



Université de Lausanne ·
Academy of Sciences
of the Czech Republic ·
Masaryk University

BREPOLS  PUBLISHERS

CONVIVIUM

Exchanges and Interactions in the Arts of the Premodern World

Seminarium Kondakovianum, Series Nova

CONVIVIUM XI/1 2024

Exchanges and Interactions
in the Arts of the Premodern World

Seminarium Kondakovianum, Series Nova

*Journal of the Department of Art History of the University of Lausanne,
of the Department of Art History of Masaryk University, and of the Institute
of Art History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic*

Editor-in-chief / Ivan Foletti

Executive editors / Zuzana Frantová, Paulína Horváthová,
Katarína Kravčíková, Janette Rendeková, Seraina Renz,
Zuzana Urbanová, Lenka Vrlíková

Abstracts editor / Johanna Zacharias

Typesetting / Helena Konečná, Kristýna Smrčková

Layout & cover design / Kristýna Smrčková

Publisher / Brepols publishers, Begijnhof 67,

2300 Turnhout & Masarykova univerzita,

Žerotínovo nám. 9, 601 77 Brno, IČO 00216224

Editorial Office / Seminář dějin umění, Filozofická fakulta

Masarykovy univerzity, Arna Nováka 1, 602 00 Brno

Print / Tiskárna Didot, spol s r.o., Trnkova 119, 628 00 Brno

Typeface / Blacker Pro, Blacker Sans Pro (Zetafonts type foundry)

E-mail / convivium@earlymedievalstudies.com

www.earlymedievalstudies.com/convivium.html

© Ústav dějin umění AV ČR, v. v. i. 2024

© Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity 2024

© Faculté des Lettres, Université de Lausanne 2024

Published / May 2024

Reg. No. MK ČR E 21592

ISSN 2336-3452 (print)

ISSN 2336-808X (online)

Convivium is listed in the databases SCOPUS, ERIH,
“Riviste di classe A” indexed by ANVUR, and in the Emerging
Sources Citation Index (ESCI) of the Web of Science.

MUNI Department
of the History of Art
ARTS Centre for Early
Medieval Studies



Unil
UNIL | Université de Lausanne
Faculté des lettres

BREPOLS

Editors — Michele Bacci (Université de Fribourg), Jaś Elsner (University of Oxford), Ivan Foletti (Masaryk University, Brno), Jan Klípa (Institute of Art History, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic), Christina Maranci (Harvard University), Serena Romano (Université de Lausanne), Elisabetta Scirocco (Bibliotheca Hertziana, Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte)

Emeriti — Klára Benešová, Herbert L. Kessler

Editor-in-chief — Ivan Foletti

Associate editors — Nathan Dennis (University of San Francisco), Stefanie Lenk (University of Göttingen), Adrien Palladino (Masaryk University, Brno)

Executive editors — Zuzana Frantová, Paulína Horváthová, Katarína Kravčíková, Janette Rendeková, Seraina Renz, Zuzana Urbanová, Lenka Vrlíková

Abstracts editor — Johanna Zacharias

Advisory board — Xavier Barral i Altet (Université de Rennes, Università di Venezia Ca' Foscari), Nicolas Bock (Université de Lausanne), Valentina Cantone (Università di Padova), Clario Di Fabio (Università di Genova), Finbarr Barry Flood (New York University), Ondřej Jakubec (Masaryk University, Brno), Alexei Lidov (Moscow State University), Assaf Pinkus (Tel Aviv University), Stefano Riccioni (Università di Venezia Ca' Foscari), Erik Thunø (Rutgers University), Alicia Walker (Bryn Mawr College)

THE ARTS
OF MEDIEVAL
NORTHERN
AFRICA
XI/1

edited by
Nathan S. Dennis
& **Ravinder S. Binning**
with the collaboration of
Zuzana Urbanová

TABULA GRATULATORIA

*Members of the Association of Friends of the Centre for
Early Medieval Studies established to support Convivium — 2023*

