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„L'économie du bon plaisir”.

**The Impact of Statism on the Organization of Administrative and Economic Life of  
Silesia during the Habsburg Era (1526-1740)**

**Abstract**

In many human sciences, especially political science and economics (and cultural research) there exist many analyses of the impact of statism (etatism) on the functioning of societies. The aim of this article is to show and highlight contemporary phenomena of this doctrine, through inquiry into their origins and character, treated – especially by Austrian and British researchers – as unchangeable. Why Silesia? Why 1526-1740? Several constants existed there. Firstly, it was a province of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, treated in the studies of the history of the rights as state *par excellence*. Secondly, in the abovementioned period, it was the farthest from, among others, Europe's easternmost economic structure which underwent statist policies modeled on French achievements. Thirdly, Silesia was the last in Europe, and so it was seen as „the most perfect”, in practice it was a well worked out and well distorted, form.

The article analyzes the issues of the organization and development of central public administration structures and their impact on economic statism, according to the scheme:

1. Ideological basis of statism in Silesia,
2. Implementation through the creation of central offices,
3. The taking of the highest economic offices by the Emperor's adherents,
4. Giving the greatest land fortunes to people involved in the politics of Vienna Court,
5. News from the fiscal policy agenda,
6. Economic basis of the creation a new social order/hierarchy.

Such a system is related to the value of chronological changes.

When conducting an explanation, it proved to be the best to use synchronic, genetic, philological, evolutionary and sociological methods and elements of comparative, progressive and retrogressive and *argumentum ex silentio* methods as well.

**Keywords:** statism, Silesia, administration, economics, Holy Roman Empire of German Nation, aristocracy.

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„L'économie du bon plaisir”.

**Wpływ myśli etatystycznej na organizację życia administracyjno-ekonomicznego  
Śląska doby habsburskiej (1526-1740)**

**Abstrakt**

W wielu nurtach nauk humanistycznych, zwłaszcza naukach politycznych i ekonomicznych (choć i badań nad kulturą) przejawia się wątek analizy wpływu myśli etatystycznej na funkcjonowanie społeczeństw. Celem, jak i w niniejszym artykule, jest unaocznienie i uwypuklenie zjawisk współczesnych, poprzez dociekania nad ich genezą i charakterem, traktowanym – zwłaszcza przez badaczy austriackich i brytyjskich – jako niezmienny. Pochylenie się nad tematyką śląską tego problemu wynika z kilku stałych. Po pierwsze jest to jedna z prowincji Świętego Cesarstwa Rzymskiego Narodu Niemieckiego, której w badaniach nad historią prawa przypisuje się cechy państwa *par excellence*. Po drugie w omawianym okresie była to najdalej z pośród innych wysunięta na wschód Europy struktura ekonomiczna, która ulegała polityce etatystycznej wzorowanej na dokonaniach francuskich. Po trzecie, Śląsk uległ jej ostatni w Europie, a więc przyjął jej „najdoskonalszą”, dobrze wypracowaną, formę. W artykule analizie poddano kwestie organizacji i rozwoju centralnych struktur administracji publicznej oraz ich wpływ na etatyzm ekonomiczny, według schematu:

1. Programowe podstawy etatyzmu na Śląsku,
2. Realizacja założeń przez tworzenie urzędów centralnych,
3. Przejmowanie najwyższych urzędów o charakterze ekonomicznym przez ludzi cesarskich,
4. Nadawanie największych majątków ludziom związanym z polityką Wiednia,
5. Nowości z zakresu polityki skarbowej,
6. Ekonomiczne przesłanki cementowania hierarchii społecznej.

Taki układ związany jest z chronologiczną wartością zmian.

Przy prowadzeniu eksplanacji najlepiej sprawdziła się metoda synchronistyczna, genetyczna, filologiczna, ewolucyjna, socjologiczna, elementy metod porównawczej, progresywnej, retrogresywnej oraz *argumentum ex silentio*.

**Słowa kluczowe:** etatyzm, Śląsk, administracja, ekonomia, Święte Cesarstwo Rzymskie Narodu Niemieckiego, arystokracja.

