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Peter Eschenloer. *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau.* nster and New York: Waxmann, 2003. 1120 pp. EUR 69.90 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-8309-1253-8.

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Published on H-German (January, 2005)

This is an excellent and welcome critical edition of one of the most important late medieval chronicles in central Europe. Written by Peter Eschenloer (d. 1481)–who studied at Leipzig and Erfurt and was a teacher and later rector at the city school in GÃ¶rlitz, before a long career as the city scribe in Breslau beginning in 1455–the chronicle draws from a variety of sources and offers a wealth of material for scholars concerned with late medieval politics, religion, and historical writing.

The edition includes a very helpful bibliography, list of chapter titles, and thorough indexes and several chronologies for events reported in the chronicle, as well as for Silesia and Breslau more generally (a brief narrative overview of the historical period would be helpful for those less familiar with Bohemian history but interested in examining the chronicle). In addition to important discussion of the various editions of the chronicle, the editor, Gunhild Roth, provides background information about Eschenloer, his family, and his work in and beyond Breslau. Roth also provides a very interesting discussion regarding the differences of the Latin (*Historia Wratislaviensis*) and the German (*Geschichte der Stadt Breslau*) versions of the chronicle, noting that while Eschenloer incorporated various city correspondence, he also broadened and altered the narrative part in the German version, inserting his own position much more strongly. As Roth notes, Eschenloer did not simply report events; he also interpreted and commented upon them as an active witness, and he crafted the chronicle to have meaning for what he saw as the future of Breslau and its inhabitants. Eschenloer, Roth concludes, was clearly partisan but also pragmatic. Early parts of the chronicle rely on other sources, especially the *Historia Bohemica* of Aenea Silvio Piccolomini. Throughout, however, Eschenloer offers a host of indirect quotes and copies of decrees and correspondence between a wide range of secular and ecclesiastical rulers and authorities.

Most late medieval chronicles were territorial in nature, and Eschenloer's chronicle draws a wide circle around the history of Breslau, while discussing events throughout Silesia, Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, and the Balkans, and adding a great deal of detail about papal politics and the Turkish threat in the fifteenth century. Indeed, Eschenloer notes early on that the focus of the chronicle will be on the honor of the Holy Roman Empire and the kingdom of Bohemia and the opposition to heresy, and that it will serve both as memory and exemplum for future generations.

A strong dualism runs through the chronicle–separating Christians and heretics, and spiritual and worldly; these elements are, nonetheless, closely related throughout the narrative. A large portion of the chron-

icle focuses on the events after the election of George of Podebrady as king of Bohemia. Although he can be critical of Breslau, for Eschenloer Breslau is at the vanguard of just opposition to George and the heretics, and he clearly respects the role of public civic identity. He notes that it was an evil sign that George (Girsik) did not take his oath publicly, but rather behind closed doors. The oath was, Eschenloer contends, of falsehood and evil heart so that nothing followed but trouble. As was typical of most late medieval chronicles, Eschenloer's includes intriguing details regarding natural and supernatural occurrences. The chronicle is at times infused with the signs of the divine. When trying to understand why the Turks have been delivered at the European doorstep, for example, Eschenloer notes that God leads all events for the best. Portents such as cruel winds, mild winters, excessive flooding, comets, and other formations in the heavens also all had real impact on the events as retold and understood by Eschenloer.

In the end, this is a chronicle that will be of great interest to anyone working on historical writing as well as anyone interested in the complicated political and religious landscape of the later Middle Ages. Roth has done momentous work and a tremendous service by making this critical edition available and so accessible.

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Citation: Dean Phillip Bell. Review of Eschenloer, Peter, *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau.* H-German, H-Net Reviews. January, 2005.

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