Eva **Abelová**
Filip **Aistov**
Michele **Bacci**
Cynthia **Bailón Abad**
Antonella **Ballardini**
Michaela **Baraničová**
Lila **Bartáková**
Klára **Benešovská**
Michael **Biasin**
Eden **Bican**
Anna **Boreczky**
Barbara **Bruderer Eichberg**
Anna Mária **Buralová**
Licia **Buttà**
Julie **Caesarová**
Fiammetta **Campagnoli**
Ruben **Campagnoli**
Jill **Caskey**
Vladimír **Cimbalník**
Adam **Cohen**
Giacomo **Confortin**
Martina **Corgnati**
Chiara **Croci**
Kateřina **Cupáková**
Barbora **Čekalová**
Jana **Černocká**
Juraj **Černocký**
Giuseppe **De Spirito**
Francesca **Dell'Acqua**

William **Diebold**
Klára **Doležalová**
Kristýna **Dufková**
Miroslav **Dvořák**
Ivan **Džugan**
Bihter **Esener**
Annika **Fabian**
Ondřej **Faktor**
Jaroslava **Fendrychová**
Gil **Fishhof**
Ivan **Floreš**
Josef **Floreš**
Antonín **Florián**
Andrea Ignazio Maria **Foletti**
Ivan **Foletti**
Karolina **Foletti**
Zuzana **Frantová**
Francesco **Gangemi**
Daria **Ghaloomová**
Manuela **Gianandrea**
Francesca **Girelli**
Irene **Giviashvili**
Gohar **Grigoryan**
Thomas **Guglielmo**
Jiří **Guth**
Jaromír **Háněl**
Ondřej **Hnilica**
Michaela **Holečková**
Aleš **Homola**

Ester **Horáková**
Tobiáš **Horváth**
Lia **Horváthová**
Paulína **Horváthová**
Natalia **Chitishvili**
Katarína **Chitishvili**
Marie **Ivánková**
Adam **Jajcay**
Martin **Jakubčo**
Eva **Jirková**
Kateřina **Jůzlová**
Emilia **Kadlčáková**
Jiří **Kadlec**
Thomas **Kaffenberger**
Markéta **Kampánová**
Martin **Kanuch**
Anna **Kelblová**
Natálie **Kelblová**
Margarita **Khakhanova**
Eva **Klepáčová**
Jana **Kobyláková**
Linda **Komárková**
Anna **Korbášová**
Athanasios **Koukopoulos**
Michaela **Kovářová**
Petr **Koželuh**
Jiří **Kroupa**
Daria **Kruchenko**
Lujza **Lehocká**

Martin F. Lešák
Fabrizio Lollini
Anna Magnago Lampugnani
Barbora Macháčková
Renata Macháčková
Hana Majerová
Adéla Maršálová
Mária Masaryková
Zdenka Matyasková
Jakub Mazanec
Marta Melkesová
Andrej Mentel
Martina Miženková
Pavel Molek
Annalisa Moraschi
Martin Naraschewski
Marie Nevřivová
Lucie Novotná
Marie Okáčová
Joanna Olchawa
Margherita Orsero
John Osborne
Adrien Palladino
Hana Palová
Chiara Paniccia
Adéla Pavlíčková
Kristýna Pavlíčková
Miroslava Pavlíčková
Kristýna Pecinová

Glenn Peers
Alison Perchuk
Milena Peterková
Tomáš Petráček
Renate Pillinger
Klára Plešingrová
Bibiana Pomfyová
Benedetta Puce
Irene Quadri
Kristen Racaniello
Dan David Rafael
Janette Rendeková
Miloš Richter
Lucía Rodríguez Navarro
Rosa Maria Rodríguez Porto
Serena Romano
Marco Rossi
Anna Růžičková
Linda Safran
Sara Salvadori
Nicolas Samaretz
Martin Siegel
Ema Slavíčková
Kristýna Smrčková
Karolína Smýkalová
Elisabeth Sobieczky
Manuela Studer-Karlen
Amálie Suchánková
Michal Šafařík