## Introduction

The politics of good taste, or the „regime du bon plaisir”, were already attributed to the French king Louis XIV (1661-1715), and then to his successors. This concept naturally reflects the character of governance in Paris and in France. Contrary to what this might imply, however, it did not entail randomness in governance resulting from disorder, the decay of state values, its structures, or the lack of an economic concept. Behind this rather inconspicuous term lay a highly statist implementation of the state doctrine, the first of its kind in Europe, according to which France became the private property of the ruler. Perhaps this is why over the centuries, the term „l'État c'est moi” came to be more ingrained in the memories of the contemporaries (Izdebski 2015, p. 42).

When analyzing statism in the modern period – the 16th to 18th century – one should consider it an absolute system of government which, while deprived of its definition, in the 16th century still meant the pursuit of centralization of the state in the form of the so-called soft statism. In this regard, it was at first closer to the politics of the Holy Roman Emperor and King of the Germans, than to the power of the Valois or the Bourbons which was limited by the parliamentary representation of the General States. For this reason, one can risk stating that Silesia in the period 1526 to 1740, which was part of the Habsburgs' Hereditary Lands, and indirectly belonging to the structure of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, was one of the first districts of the state – sometimes even directly called the „state” (Gude 1708 , pp. 12-30) – which experienced a rather intense rise of statism in the operation of the state. In the future, this would have an impact not only on public life, but above all, on economic and social life.

The basic hypothesis of this study remains the question of whether the Habsburg regime in the period considered – from the seizure of power over Silesia in 1526 until its loss in 1740 – really aimed to implement the basic assumptions of the doctrine of statism and if the actions taken can really be identified with said doctrine. What may be of interest is the answer to the question whether we can debate Silesian statism as a variant of a doctrine, even on the micro scale. It seems natural that individual countries, lands and provinces of Europe have differed significantly in this respect. This was primarily due to their separate traditions and history, as well as due to the importance of various geopolitical positions. We will try to point out both the existence of a separate, „Silesian” program of absolutist politics of the Czech kings (and also Roman emperors), the specificity of its implementation in the political dimension and, the economic interest that we are ultimately interested in. At the outset, it should be added

that the economic dimension for the Habsburgs was not based, as in other parts of Europe, on the state initiative of creating production centers in the spirit of developing mercantilism or physiocracy, but on the policy of eliminating economic privileges of the nobility and aristocracy and granting hundreds of estates to the emperors' supporters. The taxation of the latter has in the future become the basis of a broad tax system. Finally, we will try to show that the secondary effect was the taking of political control, because the owners of landed estates were the sole members of the assemblies that formed the basis of public life in Silesia.

In regard to the above, the key to tracing this process will be the analysis of the core program of statism in Silesia, its implementation by creating central offices while taking over the – closely related to the imperial and royal system – positions of administrative and economic character, as well as the largest land estates, which formed the basis of hereditary fortunes and back the state directly and in a fiscal manner (initially the state's treasury was filled by high sums of sales, and then, by taxes). Attention should also be paid to certain novelties in the field of tax policy and the very process of cementing a new, multi-level hierarchy of the so-called „political nation” or nobility and aristocracy, based on material benefits.

To carry out the outlined research postulates, a decision was made to base the research mainly on case studies, partly based on the prosopographic method, which is characteristic to research on the functioning of social elites. Even if its application is not readily apparent, the conclusions presented in the article and a large part of the facts quoted and the arguments are related to earlier, in-depth studies of this type. In addition, a philological method was used, referring to the analysis of original source texts, as well as the genetic method, when looking for causal relationships of a complex nature, in this approach referring to long-term processes. When writing about statism, also in such a short piece, it was necessary to use the comparative method, the assumptions of which need no explanation. Their use is all too visible in particular parts of the article. However, when we talk about landed estates, many of the findings were also based on the statistical method, the analysis of the use of which would nevertheless put burden this article excessively. Therefore, only its final findings have been presented.

### **The core program of statism in Silesia**

Statism is regarded as a political and economic doctrine, which assumes that the state and its broadly understood wellbeing is of paramount importance. Its main theme was the concept

of *ragion di stato* expressed by NicoloMacchiavelli, more often cited in French, *raison d'etat*. Putting the functionality of the state above the political freedom of the individual on had a profound impact on the construction of a financial base. The definition of statism addresses not only the „need for the existence of the state as the basic political organization of society, but also the special purpose of the state” (Izdebski, 2015, p. 39). Statism implied the use of methodical control over the economy and actions of the subjects. In the philosophical sense, the state was regarded as an independent being, standing above the community it ruled. Its basic element was the pursuit of an unification – which would be as broad as possible – of the state when understood as central administration (centralized structure of public authorities), of the local level (a team of public authorities), and of the economic system. This formula was in opposition to the previously existing dispersion of political and economic potential, which was largely in the hands of the „paradise of states” (Paradies der Stände), i.e. a state in which the privileges of individual social groups had a real instrument of control over the policies of the government.

