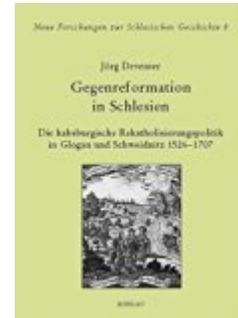


Jörg Deventer. *Gegenreformation in Schlesien: Die habsburgische Rekatholisierungspolitik in Glogau und Schweidnitz 1526-1707*. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2003. X + 433 pp. EUR 44.90, cloth, ISBN 978-3-412-06702-1.



Reviewed by Joseph F. Patrouch

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Limiting Confessionalization: Two Cities  
Weather Revolt and War

Jörg Deventer submitted this work as his *Habilitationsschrift* at the University of Hamburg in the winter of 2000-2001. It is based on research in Polish, German, Austrian, and Czech archives, and the author mentions his research stay of more than a year in Wrocław in 1996-1997 as particularly noteworthy. The book reflects the potential use of the newly-accessible archives of Poland, to more fully integrate the one-time Habsburg lands now within that country's borders, into the general (western) images of the Habsburgs' early-modern, central European possessions. The project was tied to the undertakings of Hamburg professor Arno Herzig, who has published on topics tied to "recatholicization" and Silesian history. Deventer's research was funded by the *Volkswagen-Stiftung* as part of the project "Die Rekatholisierungspolitik Habsburgs. Voraussetzungen, Mechanismen und Auswirkungen am Beispiel Schlesien und der Grafschaft Glatz." In addition, a number of other German institutions financially supported the volume under review.

Norbert Conrad of the Historical Institute of the University of Stuttgart chose to include this publication in the series he edits, *Neue Forschungen zur Schlesischen Geschichte*.

Deventer's work can be seen as tied to studies of Habsburg rule, studies of the impact of the Peace of Westphalia and religious toleration, and studies relating to the famous "confessionalization" thesis concerning the (Christian) religious changes in Central Europe during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and these changes' relationships with political and social organization. Deventer's case studies of the cities of Swidnica and Glogow and their histories in this period may be of particular interest due to the roles of the famous Baroque authors Andreas Gryphius (1616-1664) and Daniel Czepko (1605-1660) in them. Deventer dedicates two rather long sections near the end of the work to these two men.

The work discusses in detail Glogow/Hlohov/Glogau and Swidnica/Schweidnitz, cities which were among the most important in the Bohemian land of Silesia in the period under consideration. Both were also the capitals of principalities. The

cities became famous following the Thirty Years War because of the Westphalian Peace's explicit permission to erect Lutheran churches outside of their walls, even though the cities were located within the lands which their Habsburg rulers regarded as hereditary, as part of the territories associated with the Crown of St. Vaclav. (Eighteenth-century images of these two churches can be found in the front- and endpapers of this volume. For the relevant treaty passages, see Article V, chapter 40 of the *Instrumentum Pacis Osnabrugense*.) As Deventer points out, "war Schlesien schließlich das einzige der habsburgischen Gebiete, das in mehreren Paragraphen in dem am 24. Oktober 1648 in Münster unterzeichneten Westfälischen Friedensvertrag aufgenommen wurde und wo der Protestantismus wenigstens teilweise eine reichsrechtlich verankerte Privilegierung erhielt" (p. 250). In addition, Sweden also received the right to peacefully intervene on behalf of the Silesian Protestants.[1] The most important city was the area's capital and episcopal seat, Wroclaw/Vratislav/Breslau. While Silesia had over 170 cities around 1700, none of them was a Free Imperial City, so the relationship between the cities and the Habsburgs was substantially different than the well-studied relationships between the emperors and the Imperial Free Cities of the Empire.

Deventer uses the case studies of the two cities and their associated principalities in order to review some of the limits of the famous (and constraining) "confessionalization thesis" which has so captured the imaginations of historians of the religious landscape of the Holy Roman Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This thesis is most often attributed to the German historians Ernest Walter Zeeden, Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling, and Deventer duly references their works twenty times in his outstanding bibliography. Baldly stated, the thesis says that the various Christian reform movements in the Empire have to be seen in the light of attempts to organize rule within the framework of that set of insti-

tutions. Deventer makes a clear distinction between the earlier themes presented by Zeeden and the later ones advanced by Reinhard and Schilling, pointing to the latter two's consistent appeals to social science methods and modernization theory in a footnote on page 5 of his introduction.[2]

While "confessionalization" was to reinforce centralizing tendencies among local bureaucrats, the explicit recognition of the limits of the Habsburgs' abilities to enforce their Roman Catholic religious conceptions on the people of these two cities in the seventeenth century also points to the borders of the concept and limits its utility in reference to the complex political unit, Silesia.

Deventer's organization is straightforward: He divides the body of his book into four substantive chapters. Chapter 2 provides background, chapter 3 covers the period 1580-1620, Chapter 4 centers on the Thirty Years War and its affects on the two cities in question, and chapter 5 goes over the post-1648 situation. In addition to the archival evidence found in the various countries outlined above, Deventer employed a large amount of printed sources from the period analyzed and later. Many of these came from the eighteenth century.

Both Glogow and Swidnica were founded in the thirteenth century. In the following years, the political situation in the area became increasingly complex. The devolution of powers led to the development of approximately seventeen duchies by the time Silesia became associated with the Crown of St. Vaclav in the fourteenth century. With the added complications of the Hussite interlude and the intervention of the Hungarian king Mathias I "Corvinus" in the fifteenth century, the political order appears to have become almost impossible to describe given the modern vocabularies of centralized power and order. Both Glogow and Swidnica developed as capitals of modest territories, territories where the rulers had specific relations with the ruling house of Bohemia. With-

in these territories, the two cities enjoyed particular roles, and their city councils administered holdings extending well beyond the cities' walls. The cities' councils would be faced with challenges from at least two fronts: the royal challenges of the Habsburgs in Prague after the Iberian-trained King of Bohemia, Ferdinand, received St.Vaclav's crown in the early sixteenth century, and the local noble challenges neatly presented by the Silesian nobility.