Rostislav Šmuk
Svatava Šmuková
Nicol Šopíková
Derica Štefková
Irakli Tezeshashvili
Erik Thunø
Anna Tiittanen
Eleonora Tioli
Suivi Toivanen
Drahomíra Trčková
Maréva U
Ivo Überall
František Urban
Lenka Urbanová
Zuzana Urbanová
Jiří Vacek
Luca Vargiu
Anna Vohralíková
Dorota Zaprzalska
Eva Zavřelová
David Zbiral
Eva Zelendová
Sofia Zoitou
Dana Žlnková
✍
Museo Nazionale di Ravenna

Gratias vobis maximas agimus!

special acknowledgements to Zetafonts type foundry

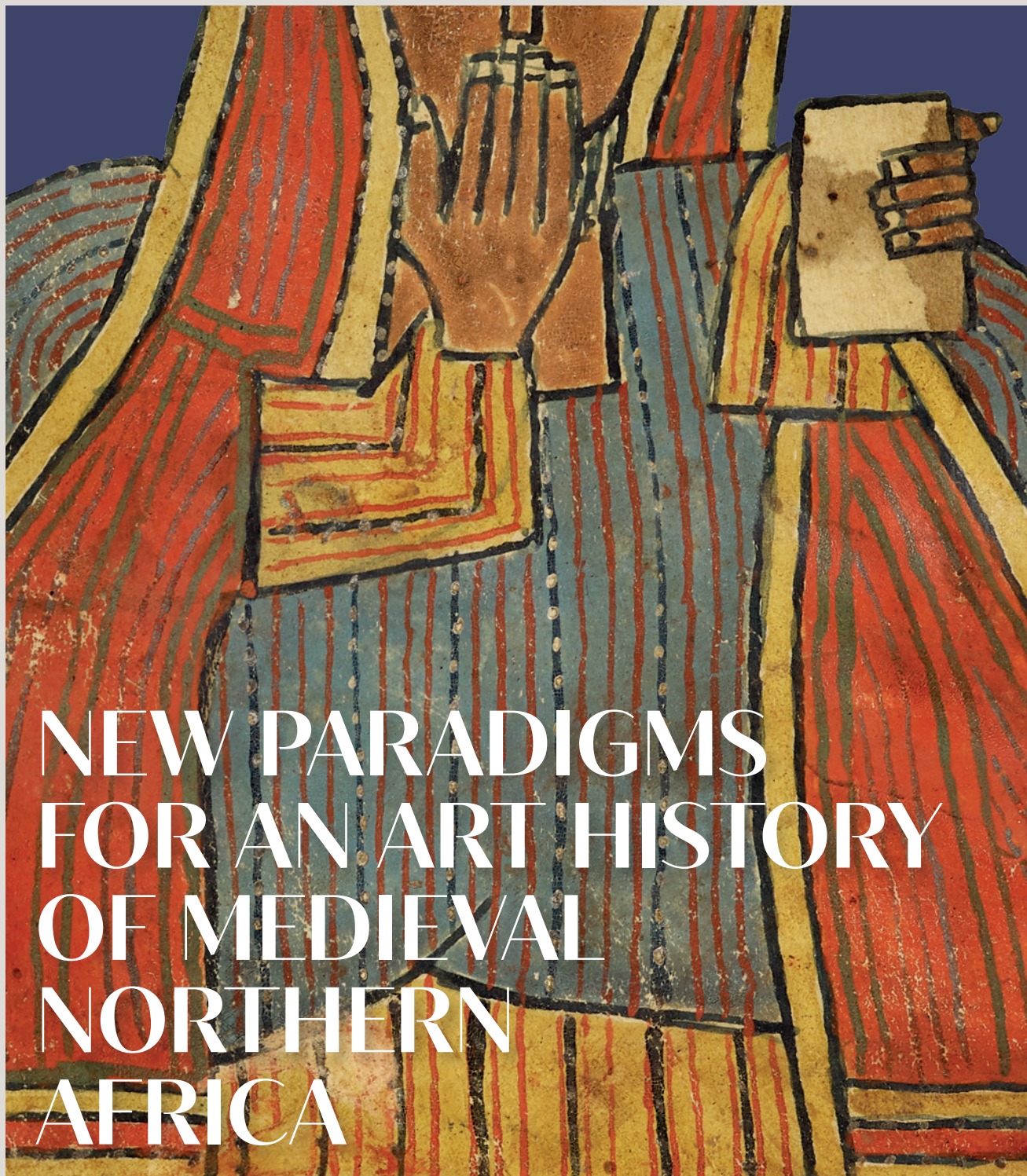
for creating an extended glyph set for the typefaces Blacker Pro, Blacker Sans Pro used in Convivium

