

## Summary

The subject discussed in the dissertation is the figure of Heinrich Felix Schmid, a historian of Eastern Europe, medievalist and slavacist, who was born and educated in Germany and academically worked in the interwar years and the years after World War II in Austria. The thread of this scholar's biography, interesting here, is his involvement in the Polish-German dialogue of historians, his activity to bury the divisions between the two communities of scholars and to build a space for supranational cooperation. The basic assumption is that work for the Polish-German dialogue in historiography (which is something exceptional compared to the attitudes of most contemporaries) is one of the most important motives in Schmid's life as a scholar, and that it is a field in which this historian exerted a certain influence. In order to properly examine the role and activity of H. F. Schmid in the area of dialogue with Polish historians, several different detailed issues have been taken into account. These are the numerous contacts maintained by Schmid with Polish historians, in the form of correspondence and direct contacts, their content and subject. No less important seems to be what Schmid wrote in his publications, which could have contributed to stimulating in the community of German historians interest and the need for dialogue with Polish historiography, deepening the knowledge of the achievements of Polish historians or even establishing scientific cooperation with them. It was also necessary to try to answer, at least to some extent, the question of whether and how H. F. Schmid's involvement could have influenced the change in attitudes of German historians towards the achievements of Polish historians.

The first chapter outlines the biography and academic achievement of H. F. Schmid, indicating the place of the dialogue with Polish historiography in this broader context. These considerations are based primarily on the existing literature on H. F. Schmid, his own autobiography and posthumous memoirs about him written by other historians. The second chapter discusses in more detail the manner in

which Schmid's involvement in the dialogue with Polish historiography was manifested. Due to the distinct specificity of the two periods in which Schmid's activity took place – the interwar period and the period immediately after the World War II – and the fact that he was much more active in this field in the interwar years, it was necessary to discuss each of them separately. At the same time, it was justified to distinguish two basic problems within each of the periods. The first was Schmid's contacts with Polish historians, which can be attempted to be reconstructed primarily on the basis of the preserved correspondence. The second key issue is the way in which the dialogue with Polish historiography was manifested in the publications of H. F. Schmid. The third chapter is then an attempt to consider the place of Schmid's described engagement within German historiography. Starting from the general depiction, showing the reactions of various German scholars to Schmid's works, which were relevant to the issue of his dialogue with Polish historiography, the extremely important problem of Schmid's relationship with the German "Ostforschung" - a strongly politicized research discipline that developed in the interwar years and focused largely on the history of Poland - is then considered closely. The next part of the chapter shortly outlines the picture of Schmid's relationship with the community of scholars connected with "Ostforschung" in the changed conditions after World War II. Then it attempts above all to answer the question of whether and what influence Schmid's activities could have had on the German historiography of the East Central Europe in his time, and whether they were followed by other scholars, also later.

The main results of the conducted research seem to confirm the thesis about the great significance of H. F. Schmid's activities for the Polish-German dialogue of historians. The analysis of his correspondence with Polish historians and those publications in which he referred to Polish history and historiography allows us to state that in his time he was one of the most strongly involved historians from the German-speaking area in the Polish-German dialogue. In the interwar

years, Schmid advocated closer cooperation between both academic circles, primarily in order to study more thoroughly the issues of medieval settlement movements in the East Central and Eastern Europe (German colonization and the spreading of German law) and to develop research on the significance of the Slavic past of the eastern lands of Germany. In the years after World War II, Schmid focused primarily on activities within the international organization of historians. This was aimed at crossing the political barriers resulting from the Cold War division of the world into two blocs, and at restoring researchers from Poland and other Eastern Bloc countries to the „ecumene of historians”. The most important part of Schmid’s activity within the Polish-German dialogue in both discussed periods was his work to popularize knowledge of the achievements of Polish historical research in the German-speaking area. In the interwar years, this work was developed in a very extensive form and in direct connection with the research conducted by Schmid, which focused on the medieval legal history in the West Slavic areas. Schmid highly valued the achievements of historical research in Poland and considered it to be in no way inferior to German research. While pointing out the significant value of many achievements of Polish historiography, he was not completely uncritical. Also in the years after World War II, although already in a much limited form, he tried to continue these activities and felt a connection with the Polish community of historians and followed its activities.

In relation to the German scholars’ community, Schmid tried in the interwar years in various ways to push through his postulates, related to the need for greater openness to dialogue with historians from Poland and other Slavic countries. He sought ways to shape research on the culture and history of Slavs in eastern Germany and the entire East Central and Eastern Europe in a completely alternative way to the “Ostforschung” that was emerging at the time as a discipline, which was characterized by a hostile attitude towards Slavic nations. However, Schmid’s relations with “Ostforschung” did not consist in a definitive turning away from this community of researchers. In the interwar years,

he tried to cooperate as much as possible with its representatives and institutions representing this politicized direction of research, clearly trying to influence the way of its development. These attempts ended in failure. After World War II, Schmid did not decide to sharply criticize the most politicized circle of researchers, but in some of his texts he pointed to the existence of dark sides of the research direction that had dominated until then. From the very beginning, Schmid was linked to the “Ostforschung” by his considerable interest in the issue of medieval colonization. However, already in the interwar years, he moved away from the understanding of this phenomenon as a “great deed of the German nation in the Middle Ages,” which was characteristic of the entire German historiography of the time, towards viewing it as one of the manifestations of a much broader process of transferring phenomena of Western culture ever further to the East. His point of view was close in its general assumptions to the views developed by Polish scholars, and it became noticeably widespread in German historiography after World War II.

In light of the considerations presented so far, it seems reasonable to speak of the influence of Schmid’s activity on the Polish-German dialogue of historians. There are examples indicating that Schmid’s work to popularize knowledge of the results of Polish historiographical research within German community of historians was noticed already in the interwar years by representatives of „deutsche Ostforschung” and could have been one of the important elements of the process of familiarizing this environment with the achievements of Polish historians. Schmid’s activity clearly inspired German historians after World War II, such as Herbert Ludat and Wolfgang H. Fritze. Thus, Schmid’s work for the sake of historiographic dialogue, although very difficult and unable to bring tangible results during his lifetime, became one of the important foundations for later understanding between researchers from Poland and Germany.