

## **Mod Gothic? Medieval Architecture in the Modern Ages**

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July and Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021**

### **Paper Abstracts**

#### **'Panofsky on the Gothic Style: New Texts'**

Elizabeth Sears, University of Michigan

In February 1943 Erwin Panofsky submitted a proposal to Princeton University Press for a book titled 'The Gothic Style'. It was to be based on three lectures - the Page-Barbour Lectures - that he had delivered at the University of Virginia in May 1942. The one-page proposal, preserved in the archives of the Press, was my own starting point for a venture that is now leading to the publication of texts unknown to the field, housed in the Leo Baeck Institute in New York: the three lectures, handwritten, and over 100 pages of the book, typed. The incomplete project - rooted in earlier work but very much a product of his American phase - throws fresh light on the classic studies that Panofsky did complete in the following decade: *Abbot Suger, Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, and *Early Netherlandish Painting*.

#### **Christine de Pizan, Pevsner and Panofsky**

Paul Binski, University of Cambridge

Chapter 11 of Christine de Pizan's *Le Livre des Fais et Bonnes Moeurs du Sage Roy Charles V* (1404) is an account of Charles's virtue and wisdom as an 'artist' possessed of knowledge of the Liberal Arts. Her account is strongly Thomist in its understanding of the 'regiminal' nature of the arts, i.e. that patrons and artists are causally speaking 'rulers' in their domain. This paper will reflect on the strongly aristotelianized character of Christine's thinking in relation to medieval thought about *ars* and *scientia* and will also follow the fortunes of these ideas in the writings of Pevsner and Panofsky.

#### **Two Sugers: Kidson, Crossley and Saint-Denis**

Alexandra Gajewski

Sharply analytical and unflinchingly critical in exposing ideological flights of fancy, Peter Kidson and Paul Crossley both rejected Erwin Panofsky's influential portrayal of Suger as a naïve and covetous abbot who, in order to justify his love of bling, became a student of Pseudo-Dionysian light metaphysics, in a league with Roger Bacon and Pico della Mirandola. In his magisterial essay from 1987, Kidson dryly commented that 'if it may be said of a great scholar, [this] is just silly'. For Kidson, Suger was an orthodox churchman, not an intellectual. Crossley discussed Suger in a 2009 essay that challenged the notion of 'the integrated cathedral'; Kidson's article was approvingly mentioned. However, in the concluding paragraphs Crossley examined a different aspect of the multi-faceted Suger, that of a choreographer of cult and liturgy, animated not just by aesthetics as Panofsky had argued, but by deep devotion and knowledge of Christian exegesis. Although these differing interpretations may to some extent express the individual concerns of the two

scholars, they are also a reflection of the twenty years of scholarship that lie between these essays. This paper will trace the changing perceptions of the great abbot, suggesting that if each generation creates its own cathedral, it also creates its own Suger.

### **Royal images in Strasbourg Cathedral's Gothic nave: their conceptual transformations and place in historiography**

Peter Kurmann and Brigitte Kurmann-Schwarz

Prior to 1945, assessment of the stained-glass windows in Strasbourg Cathedral and the royal images in the northern aisle of its nave varied greatly. At first, the stained glass was mainly the subject of local research; from 1870 onwards, Alsace's territorial affiliation with France or the German Empire influenced interpretations of the glass. Only after World War II, and especially after the founding of the *Corpus Vitrearum* in 1952, an approach appropriate to medieval glass began to prevail. This shift of perspective concerns the windows' dating, their authenticity, their place in architecture and art history more broadly, and finally, interpretation of their contents.

### **The Study of Medieval Architectural Proportions in the Twentieth Century**

Eric Fernie, The Courtauld

The paper examines and disagrees with some claims that have been made about proportions in medieval architecture. They fall into two categories, the first concerning the history of the subject. These are that units of measure were not used, that irrational proportions were not used in the second half of the first millennium, and that they did not use plans before the thirteenth century. The second category concerns two methods which have been employed, namely drawing lines on plans and the introduction of computing. A concluding section presents aspects of Peter Kidson's work on the history of units of length.

### **Peter Kidson's Book, *From Greek Temples to Gothic Cathedrals: Studies of Architectural Design in Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages.***

Sarah Pearson, independent

PK, as Peter Kidson was known to most of his colleague and students, wrote his Ph D on 'Systems of Measurement and Proportion used in Early Medieval Architecture'. Throughout his life he continued to develop and refine the topic, publishing only one or two papers on the subject. The delay in publication was caused by the need to take the study back in time to the roots of the systems used by medieval architects and masons. The book was nearly, but not completely, finished when he died in 2019. It should, however, be available in some format before too long.

### **Bohemian Gothic**

Zoë Opačić and Klára Benešová

Abstract to follow

## **Paul Crossley's fascinations: Gothic in Lesser Poland**

Tomasz Węclawowicz

Paul Crossley arrived in Krakow in 1969 to prepare a monograph on Krakow cathedral. The cathedral was in fact relatively easy to interpret in terms of iconography for it was the Koenigskirche, the coronation church and royal necropolis. Paul, however, was mostly fascinated by smaller two-nave churches, with their complex vault designs, elegant proportions and fine stonework. Like the cathedral, these churches have undergone a certain amount of 'purist' restoration that has made their structure clearer, one reason, perhaps, for Paul's fascination with their style, proportions and details. This paper explores Paul's many years of research on Krakow and the how he inspired new generations of Polish scholars.

## **Photography and the Architectural Historian: a perspective from the Conway Library**

Lindy Grant, University of Reading & The Courtauld

The Conway Library is one of the most important collections of photographs of buildings and the built environment in the world. It sits alongside national collections, like the Historic England collection at Swindon (which was formed from the Conway), or the Archives of the Monuments Historiques in France. Like other university collections, aimed at the study of art and architecture, notably Photo Marburg in Germany, its range is wider than British Architecture. The aim, to study art and architecture, gives it a different focus and complexion from collections of photography and photographs, such as the National Art Library Photographic Collection at the V and A, or the Royal Photographic Society Collection. This paper will explore the use that historians of architecture and the built environment have made of photography, and the way that that is reflected in the Conway collection - in its inception by Lord Conway, its adoption by the nascent Courtauld Institute, and its development in the post-war period, especially under the leadership of two great medievalists, George Zarnecki and Peter Kidson.

## **Paul on the Road**

Jeffrey Hamburger, Harvard University

The talk, very informal in nature, will look back on excursions undertaken as collaborations between the Department of the History of Art & Architecture, Harvard University, and the Courtauld Institute, both as a way of underscoring the value of such undertakings but, still more, as a way of recalling what made Paul Crossley such an effective and memorable teacher.

## **Historiographical Reflections**

Stephen Murray, University of Columbia

Asked to present an overview of the twentieth-century historiography of French Gothic, I defer to Paul Crossley's magnificent introduction to Paul Frankl's *Gothic Architecture* (2000), and indulge here in some reflections about my own engagement in art historical scholarly exchange during half a century in the discipline. How did the methods and conclusions of the great synthesizing works of the mid-century (von Simson, Panofsky,

Frankl, Bony, Jantzen, Branner etc) hold up in subsequent decades, and how useful were they for the young scholar embarking on the investigation of "Gothic"? And what next?