Changes in the administration and management of the economy of Silesia can be seen immediately after the takeover of Silesia by the Habsburg dynasty in 1526. In the first years, attempts were made to limit the influence of the Silesian parliament, and royal equivalents of existing state offices (mainly noblemen's) were introduced.

Not only an institution of a strictly economic nature was established, i.e. the Royal Camera (KöniglicheKammer), an office aiming to manage royal properties and limit the authority of the local staroste (Landes Hauptmann), over time an absolute authority of collegial nature, completely dependent on Vienna's policy of, was established – the Superior Office (Ober Amt) whose counselors combined political and economic competences in their hands. Importantly, the first changes associated with the objective to closely link all provinces with the state and manage them, and the use of their financial capabilities, more effectively, concerned fiscal reform. Similarly to Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Upper and Lower Austria, the Kingdom of Hungary, Tyrol, the so-called cadastre, otherwise known as the indiction tax, was introduced in Silesia. Furthermore, an estimate was made of the value of goods, basing on which the annual tax for the state was to be paid in the future. It was the economic profitability base for owning the province (Orzechowski, pp. 120-220).

The changes introduced were to streamline the decision-making process and to supply the imperial royal treasury with constant inflows of funds, and not as was so far the case only by the levies, adopted freely under certain circumstances by the Silesian parliament and by the

grace of its members. While in the sixteenth century this policy was not yet defined according to the criteria of absolute dominion, the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618 encouraged the young Emperor Ferdinand II Habsburg to take more radical steps based on a planned model partly established in France, the so-called hard statism. This was all the more characteristic because the monarchy considered the outbreak of the war a result of a too conciliatory policy towards the elites, mainly the aristocracy, but also the nobility guarding their political and economic prerogatives. It was during the first years of the Thirty Years' War that the evolution of the power relationship towards society took place. It consisted of an attempt to find a formula appropriate for the final reversal of the roles of the king and states.

Interestingly, this was to be accomplished by donating to the aristocracy the patronage over internal politics in the provinces. However, it was supposed to be so-called „New” aristocracy, which owed exclusively to the emperor the honors of offices and estates (Kuczer, pp. 42-66).

Ultimately, the first program for the native but atomized version of absolutism was developed locally in a relatively short time. In 1625, a Silesian, Otto von Nostitz (1574-1630), councilor of the Reich court and vice-chancellor of the Royal Czech Chancellery, in a memorial he himself published, suggested to the emperor the creation in Silesia of a party / coterie – meaning a group of people – that would remain faithful to his politics (the content was sometimes attributed to the burgrave Karl Hannibal von Dohna (Hübner 1925, p. 77). In parallel, an attempt was made to ensure that the aristocracy that was to carry out the highest state offices in the future, would have felt a constant need to contact the court, or even to make then dependent on the court regardless of the distance (Hengerer 1995, p. 114).

Thanks to the subordination of economic and public life, the possible threat of another anti-Habsburg uprising was to be neutralized. The author planned changes in the administration by introducing into it the typically „official” noblemen called *Beamtenadel*, based on the French *noble de robes*, i.e. those who have owed the promotion to the office to the imperial and royal administration. The increase in the importance of such a camera was to be made at the expense of the decision-making power of the already mentioned Silesian parliament, and the Silesian nobility and magnates that enjoyed wide privileges. As evidenced by the analysis below, these basic ideas were implemented with surprising meticulousness.