à	é	ή	ι	ó	ύ	ώ	à	à	ή	ώ	ă	~	ĩ	ÿ	
á	é	ή	ι	ó	ύ	ώ	á	à	ή	ώ	ā	~	ī	ū	
ä	ë	ñ	ĩ	ö	ü	ŵ	è	à	ñ	ŵ	à	ñ	ì	ù	ŵ
â	ë	ñ	ĩ	ô	ü	ŵ	é	à	ñ	ŵ	à	ñ	ì	ù	ŵ
ǎ	ë	ñ	ĩ	ǒ	ǔ	ŵ	ή	à	ñ	ŵ	à	ñ		ρ	ŵ
ǎ	é	ñ	ĩ	ǒ	ǔ	ŵ	ή	à	ñ	ŵ				ρ	
ǎ		ñ	ĩ		ǔ	ŵ	ì	à	ñ	ŵ	ã	ñ	ĩ	ũ	ŵ
ǎ		ñ	ĩ		ǔ	ŵ	í	à	ñ	ŵ	Ǻ	ñ	ĩ	ũ	ŵ
À	É	Η	Ι	Ό		Ω	ò	À	Η	Ω	Ǻ	É	Ĩ	Ÿ	Ό
À	É	Η	Ι	Ό	Υ	Ω	ó	À	Η	Ω	Ā	É	Ī	Ÿ	Ό
”À	”É	”Η	”Ι	”Ό		”Ω	ù	”À	”Η	”Ω	À	Η	Ι	Υ	Ω
À	É	Η	Ι	Ό	Υ	Ω	ú	À	Η	Ω	À	Η	Ι	Υ	Ω
”À	”É	”Η	”Ι	”Ό		”Ω	ò	”À	”Η	”Ω	À	Η		’P	Ω
”À	”É	”Η	”Ι	”Ό	”Υ	”Ω	ó	”À	”Η	”Ω	’	”	”	’	’
”À		”Η	”Ι			”Ω		”À	”Η	”Ω	ι	”	”	’	’
”À		”Η	”Ι		”Υ	”Ω		”À	”Η	”Ω	’	”	”	’	’

TABLE OF CONTENTS

introduction	NATHAN S. DENNIS & RAVINDER S. BINNING New Paradigms for an Art History of Medieval Northern Africa	14
articles	HENRY MAGUIRE Two Textiles with Interlace Designs from Byzantine Egypt and Their Interpretation in the Light of Floor Mosaics	26
	EUNICE DAUTERMAN MAGUIRE <i>Ananeosis</i> at Qasr el Lebia. Introducing Renewal after Justinian’s North African Victory	40
	RAVINDER S. BINNING “Where the World Did Not Walk”. The Desert as Sacred Space on the <i>Klimax</i> Painting at Sinai	56
	ALEKSANDRA SULIKOWSKA-BEŁCZOWSKA Mary’s Open Palm in the Iconography of the Virgin in Medieval Nubia	70
	ARIELLE WINNIK Dress and Identity in Christian Nubia	90
	MICHELLE AL-FERZLY Ifriqiyān Ceramics. Connectivity and Interaction Across Medieval Africa	102
	HOLLEY LEDBETTER Aestheticizing Enslavement. Representations of <i>Jawārī</i> in Fatimid Visual Culture	116
	MARCIA KUPFER Israelite Identity and Anti-Judaism in Late Antique and Medieval Ethiopia	130
	JUTTA SPERLING Die <i>Stillende Jungfrau</i> in der äthiopischen Buchmalerei des 15. Jahrhunderts. Bemerkungen zu Stil, Medium, Gegenwärtigkeit und (Un)Mittelbarkeit	150
chronicles & debates	RAVINDER S. BINNING & NATHAN S. DENNIS Africa & Byzantium. An Interview with Dr. Andrea Myers Achi	170
copyrights		176