Deventer portrays the differing experiences of the two cities in question after the advent of Lutheran ideas and policies in the area. While Glogow was contested and the site of bitter conflicts, Swidnica seems to have been characterized by a much greater degree of consensus. The cities' geographic locations also substantially affected their histories and the policies of their Habsburg rulers towards them: while Swidnica was located close to the Bohemian heartland and near the Silesian capital of Wroclaw, Glogow sat on the important River Oder and its territories bordered both the Kingdom of Poland and the Electorate of Brandenburg. This point is mentioned by Deventer, but his approach centers more on an analysis of the two cities' populations and specific experiences than on the larger geo-political or military situations.

The work's general organization, traveling back and forth between the two cities, can at times be confusing, as periods and developments previously mentioned in reference to one have to be repeated in reference to the other. It is hard to imagine in such a comparative study how things could have been arranged differently, however, especially given the different historical experiences of the two cities and their populations. Deventer points out, too, that the evidentiary basis for Swidnica is better than that for Glogow. This means that certain specifics which were able to be analyzed in the former could not be analyzed in the latter (such as a rather detailed prosopographical analysis of the male political leadership cir-

cles in Swidnica which Deventer undertakes on pp. 77-86).

The title of chapter 3 ("Schweidnitz in Ruhe--Glogau in Aufruhr") gives a good impression of the situation often in the two cities. The more radical orientation of Protestant leaders in Glogow led to more radical reactions on the part of the Habsburg authorities, and the quartering of dragoons on the population there was only one of the many weapons available during the war to encourage religious conformity. It must be pointed out, too, that the destruction from the war, the repeated capture of Glogow by various forces, and the general economic dislocation which characterized particularly the period 1632-1648 (which Deventer calls "Die Stagnationsphase" p. 212) made survival perhaps as great a priority as religious homogeneity. (Deventer quotes one report to Emperor Ferdinand III dated 3 Sept. 1637 that states that while the city had 2,500 burghers at one time, now it had only 122: pp. 216-217).

The two "Peace Churches" mentioned above, where Lutherans were legally permitted to worship, were built in the 1650's. Their presence, however, did not mean that the Habsburg rulers desisted from attempts to limit Protestant practice elsewhere in their Silesian lands. One of Deventer's contributions to the scholarship on the confessional conflicts in the Habsburg territories is his discussion of developments after the Westphalian peace. He chose to continue his narrative up until 1707, when Emperor Joseph I extended further rights to religious practice to Silesian subjects as, Deventer explains, part of wider policies tied to foreign relations and international affairs at the time, effectively ending the Counter-Reformation in the area whose beginnings he had dated from around 1580.

While the work under review is a valuable contribution to the study of the political, religious and social histories of these two cities, and it fits in well with other recent attempts to study the Habsburgs' relations with often-forgotten parts of

their early modern holdings (such as the Lusatias or Swabia, to name two recent examples), there are also many specific questions and points which such a sweeping study could not sufficiently analyze and which may deserve future study. One area, for example, which seems very open to further research is the specific experiences of the Protestant and Catholic women in the cities. Deventer points out that in Glogow and a row of other Silesian cities in 1628 a Counter-Reformation statute dealing with religion dedicated an entire article to how to deal with women who refused to make a public confession of faith, and the specific issues relating to married versus widowed women in this connection. The political role of women in Swidnica in 1642 is also touched upon, as is the extremely important role of the house of Poor Clares in Wroclaw, whose abbess had substantial rights of patronage over such things as the appointment of the parish priest in Swidnica. (See pp. 66-67 where the abbess in 1531 recommended the appointment of the controversial preacher to the widowed Queen Mary of Hungary, Johannes Henkel.) In general, it seems that in the areas studied, the female houses such as the Poor Clares' in Glogow survived well late into the sixteenth century, in contrast to the fates of the male houses of religious.

While the lack of attention to issues associated with female rule and influence is significant, it should not be seen as a fatal flaw in the argumentation and presentation of the work under review: the clear evidence of substantial, focused research on an often-overlooked topic reveals Jorg Deventer's contribution to the field of early modern Habsburg studies. The more the varieties of rule and ruled are studied, the more nuanced the images of central Europeans' lives under this dynasty become.

#### Notes

[1]. In order to place these two cities and situate them and their territories within the Bohemian kingdom, a map may have been useful. For ref-

erence, it is recommended that the one appended by Joachim Bahlcke in his *Regionalismus und Staatsintegration im Widerstreit: Die Länder der Böhmisches Krone im ersten Jahrhundert der Habsburgerherrschaft (1526-1619)* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1994) be used.

[2]. The literature on this thesis and its development is voluminous. For English language discussions, see: John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000) pp. 108-114. Here, O'Malley points to the idea's connections to the concept "social disciplining," connections developed back in the late 1980's by R. Po-Chia Hsia. See Hsia's *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750* (New York: Routledge, 1989) with chapters such as "The confessional state", "Cities and confessionalization", "Culture and confessionalization", and "Confessionalization and the people". See also Wolfgang Reinhard, "Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State: A Reassessment," *Catholic Historical Review* 75 (1989) pp. 383-405, republished in David M. Luebke, ed., *The Counter-Reformation: The Essential Readings* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1999) pp. 105-128.

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