a curiosity may be the statement “Opole Silesia, also sometimes called Upper Silesia” (Maliszewski, 1919, 42). Similarly, in Germany the term

Ostoberschlesien was used to avoid speaking of Polish Upper Silesia (Wieczorek 1939, Linek 2005, 11). The term Opole Silesia was probably developed by the geographer Eugeniusz Romer, but it was used widely, appearing in the press and in literary works (Romer 1922, Wasylewski 1937).

The newly created Silesian Voivodeship was not homogeneous economically, socially or with regard to the origin and historical experience of its inhabitants.

A band system was observed: the areas of the former Austrian monarchy, the Polish part of the industrial district and the agricultural areas of the district of Lubliniec, which lay in the north of the voivodeship. The geographer and science populariser Stanisław Berezowski and the writer Gustaw Morcinek defined this troism by colour: Green, Black and White Silesia (Morcinek 1933, Berezowski 1937). Green Silesia was defined as the southern parts referring to the numerous green areas here, including extensive forests. Green Silesia included Teschen Silesia and the district of Pless, located to the north and densely covered with Pless forests. Black Silesia is the industrialised region – indeed black from coal dust and the fumes of steelworks or coking plants. The term White Silesia was probably coined in opposition to Black Silesia – it was an agricultural area in the vicinity of Lubliniec.

On the German side, the *Oppeln Regency* was raised to the rank of a province (Provinz Oberschlesien) in October 1919. The reason was the preparations for the nationality plebiscite mandated by the Treaty of Versailles. The Upper Silesian Province was abolished after the expiry of the Geneva Convention in 1938, while the *Oppeln Regency*, together with the Hulčín District recovered after the annexation of Czechoslovakia, was incorporated into the Silesian Province.

Administrative changes in the area of broadly defined Upper Silesia also occurred during the Second World War. Already in October 1939, the Kattowitz Regency was established within the Silesian Province. Initially, it covered the area of the former Silesian Voivodeship including the three cities of the industrial part of the Oppeln Regency, i. e. Gleiwitz, Beuthen and Zabrze. A few weeks later, the districts of Żywiec and Będzin, which had previously had no connection with the German state, were incorporated into this region.

Further administrative changes in the area took place in late 1940 and early 1941. A new Upper Silesian Province (Provinz Oberschlesien) was separated from the Silesian Province. Two regencies were subordinated to it: the Oppeln Regency and the Kattowitz Regency, which had only existed for a year. Kattowitz became the capital of the province. The territories of both regencies were enlarged by the areas of occupied Poland. The Oppeln Regency included parts of the Zawiercie and Częstochowa regions, while the Kattowitz Regency included areas of the Dąbrowa Basin, the vicinity of Olkusz and Chrzanów, Bielsko and Wadowice. In Nazi nomenclature, the term Gau Oberschlesien was used, and the province was



headed by the gauleiter Fritz Bracht (Węcki, 2014, Węcki 2021). This state of affairs prevailed until 1945.

After the end of the Second World War, the whole of former Upper Silesia found itself in Polish hands (excluding Czech Silesia, of course). The Polish authorities of the time created an administrative unit called the Silesian or Silesian-Dąbrowa Voivodeship, comprising the areas of the former pre-war Silesian Voivodeship, the Oppeln Regency (excluding Brzeg and Namysłów), the Dąbrowa Basin and part of the area around Częstochowa. The territory was quite extensive and thus difficult to administer. There were also clear differences between the industrial area in the east of this province and the agriculture-oriented western lands. Social structures were also different. A significant Polish population remained in the pre-war Silesian Voivodeship, while the pre-war German areas were largely abandoned by refugees in 1945 and as a result of the subsequent displacement of the German population. There were also differences in the administration of this province by the Polish government. Indeed, in 1945 the Ministry of Recovered Territories was established to administer the areas lying outside the pre-1939 state borders<sup>6</sup>. This Ministry was abolished in 1949, recognising that there had been an integration of the post-German territories with the pre-war Polish lands. In 1950, another administrative reform was carried out, resulting in the creation of the Katowice and Opole Voivodeships.