INTRODUCTION



NEW PARADIGMS FOR AN ART HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL NORTHERN AFRICA

NATHAN S. DENNIS
RAVINDER S. BINNING

Nathan S. Dennis / University of San Francisco / ndennis@usfca.edu
Ravinder S. Binning / The Ohio State University / binning.6@osu.edu

When selecting the title for this themed issue of *Convivium*, we deliberately chose “Northern Africa” over the more conventional “North Africa”. “North Africa” is much more than a geographical category in the history of medieval scholarship. It has long been an ideological construct that is as much a product of Eurasian colonialist and imperialist ambitions – both ancient and modern – as it is of physical proximity to the southern shores of Europe or to the Levant. Historically, African territories along the Mediterranean and Nilotic littoral have been grafted onto the cultural identities of Europe and the Near East as part of a shared nexus of pan-Mediterraneanism. This includes modern-day Morocco (though generally only the eastern half), Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt, all of which correspond to former Roman and Byzantine imperial territories, or where Islamic caliphates and emirates took root after the Arab Conquest in the seventh century. “North Africa” has historically excluded regions comprising the northwestern Atlantic, the Gulf of Guinea, the Sahel, Nubia (Sudan), and the Horn of Africa, even though those regions were major centers of artistic production that wielded considerable influence over their medieval neighbors to the north, as well as over Sub-Saharan trading partners.¹ By adopting “Northern Africa” as an alternative, we have tried to be maximally inclusive of individual African cultures and larger trade networks north of the equator to better highlight Africa’s overlooked and understudied role in shaping medieval art and architecture.

Northern Africa’s individuality and uniqueness have too often been subsumed by historical attempts to define and validate the region through its relationship with the Roman Empire, Byzantium, the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates of the Near East, or, for the Maghreb, its relationship to al-Andalus on the Iberian Peninsula. This is not to say that medieval Northern Africa should not be considered alongside those broader cultural networks since they were indeed part of them. But until fairly recently in Western scholarship, medieval African cultures were regularly treated as peripheries of received influence rather than centers of generative agency. Territories in Northern Africa were well aware of artistic, theological (especially Christian and Islamic), and political developments far outside their borders but nevertheless cultivated their own distinct iconography, style, and ritual experience that highlighted indigenous histories and local concerns.

The present volume participates in a broader project of foregrounding Northern African art on its own terms. In one respect, we are benefiting not only from how monographs and important articles over the last twenty-five

1 On the history of these ideological boundaries in medieval scholarship, see especially Andrea Myers Achi, Seeta Chaganti, “‘Semper Novi Quid ex Africa’: Redrawing the Borders of Medieval African Art and Considering Its Implications for Medieval Studies”, in *Disturbing Times: Medieval Pasts, Reimagined Futures*, Catherine E. Karkov, Anna Klosowska, Vincent W. J. van Gerven Oei eds, Santa Barbara 2020, pp. 73–106.

[fig. 1] Follower of Fære Şəyon (active 1445–1480), diptych icon with Virgin and Child Flanked by Archangels (left) and Apostles and an Equestrian Saint (right), Ethiopia (Təgray), late 15th century / Walters Art Museum (Baltimore)



years have re-centered Africa in medieval studies, but also from the wave of recent museum exhibitions that have challenged the medieval canon. Examples include *Coptic Art Revealed* (2010–2011) at the Palace of Amir Taz in Cairo; *Byzantium and Islam* (2012) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met) in New York; *The World of the Fatimids* (2018) at the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto; *Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time* (2019) at the Block Museum at Northwestern University; *Africa & Byzantium* (2023–2024) at the Met; and *Ethiopia at the Crossroads* (2023–2024) at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. Although exhibitions on Northern African art (especially textiles) began as early as the late-nineteenth century, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that certain cultures and subregions, such as Coptic Egypt, Nubia, and Ethiopia, received mainstream recognition, particularly among European institutions.² Many of

