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Blogging the Medieval Revolution?

By Sarah Blick

Blogs (short for “web logs”) are a new phenomenon. At their most basic, blogs are websites that feature a running commentary on whatever interests the “blogger”; thus the majority of blogs are personal diaries that usually only interest the blogger’s friends and family. But the most popular blogs interest hundreds of thousands of people who visit their site each day. These blogs have had a tremendous impact on news, media, and politics. The findings and commentaries of these blogs have raised huge amounts of money for presidential candidates, forced the resignation of news executives, politicians, and helped bring information about major political movements in places like Krygyzstan (<http://www.registan.net/?p=4848>) and Africa (<http://www.blogafrica.org/>) to a wider audience. Bloggers link to articles from newspapers all over the world and some of the bigger blogs even “dispatch” their own correspondents. That is, when they want news and information from say, Kazakhstan, they connect with a Kazak blogger and post photos, commentary, etc. Bloggers now post news from every country in the world, except perhaps, North Korea, which restricts internet access. (<http://www.nkzone.org/nkzone/Blogs>). The “blogosphere” takes to task politicians, the MSM or “mainstream media,” academia, and more. Whatever your political bent you will find blogs that inspire you or infuriate you. Here are links to some of the biggest political blogs in the U.S.:

<http://www.dailykos.com/> (left)

<http://instapundit.com/> (right)

<http://www.liberaloasis.com/> (left)

<http://littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog/> (right)



But blogs go beyond politics. Indeed, with over 24,000 blogs being created every day, you can find a blog on every topic under the sun: medicine, law, education, gardening, recipes, cats (and dogs), history – there’s even a blog on academic copyright! For example:

<http://blogcatalog.com/directory/personal/health/medicine/> (medicine)

<http://techlawadvisor.com/2005/03/belly-up-to-bar-final-edition.html> (law)

<http://educationwonk.blogspot.com/2005/03/carnival-of-education-week-6.html> (education)

<http://www.projo.com/blogs/shenews/gardenblogs.htm> (gardening)

<http://pajamapundits.powerblogs.com/posts/1111756861.shtml> (recipes)

<http://maggiekatzen.blogspot.com/2005/03/carnival-of-cats.html> (cats)

<http://mickey.ondragonswing.com/archives/006277.html#006277> (dogs)
<http://blogenspiel.blogspot.com/2005/03/history-carnival-4.html> (history)
<http://academiccopyright.typepad.com/> (academic copyright)

Reading through some of these blogs (when I ought to have been grading exams or cleaning the house), I began to wonder whether there were blogs on art-historical or medieval, Renaissance, and early modern topics. Naturally, there are. Unfortunately, while lots of medievalists have blogs, many tend to be the “I went to the grocery store” type with some medieval thoughts thrown in. Still, every movement has to start somewhere. Here are some active blogs written by medievalists:

<http://www.artsjournal.com/>
<http://www.blogenspiel.blogspot.com/>
<http://www.digitalmedievalist.com/news/>
<http://www.earlymodernweb.org.uk/emn/>
<http://fishpond.owlfish.com/medievallogs.html>
<http://community.itergateway.org/>
http://www.livejournal.com/userinfo.bml?user=middle_ages
http://www.newyorkcarver.com/blog/2004_12_01_archive.htm
<http://homepage.mac.com/gillgren/iblog/B1104942885/> (Renaissance)

Here are three that roundup and report almost daily on new archaeological and art historical discoveries:

<http://www.cronaca.com/>
<http://www.mirabilis.ca/>
<http://pecia.tooblog.fr>

How will blogs influence the study of medieval art history? With blogs making a big splash in most fields, it is probably only a matter of time before they influence our field as well. Will they play a role in expanding the discourse between scholars or just become fun time-wasters; it's too soon to tell.