There has been a significant shift towards the east of the entity still identified with Upper Silesia, the industrial district. On the other hand, the western part of the former region slowly began to develop its own identity, referred to as Opole Silesia. The districts of Brzeg and Namysłów were added to this voivodeship. Attention was also drawn to the heterogeneity of the new "Upper Silesia", i. e. the Katowice Voivodeship, which included the areas of the former Lesser Poland and Dąbrowa Basin. The full decomposition of the region was accomplished by an administrative reform in 1975. The former Katowice Voivodeship was divided into three new units: Katowice, Częstochowa and Bielsko. The Katowice Voivodeship was enlarged by areas indigenous to Lesser Poland – the former Olkusz and Chrzanów districts. In the west, the district of Racibórz, formerly part of the Opole Voivodeship, was incorporated. The Częstochowa voivodeship included not only the area around Częstochowa and the former Katowice area, but also the area around Olesno, belonging to the Opole region. Part of the former Kielce Voivodeship with the area around Szczekocin and Koniecpol was also added to this province. The new Bielsko Voivodeship was also created from the former areas of Upper Silesia, Teschen Silesia and Lesser Poland. The area came to be rather ambiguously referred to as Podbeskidzie.

6 Decree on the administration of the Recovered Territories of 13 November 1945, Journal of Laws of the National Council, No. 51, item 295, p. 451.

Already after the fall of communism, in 1998, the state authorities proposed a new administrative reform. The original idea was to create one large Silesian Voivodeship, encompassing the whole of historic Upper Silesia and the later annexed areas of the Dąbrowa Basin and other areas of western Lesser Poland. These plans provoked opposition from many local communities, where the local population, but above all local politicians, feared annexation to the demographically and economically dominant industrial district. Only in Opole Silesia did these fears develop into mass opposition. The Civic Committee for the Defence of the Opole Region was formed, which, together with the Social and Cultural Association of Germans in Opole Silesia, collected 200,000 signatures in protest against the liquidation of the voivodeship<sup>7</sup>. An emblematic and media-savvy event was the formation of the so-called *Chain of Hope*, a gathering along the most important road cutting through the region of tens of thousands of people, holding hands, demonstrating their desire to retain their own voivodeship. The Opole Voivodeship was retained, although the demand for the return of the Racibórz district, which remained with the Silesian Voivodeship, was not realised.

## 6. Changes in Church Structures

As with the changes concerning the structures of the state administration, one can observe the adaptation of the ecclesiastical divisions to the shift of the region to its eastern, industrialised zone. From the early Middle Ages, the border between the dioceses of Wrocław and Kraków ran through the eastern part of the region. In fact, only a sliver of Upper Silesia belonged to the diocese of Kraków – the later counties (according to the borders at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) of Tarnowitz, Beuthen, Kattowitz and Pless. However, after the Third Partition of Poland, the Prussian authorities, referring to the principle of adjusting the church administration to the borders of the state, began the process of subordinating the acquired areas to separate church offices. In 1797, the so-called Siewierski Commissariat was established, covering the deaneries of Częstochowa, Pilica and Siewierz, previously subordinated to the diocese of Kraków. It was actually a separate ecclesiastical judiciary district. This Commissariat functioned until 1807. However, it was not long before changes also affected the Beuthen and Pless deaneries. In 1811, jurisdiction over these deaneries was ceded to the Bishopric of

---

7 It is worth noting that none of the social organisations speaking in defence of the Opole Voivodeship used the term Upper Silesia in their narrative. They referred to the Opole region and Opole Silesia.

Breslau, and the changes in diocesan boundaries were approved by the papacy with the bull “De salute animarum” of 1821 (Maroń 1971, Właźlak 2003).

Similar changes in church jurisdiction were taking place in Austrian Silesia. Here, the main problem was the dependence of the local church on the Bishopric of Breslau, already located within a foreign state. In 1770, a new administrative structure, the so-called Vicariate General, also later known as the Vicariate of Teschen, was established in this area. It comprised two territories – the former bishop’s commissariat of Teschen, established as early as 1654, and a separate commissariat established in 1746, covering those areas of the former Duchy of Neisse that had not been acquired by the Prussians. These territories were divided by that part of Austrian Silesia which had belonged to the Olomouc diocese since the early Middle Ages. The following deaneries were subordinated to the vicariate in Teschen: Bielsko, Teschen, Friedek, Freistadt, Karwin and Strużie, while in Neisse: Freiwaldau, Jauernig, Weidenau and *Zuckmantel* as well as several minor territories (Tomecki 1994–95). For many years the Austrian authorities tried to establish a bishopric in Troppau, but without success.