2 Although not an exhaustive list, see, for instance, *Koptische Kunst: Christentum am Nil* (1963) at the Villa Hügel in Essen; *L'Art copte* (1964) at the Petit Palais in Paris; *Frühchristliche und koptische Kunst and Christliche Kunst aus Äthiopien und Nubien* (1964) at the Akademie der bildenden Künste and Museum für Völkerkunde (now Weltmuseum) in Vienna; *Уметност Копта* (1970) at the National Museum (Народни Музеј) in Belgrade; *Éthiopie millénaire: préhistoire et art religieux* (1974–1975) at the Petit Palais in Paris; or *Tissus coptes* (1977) at the Musée d'Angers. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, American and other non-European institutions were following suit: *Africa in Antiquity: The Arts of Ancient Nubia and the Sudan* (1978) at the Brooklyn Museum; *Ancient Textiles from Nubia: Meroitic, X-Group, and Christian Fabrics from Ballana and Qustul* (1979) at the Art Institute of Chicago; *The Art of the Ancient Weaver: Textiles from Egypt (4th–12th Century A.D.)* (1980) at the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology at the University of Michigan; and *Textiles from Egypt, 4th–13th Centuries C.E.* (1980) at the L. A. Mayer Memorial Institute for Islamic Art in Jerusalem (now the Museum for Islamic Art). The first major attempt to incorporate Northern African material into a broader discussion of pan-Mediterraneanism, however, was *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (1977–1978) at the Met.



[fig. 2] Wall painting of the *Maiestas Crucis* from the Faras Cathedral, Nubia (Sudan), early 11th century / National Museum in Warsaw



[fig. 3] Baptismal font from the Christian basilica at El Gaalla (Bekalta), Tunisia, 6th century / Musée archéologique (Sousse)

the exhibitions, however, still positioned Northern Africa’s artistic eclecticism as a footnote to a broader Mediterranean culture. Perhaps this was because even up until relatively recently, Byzantium – long celebrated for “perennial Hellenism” and Christianity’s aesthetic origins – once sat uncomfortably in Western art history. A significant shift, however, occurred with *African Zion: The Sacred Art of Ethiopia*, which toured the U.S. from 1993–1996 and produced a catalogue of essays that reframed the Horn of Africa as a powerful and vibrant center of medieval art, independent of a shared Mediterranean and Near Eastern art history, yet clearly participating in its orbit.³ High-profile exhibitions since that time have tried to structure a view in which Northern African art is not displayed or described, if unconsciously, in relation to a Western European aesthetic culmination.

3 *African Zion: The Sacred Art of Ethiopia*, Marilyn Heldman, Stuart C. Munro-Hay, Roderick Grierson eds, New Haven 1993.



[fig. 4] Textile fragment with Artemis and Actaeon (?), Egypt (Akhmim?), 5th–7th century / British Museum (London)

Broadly speaking, we have assembled a range of scholarly methods offering possibilities of breaking out of previous models holding Northern Africa as passive or dependent on imported styles and models. But still, problems of establishing emic terms for aesthetic systems will continue to endure.⁴ To use just one example, that of medieval Nubia: it was only from the Polish salvage archaeology of the 1960s that the extraordinary monument of Faras Cathedral came to light in the first place.⁵ Although seasons of archaeology since have exposed the presence of Chalcedonian Christianity and the Byzantine

4 For a definition: Irene Winter, "Defining 'Aesthetics' for Non-Western Studies: The Case of Ancient Mesopotamia", in *Art History, Aesthetics, Visual Studies*, Michael Ann Holly, Keith Moxey eds, New Haven 2002, pp. 3–28.

5 For the development, see Kazimierz Michałowski, "Faras, Seventeen Years After the Discovery", in *Africa in Antiquity: The Arts of Ancient Nubia and the Sudan*, Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Conjunction with the Exhibition (Brooklyn, September 29–October 1, 1978), Fritz Hintze ed., Berlin 1979, pp. 31–39. And earlier, *Kunst und Geschichte Nubiens in christlicher Zeit: Ergebnisse und Probleme auf Grund der jüngsten Ausgrabungen*, Erich Dinkler ed., Recklinghausen 1970.

