"Gothic Sculpture...", Kalamazoo, 2-5 May 2002

Achim Timmermann

CALL FOR PAPERS
"Gothic Sculpture of the Holy Roman Empire in Its Architectural Setting (ca. 1200- ca. 1400): Recent Contextual Approaches"
37th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, 2-5 May 2002
Special Session organized by Jacqueline E. Jung (New York) and Achim Timmermann (Berlin, Los Angeles)

The abundance, diversity, and often very high quality of Gothic sculpture produced in countries comprising the medieval Holy Roman Empire (including most of modern Germany, the Burgundian Netherlands, western Poland, Silesia, Bohemia, and northern Italy) make this field a particularly rich and important source for understanding the visual, religious, and social culture of the Middle Ages. But all too often it falls out of the purview of medieval studies, as European presentations of the monuments tend to stay confined to archaeological or stylistic analysis while American scholars, more inclined toward integrative approaches, are often unaware of the lesser-known monuments.
This session will bring together scholars from Europe and America who work on the sculpture produced between ca. 1200 (the beginning of the Gothic style in central Europe) and ca. 1400 (the death of Peter Parler), asking them to discuss the ways figural works function visually, socially, politically, liturgically, etc. within their given architectural frames. In so doing, we hope to broaden both the canon of Gothic sculpture traditionally accessible to American scholars*), and the range of approaches typically employed by their European colleagues.

Because we are interested as much in the space a sculpture creates as the technical details of the sculpture itself, we hope to draw together three-dimensional figural objects usually assigned to discrete categories. Thus potential papers might deal with fixed works of architectural sculpture (e.g., portals or buttress figures) and funerary sculpture; sculpture animating liturgical furnishings (e.g., altarpieces, choir stalls and screens, and sacrament houses); moveable objects (e.g., reliquaries and cult statues); or public monuments featuring figural programs (e.g., fountains, boundary markers

and wayside crosses). We believe that these sessions will stimulate a long-overdue dialogue between American and European art historians, while offering an important supplement to an understanding of Gothic sculpture and its
uses gained from concentration on the monuments of northern France.

*) 13 of the 18 papers on Gothic sculpture presented at the last Kalamazoo Congress dealt exclusively with French monuments.

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