After the division of Upper Silesia in 1922, the eastern parishes of the diocese of Breslau were included within the Polish state. In 1925, the Diocese of Katowice was created in this area, which was subordinated to the Archbishops of Kraków. The diocese included the territories of the newly created Silesian Voivodship, including part of the Vicariate of Teschen. In 1938, the territories of the so-called Trans-Olza, occupied by the Polish state after the fall of Czechoslovakia, were transferred under the administration of the Diocese of Katowice.

After the defeat of the Third Reich in 1945, Polish ecclesiastical administration was introduced in the territories of the former German state under an apostolic administration. A separate administration was established in Opole, giving rise to a separate diocese. After a long period of provisional administration, the separate diocese of Opole was established in 1972, by a decision of Pope Paul VI. It included most of the eastern areas of the former diocese of Breslau (then already an archdiocese), to which it was subordinate. The Diocese of Opole also included the western areas of the Upper Silesian Industrial Region with Gliwice and Zabrze.

The last, so far, reform of the administration of the Catholic Church took place in 1992. It covered the whole of the Polish lands and was introduced by Pope John Paul II with the bull “Totus Tuus Poloniae populus”. It can be compared to the reform of state administration in the People’s Republic of Poland in 1975. It created small dioceses, with capitals often located in places without any serious tradition of church governance, and still not growing beyond the structures of deaneries. Nor did it take account of existing organisational and socio-historical links, creating new dioceses across the old regional structures. A huge and demographically very large archdiocese was created with its capital in Katowice,

to which the dioceses of Opole and Gliwice were subordinated. A separate diocese was created in the Dąbrowa Basin, with its capital in Sosnowiec, but it was subordinated to the metropolitan see of Częstochowa. Similarly, the newly created diocese of Bielsko-Żywiec, covering the territory of the former Austrian Silesia and south-western Lesser Poland, was subordinated to the Archbishop of Kraków. The divisions introduced at that time partly respected the old state or regional divisions, and partly did not respect them at all.

## 7. Summary

The transformations of state and church administrative structures in the broader Upper Silesian area outlined above allow several observations which are important from a research perspective. The formation of the region began in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and the first years of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when Duke Mieszko the Tanglefoot established the foundations of his dominion in the upper reaches of the Oder and Vistula rivers. After two centuries of the dynasty started by this prince, the area began to be seen as a separate territory, taking its name from the nearby Lower Silesia. This was probably fostered by the separate political fate of the whole area along the upper and middle Oder, which was separated from the Polish state and became part of the Czech Kingdom in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It constituted a separate area within this state.

After a period of fragmentation into small principalities, the unification of most of the areas of Mieszko the Tanglefoot's former rule took place at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and was the result of the action of Duke John II the Good. His decisions regarding political changes in the principalities of Opole and Racibórz (although he actually ruled also in the former principalities of Bytom, Strzelce, Głogówek, Gliwice, Toszek, Koźle and Niemodlin) laid the foundation for the crystallisation of the region's core, lasting as a separate state administration structure, but above all as a local self-government for 200 years. In addition to the self-government of the Opole and Racibórz principalities, the representation of all local rulers in the Silesian Parliament (*Schlesischer Fürstentag*) played an important role in the formation of the region. The changes that took place after Frederick the Great took over most of Silesia led to the breakaway of the so-called Austrian (Bohemian) Silesia from the local structures. This can be said to be the first phase of the decomposition of territorial structures originating from feudal times. Within the Prussian state, self-governing bodies had disappeared and the territorial changes introduced were aimed at streamlining the state administration rather than creating regional ties. The peripheral areas – the Duchy of Neisse and the Kreuzburg county – were then added to the core of Upper Silesia, which was the former Duchies of Opole and Racibórz. The sig-