[fig. 5] Fatimid
lusterware bowl
with a Coptic priest,
Egypt, ca 1050–1100
/ Victoria and Albert
Museum (London)



Euchologion in the region in the form of inscriptions, aesthetic commentaries or sources such as ekphrasis do not survive to animate Nubian perspectives on this trove of painting. Texts providing language for artistic processes or reception are nonexistent. As a result, scholars have been reticent to move beyond the methods of analysis by which archaeologists construct timelines through stylistic judgment. What has resulted are several important studies tracing “Byzantine” influence on the myriad depictions of ecclesiastic dress, patristic authorities, even liturgical objects once painted on the walls of Faras. The question of influence cracks open problems with method: do we discuss Nubia as a passive receptor of Constantinopolitan aesthetics or as a dynamic artistic center that made the Macedonian imperial style one form of aesthetic aspiration? A third approach might take its point of departure by focusing on the strategies of syncretism itself. A set of criteria for discussing syncretism has been applied by the scholar of religion David Frankfurter in his studies on

Late Antique Egypt.⁶ For Nubia, Frankfurter cited an extraordinary painting from Old Dongola featuring an African dance before an image of the Virgin.⁷ In sum, much more work is necessary for isolating Northern African aesthetic vocabularies and identifying points of syncretism between local and foreign aesthetic traditions.

The articles in this volume cover diverse geographies, chronologies, cultures, and artistic media in Northern Africa. They range from studies of mosaics, icons, and ceramics in the Byzantine and early Islamic Maghreb, Cyrenaica, and Egypt, to frescoes, textiles, illuminated manuscripts, and icons in the medieval kingdoms of Nubia and Ethiopia. Although the articles often focus on cross-cultural relations between Northern Africa, Western Asia, and Southern Europe, as well as between distinct cultural regions within Africa itself, they also highlight the local histories of distinct groups.

The volume is organized chronologically in cultural units, beginning with Henry Maguire's "Two Textiles with Interlace Designs from Byzantine Egypt and Their Interpretation in the Light of Floor Mosaics". Maguire examines the complex interplay of both iconography and materiality between the Late Antique textile industry in Egypt and late Roman mosaic pavements in Africa and the broader Mediterranean world. Focusing primarily on knotwork and interlace, he explores the various ways in which the motifs were used apotropaically, metaphorically, and theologically to help guide Early Christians toward salvation.

Eunice Dauterman Maguire's "Ananeosis at Qasr el Lebia: Introducing Renewal after Justinian's North African Victory" uses the sixth-century East Church pavement mosaics at Qasr el Lebia in Libya as a case study, highlighting the personification of *Ananeosis* (Renewal) in the visual program of individual mosaic panels. She argues not only that *Ananeosis* is emblematic of the so-called Justinianic Reconquest in the first half of the sixth century, but also that her position in the grid pattern of carpet mosaics relates to larger metaphorical concerns in Byzantine interlace designs and framing devices.

Ravinder Binning's "'Where the World Did Not Walk': The Desert as Sacred Space on the *Klimax* Painting at Sinai" closes out the section on Byzantium. Centered around the famous panel painting of John Climacus's heavenly ladder, the article rethinks the relationship between Constantinople and Sinai in the twelfth century. Calling into question previous arguments that the panel was produced in Sinai (and evocative of a "Sinai style"), Binning demonstrates that the work was made in Constantinople and was *encomiastic* of Sinai as a place of primeval monasticism. This visual encomium, Binning argues, was contingent on a strategic modeling of the desert as a sacred and supernatural landscape.

6 David Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and Local Worlds in Late Antiquity*, Princeton 2017, pp. 1–33.

7 *Ibidem*, pp. 124–126.

Aleksandra Sulikowska-Bełczowska's "Mary's Open Palm in the Iconography of the Virgin in Medieval Nubia" moves the volume into early medieval Sudan. The article analyzes possible interpretations and traces the chronology of the open-palm motif in Marian iconography at the Faras Cathedral, the Monastery on Kom H in Old Dongola, and the Central Church at Abdallah-n Irqi. Comparing the open-palm gesture of the Theotokos to other Marian archetypes such as the Hodegetria, Eleusa, and the Virgin Enthroned, Sulikowska-Bełczowska re-evaluates concepts of divine motherhood, the Incarnation, and intercession that connected medieval Nubia to Byzantine and Coptic icon production centers to the north.