Nostitz pointed out that the law, in order to be a strong foundation of power, must always be associated with ideology. To the rank of a state ideology, which, as in the Middle Ages, was to unite society within caesaropapism, Catholicism was to be raised. He demonstrated the

danger of the expansion of Calvinism, which was under the patronage of such magnates as the Piasts, princes of Legnica-Brzeski or the Schönaich – free state rulers of Siedlisko and Bytom Odrzańskie. Therefore, the intention was to close the Calvinist schools and replace them with Catholic ones. The stay of young people at Calvinist universities was forbidden, and the bishop and princes were obliged, according to the author of the memorial, to set up higher education institutions. The Silesian starostes were to be appointed from now on from the Wrocław prince-bishops, and the posts of local authorities, such as the starostes of the principalities, were given to Catholics. The memorial was aimed at abolishing the principles of a tolerant majestic letter, but did not assume the persecution of the Protestant nobility in Silesia. A slow return „to the old principles of the monarchy” was postulated (Acta Publica 1875, pp. 9-15, Jedin 1938, pp. 212-215).

The view of a Nysa Jesuit priest, Christoph Weller, who also in 1625 presented a wide program of re-catholicization of the province, was similar. The author stressed that for the development of Silesia it will be necessary to support the „Catholic party” (catholischePartey). He consistently postulated the granting of estates only to the supporters of the court – to Catholics. He explicitly advocated creating a strong, loyal group. It would owe solely to the Crown its social advancement as well as temporal goods that would make it part of the new political and property elite (Jedin 1938, pp. 395-412).

The third document which indirectly influenced the development of relations in Silesia was the Renewed Land Order (VerneuerteLandesordnung). Issued in 1627, it was to deal directly with Bohemia and Moravia, but its provisions in fact also affected Silesia, which was one of the five regions constituting the Kingdom of Bohemia. It was a kind of quasi-constitution that established both a new model of society, new forms of land ownership, and was to help to develop new economic relations, but it also reached the cultural sphere. It established the basic principle of absolutism, saying that the emperor will from now on be the „source of all grace” (Quelle allerGnaden). It was an elementary component of the Habsburg statism of the period (Kuczer, p. 52). The Renewed Land Order became law in Silesia and enabled the implementation of both Nostitz and Weller's plans with a vengeance.

### **Implementation of absolutism by creating the central administration and creating its members**

To create a modern – for the time – economic and administrative structure, it was necessary to organize the clerical system and redefine the right to enter it. Above all, a

platform was created that combined into a logical whole the area of central offices, the performing of which was associated with a personal, permanent presence at the Vienna court, with the offices being provincial or national. The latter were naturally related to local politics. This rapprochement was to ensure better decision-making, control and, what was important for both elements, a greater degree of identification of offices with imperial politics, and not, as in the state monarchy of the 14th and 15th centuries, with the interests of individual principalities.

And so the Silesians began to hold the highest offices in the imperial government, where they successively held the offices of ministers. Principally, Prince Johann Weikhard von Auersperg, or Wentzel von Lobkowitzn, should be mentioned, both being heads of government cabinets in the fifties and sixties of the seventeenth century. Those who served Habsburg policies well have also been elevated to Members of the Reich Court (Reichshofrath). In this group, we can also mention the counts Johann von Churschwandt (from 1696), Carl Alexander von Gellhorn (from 1696), Johann Friedrich von Nimptsch (1717-1719), Josefa Maria von Weltzek (from 1733) (Weber, p. 306 -315; Gschließer 1942, pp. 389, 348-349, 396-397, 406, 415, 431, 435-436, 524). The case of the titles of secret councilors who were members of the secret imperial council (KaiserlicheGeheimRath) was similar. The count Johann Anton Anton von Schaffgotsch, or Count Otto Wentzel von Nostitz can be mentioned in this regard (Sinapius 1720-1726, vol. 1, Einleitung, Gebauer 1931, p. 142). Count Heinrich Johann von Dünnewald held the post of the real, secret and court counselor (Geheimer- und Hofkriegsrath) until his death in 1691. First of all, he came from a family closely related to the court long before he appeared in Silesia, and secondly his performance on the post was probably quite limited due to the ongoing war campaigns and the absence of the general himself at the court. The wealth of the count's awards could include many of those which he did not use at all, such as the title of a Czech aristocrat (member of the upper class known in German as *Herrenstand*) in 1667 and the introduction into the Counts (Grafenbank) of the Czech Diet. The dignity of the real secret counselor was obtained by Melchior Ferdinand von Gaschin, who died in 1656, which was then also passed on to his son George Adam (Meraviglia-Crivelli 1969, pp. 120-123). Wentzel von Würben (who died in 1649) was also an outstanding figure. He not only served as a real courtier, who was probably permanently in Vienna, but was also appointed commander of the Emperor's bodyguard (NAP, ČDK, 752, reference IV D 1, lk 507, Grafenstand Wentzel from Vrbno, 1625, 1642).



