

Anna Radziejewska

The Silesian Central Evangelical Archive in Wrocław (1934–1945) as an implementation of the idea of a historical archive

Summary

The dissertation analyses the functioning of the Silesian Central Evangelical Archives in Wrocław (1934–1945) in the context of the development of the idea of historical archives, with particular emphasis on confessional archives and its practical implementation in a totalitarian state.

The aim of the research was to show the extent to which the Silesian Central Evangelical Archive was a continuation and development of modern archival concepts formed in the 19th and early 20th centuries and how it contributed to the implementation of the overarching mission of confessional archives, which was the transmission of faith, and to what extent its activities were determined by the political and ideological realities of the Third Reich.

The dissertation consists of four chapters. The first chapter presents the origins and development of historical archives, with particular emphasis on their function in Christian churches and Jewish religious communities. The second chapter discusses the organisation of the Evangelical Church in Germany in the years 1918–1945, the history of the Silesian Church Province, and the legal and organisational basis for the functioning of Evangelical archives in Germany in the first half of the 20th century. The third chapter is devoted to the establishment, organisation and activities of the Silesian Central Evangelical Archive, including its functioning during the Second World War and its history after 1945. The fourth chapter analyses the functions of the archive in relation to its resources, i.e. the collection, storage and processing of archival materials and their accessibility, including the activities of the registry departments. In addition, attention is drawn to the scientific and popularisation use of the archive's resources through the activities of the J. Hess Institute.

The research primarily employed classical methods of establishing historical facts (inductive and deductive), while also taking into account the achievements of practical methodology. The work is based on extensive archival research carried out in Poland and Germany and an analysis of German normative acts.

The research conducted allows to conclude that the Silesian Central Evangelical Archive is an example of the implementation of the idea of a historical archive as a central, scientific

institution serving to preserve heritage. At the same time, its functioning in the years 1934–1945 reveals the ambivalent nature of archives as institutions entangled in the political realities of their time, which makes the analysed case particularly important for research on the history of archival science and the role of memory institutions in the 20th century.