Arielle Winnik's "Dress and Identity in Christian Nubia" focuses on the cathedral and cemetery at Qasr Ibrim in Lower Nubia, where excavations uncovered a well-preserved corpus of textiles, including *tiraz* (embroidered inscriptions) fragments bearing the names of tenth-century Islamic caliphs from Fatimid Egypt. Typically considered "robes of honor" for royalty or high-ranking members of the aristocracy, some *tiraz* textiles from Qasr Ibrim were worn by Nubian church officials. Winnik explores the politics of gift exchange, diplomacy, and status between the Nubian Christian south and the Fatimid Islamic north.

Michelle Al-Ferzly's "Ifriqiyan Ceramics: Connectivity and Interaction Across Medieval Africa" marks another transition in the volume, this time to Islamic art and identity in medieval Africa. The article examines the development of Ifriqiyan lusterware under the Aghlabids and Fatimids – most notably Raqqada yellow wares in Tunisia – and the complex trade networks that flourished with al-Andalus on the Iberian Peninsula and Abbasid ceramic centers in Iraq and Iran.

Holley Ledbetter's "Aestheticizing Enslavement: Representations of *Jawārī* in Fatimid Visual Culture" reexamines representations of "courtly women" in Fatimid Egypt in a variety of media, including automata. These depictions of women are often labeled euphemistically as "musicians", "entertainers", "dancing girls", or "courtesans" in Western scholarship. Ledbetter proposes an alternative reading of female enslavement (the *jāriya*), the elite male gaze, and the gendered politics of the female body in medieval Egypt.

The final section of the volume focuses on Ethiopia, particularly in the later Middle Ages through approximately the fifteenth century. Marcia Kupfer begins the section with "Israelite Identity and Anti-Judaism in Late Antique and Medieval Ethiopia", where she traces the adoption of ancient Israelite lineage in the Zagwe Dynasty and the rise of theological rhetoric against Judaism. Beginning with the Late Antique/early medieval *Kebrā Nagast* epic and ending with the reign of Zār'a Ya'eqob in the fifteenth century, Kupfer uncovers layers of antisemitic tropes in Ethiopian art and literature that helped concretize Ethiopia's claim of both a physical and spiritual bloodline to a Jewish ancestral identity.

Jutta Sperling completes the section with “Die *Stillende Jungfrau* in der äthiopischen Buchmalerei des 15. Jahrhunderts: Bemerkungen zu Stil, Medium, Gegenwärtigkeit und (Un)Mittelbarkeit”. Using Fære Şəyon’s mid-fifteenth-century panel painting, *Our Lady Mary and Her Beloved Son with Saints Stephen, Peter, and Paul* as her starting point, Sperling examines the evolution of Ethiopian Marian devotion under the tenure of King Zār’a Ya’əqob in the fifteenth century and the controversy among the Ḍstifanosites over how to worship Marian icons. She pays particular attention to the proliferation of the iconography of the breastfeeding Virgin, its relationship to the milk miracle of Giyorgis of Sägla, and the translation of the *Tä’ammərə Maryam* (ተአምረ ማርያም, *Miracles of the Virgin Mary*) by King Dawit II.

The Arts of Medieval Northern Africa ends with an interview with Andrea Myers Achi, curator of the recent *Africa & Byzantium* exhibition at the Met. Achi explains the significance of the exhibition in a historical moment when more medievalists are looking to Africa not only to better understand its unique contributions to the period, but also to understand its dynamic influence on Western medieval, Byzantine, and Islamic art beyond Africa’s borders.

[fig. 6] Panel of a Torah Ark door with inscriptions from Psalm 118 (front) and Numbers 6 (back), from the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo, Egypt, 11th century with later medieval carving and pigment / Walters Art Museum (Baltimore)



ARTICLES