The Sinzendorffs, who in the 18th century became the owners of allodial estates in the Duchy of Głogów, could boast of an extremely impressive parentele. The Austrian noblemen received the title of local barons already in 1611. From 1653 onwards, they held – as was already partly mentioned – the offices intended exclusively for people from the Herrenstand of the Erbland in question, including the offices of the Hereditary Treasurer of the Reich (Reichs-Erbschaftmeisteramt), and in Austria itself, the Hereditary Seneschal (Erbschenckenamt), the First Tailor (Oberstlandvorschneider), a honorary kind of title primus inter pares equal (Erbschildträger - Esquire) and the Judge (Kampfrichteramt) (NAP, ČDK, 752, reference IV D 1, LHS 486: Sintznendorf 1650, 1658).

By creating central provincial offices in Silesia, the empire had at its disposal a very well-prepared group of future officials not only from the newly hatched nobility – as in France – but highly specialized officials, who often came from families with a rich tradition of service in public administration, and therefore probably a much broader view of the matters than their predecessors. These people were then entrusted with the highest offices in the created in 1629 Superior Office and in the Royal Camera. In addition to the highest positions, such as the starosta of Silesia, or the President of the Royal Camera (Kammerpraesident) in Silesia, there were also councilors' offices, usually in the number of a dozen or so. The stabilization of power was guaranteed by the first condition that the head of the Superior Office, the Silesian staroste, was always a prince by birth, and the second condition which in turn guaranteed the chairmanship of the Royal Camera to counts. These were the offices that directly connected the province with Vienna. The functions of the counselors of both offices were also passed to the counts or barons, and thus to higher nobility. A wealth of information on Catholic religion directly points out the actual, practical implementation of Nostitz' and Weller's programs, also in the ideological and religious sense. Such a union strengthened the elite internally, creating a kind of monogroup.

Thus, at the end of the era – in 1741 – and therefore in the period of the full development of the described system, the College of the Superior Office was composed of six counts and five barons. Amongst the most important were such people as count Franz Karl von Kottulinsky, count of Franz Carl von Praschma, Count of the Reich Otto Wentzel von Nostitz und Reineck, Earl of the Reich Johann Baptista von Neithardt, Count Johann Ferdinand von Globen and Count of the Reich Gerhard Wilhelm von Strattmann (Köhler 1741, vol. 1, p. 291).

Counts were the „first officials”, i.e. the Presidents of the Silesian Camera, an exclusively economic agenda, whose tasks included the management of all profits of the crown from this province. It was a rule which Johann David Köhler explicitly stated in his chronicle. He has stated that *das Collegium an sich selbst bestehet aus einem Cammer Praesident, der gemeiniglich ein Graf ist* (Köhler 1741, t. 1, s. 352). For example, from among the most-often mentioned counts, in 1656, this function was performed by Melchior Ferdinand von Gaschin (1656), and in 1703 it was acquired by a newcomer to Silesia, an immigrant from the Neyhardt family, Johann Baptista. The period the office was held by this Count of the Reich is a period lasting up to 1741. His deputy (Vice-Cammer-Praesident) was also a Count of the Reich, Friedrich Leopold von Rechenberg. The councilors of the office were Count Johann Leopold von Herberstein, Count Johann Frantz von Würben und Freudenthal, Count Anthon Christoph von Proßkau and Count Joachim Ladislaus von Berge. The body amounted to 23 people at the time (Köhler 1741, vol. 1, p. 295).

Subsequently, in the hierarchy of administration eleven offices of starostes of individual duchies were subordinated, namely Głogów, Opole-Racibórz, Świdnica-Jawor, Ziębice, Legnica, Brzeski, Wołowski, Opava, Karniów, Oleśnica and Wrocław. The offices from the second half of the 17th century remained in the hands of barons and counts closely related to the imperial court (Kuczer, chapters 3 and 4). It was the office responsible not only for the functioning of the royal administration, but for the supervision of economic matters through the control of tax matters and of the functioning of the ruler's property. It was important that to the starosts were subject not only the royal chamber goods but also the extensive castle possessions, which were the legacy of princely estates, now belonging to the ruler.

### **The policy of granting estates to the emperor's supporters and the economic consequences of cementing the social hierarchy**

Another important aspect of the Austrian emperors' policy in Silesia was the granting of the estates to those supporters, who were then to hold the most important offices. Their estates were by absolute obligation subordinate to the fiscal system created by the Habsburgs. Furthermore, their growing number meant that they began to have a decisive voice not only in the central administration, but also during the deliberation of small local assemblies, called sejmiks, which until now were the domain of anti-imperial, Lutheran and Calvinist lower and middle nobility. This goal was easier to fulfill due to the fact that the monarchy, in exchange

for the recognition of its direct sovereignty over landed property, gave the new aristocracy the so-called *Inkolat*, or political rights, derived precisely from property rights.

Therefore, the Habsburgs first of all created a property system in Silesia, which handed over the largest land assets to the families in highest esteem. It guaranteed the total domination of those who were closely associated with the empire. To this group of estates belonged primarily entire principalities remaining in the hands of the vassals (Ziębice, Oleśnica, Cieszyn, Opava and Karniów), free states (Freistandesherrschaft), i.e. territorial units with political and economic properties of principalities. The difference was de facto in the different name, which resulted from the fact that they were created in the first years of the Renaissance, at a time of opposition of the princes of the time to grant the title to new men. Therefore, the idea of a free state lord (FreierStandesherr) was invented. As many as six huge territorial organisms can be mentioned in this vein: the states of Pszczyna, Milicz, Żmigród, Bytom Górnśląski, Bytom Odrzański, Syców. Another type of great latifundia, which was to guarantee the stabilization and the following of the policy of the emperors by giving them to the most trusted aristocrats, were the so-called smaller states (Minderherrschaften, status minores). The fourth form were the so-called fideikommissy, or private estates, which could not be divided by the owners without the consent of the emperor. In the case of the expiration of a given family, they were simply taken over by the state, and then handed over for particularly high sums to the emperor's officials or military men. In addition, many of them were combined within the system of supra-national land property, which bound Silesia to other provinces of the state.

The princely domains were of course the largest of the territories. The largest domains belonged to the princes of Liechtenstein. Apart from Opawy and Karnia, they also owned estates in Lower Austria – the duchy (since 1719) of Liechtenstein (Vaduz and Schellenberg), Valtice (Feldsberg), Lednice (Eisgrub), Maria (Enzersdorf), Wilfersdorf and in Moravia – Plumlov, Nikolsburg, Šternberk, Velké Losiny. They owned the palace in Prague and a summer residence in Vienna. In Styria, they possessed the medieval Waldstein castle.

On the other hand, the Auerspergs, Ziębice princes, in 1663, obtained the confirmation of ownership of the Tengen County in Baden (not to mention the Slovenian possessions belonging to the other lines of the family), and the Wirtembergs of Olesnica were the rulers of Sternberg in Moravia (Henel v. Hennefeld 2004, p. 64- 86). The Lobkowitz family possessed Neustadt, in 1641 elevated to the rank of a county, Sternstein in Austria, and extensive Czech property with the center in Raudnitz (Kinderfreund 1860, pp. 18-19). This combination of

distant estates was not only done by princes. It should be noted that even the barons von Canon und Rupp, who did not play a major role in public life in Silesia, owned estates in Mailmaison in Lorraine along with their Silesian property, and the Upper Silesian counts von Solms held Sonnenwalde on the border between Saxony and Brandenburg. Interestingly, there were cases when, as in the Duchy of Głogów, almost all of the counts living there in the 18th century, had their main possessions outside its borders (Horn Melton, pp. 121; Strzyżewski, p. 88; NAP, ČDK, 752, reference IV D 1, LHS 421, 487).

Indirectly, economic and political rights resulted in a new social division. It was introduced in a manner just as statist as the new tax, new ideology, and the new administration. The Renewed Land Order (Verneuerte Landesordnung) from 1627-28 established that the division of the higher and lower nobility according to certain rank will be introduced. It was a document sanctioning the appropriate „uniformization” of the privileged social groups to the all-German fashion. The same formula was applied to the Silesian aristocracy, and all titles were raised by the same officials as the raises in other parts of the country. *Herrenstand*, or the upper layer, which was in fact the guarantor of the imperial policy, included primarily the higher princes (Herzog, Herzogin), lower princes (Fürst, Fürstin), counts of the Reich (Reichsgrafen, Reichsgräfin) – in Silesia, the formula that existed since the Middle Ages also remained in the form of the prince-bishops (Fürstbischof) of Nysa-Wrocław - followed by the Czech counts (böhmische Grafen, Gräfin), barons of the Reich (Reichsfreiherrn, Reichsfreyfrau, Freyin), Czech barons (böhmische Freiherrn, Freyfrau, Freyin). In the case of counts and barons, the „old and new” formula was also created. The appropriate constitution precisely defining the rules of admission to both groups was issued in 1629. Essentially, the *Herrenstand* group consisted of social groups known as „states”: Fürstenstand, Grafenstand, Freiherrnstand, and thus dukes, counts of barons (Kuczer, p. 35). When granting titles, the state treasury would fill up due to the high fees. Obtaining the status of a baron, count or prince went in hand with a one-off payment of an initial price, being the equivalent of an estate of at least a few villages. However, estates raised to the status of the barony, county or duchy were covered by the highest tax levies.

### **Final remarks**

The establishment and then the consolidation of this structure during the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries represented the victory of statist thought in Silesia and the final implementation of the works of Nostitz and Weller, and of many German theoreticians of

state of the 16th-17th centuries, some of whom were from Silesia anyway. The takeover of Silesia in 1740 by the Kingdom of Prussia strengthened only the ethos of the state and the laws created by it, and the socio-political structures developed by the Habsburgs became the basis of the highly centralized Hohenzollern system, which would go on to create the model of enlightened absolutism. All the elements discussed in the article and implemented by the Habsburgs constituted, almost point by point, developed theses of the authors of the Silesian statist program. In the writings of Nostitz and Weller, one can find many references as well as understanding for the specifics of functioning of all the sixteen principalities, as well as for the uniqueness of social structure, especially with regard to the local elites. Naturally, the source for such reasoning was the French statism already developed in Western Europe, but its implementation in Silesia shows significant specificity, and even autonomy. For the Habsburgs, the basic goal was to subjugate the province, but at the core of this action was the desire to fully exploit the fiscal potential of this district. If in the 16th century these activities were partly doomed to fail, the adoption of French patterns in the 17th century accelerated the process. It was naturally imposed by force, for which there was previously no excuse. With the outbreak of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and insubordination of the Silesian states, the crown reached for its final and, as it turned out, most effective tool, which was eliminating the aristocracy through accusations of felonies and condemning them to real and often irreversible banishment, including the loss of great land estates. With full conviction, one should therefore speak of Silesian statism as a separate way to realize the assumptions of this doctrine in general, regardless of the fact that its impact is often treated on a micro scale. It should be added that it was the proximity of these lands to the Polish Crown, frequent contacts and the characteristic, so to speak, brutality of the local absolutism that caused the Polish gentry's reluctance to the possible introduction of the so-called rule of *absolutum dominium*. The economic dimension of the statism of Silesia, discussed in this article, was characterized above all by the resignation from the creation of royal property enclaves. This element of the royal economy could not be rebuilt after a few hundred years of distribution of the king's land. The construction and development of any production activity that would be subject to the king also was not undertaken. Manufactories were not set up here, and the only attempt to establish a salt factory here in Nowa Sól in Lower Silesia quickly failed. The king therefore relied on two elements. The first was the categorical maximization of profitability resulting from the supervision over the amendment of the tax law. They were based on an indicative tax on the size of a noble estate (an individual role was played by taxes paid by

Wrocław townsmen which, on a general Silesian scale, were not sums that would stand out due to their size). The second element of the royal economy was the use of royal regalia, mainly from customs, toll, coin and mining regalia, along with gold and silver mining. All this evidences the existence of a separate road to the construction of statism. It shows a whole range of differences, while maintaining the basic principle of building a „state for the ruler”. At the same time, the Silesian politics of the Habsburgs became part of the first wave of development of the doctrine of statism in Europe, which was the construction of absolutism. It should be noted that the development of statist Prussian thought in the 18th century and the brutal statism of the 20th century – with all proportions – was modeled on the achievements of the 17th century. Both forms of statism eventually succumbed to the revival of democratic ideas, widely discussed already on the eve of the development of centralist concepts both in France and in German culturally areas, ie the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and in most of the hereditary countries of the Habsburg dynasty.

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