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# CONVIVIUM

Exchanges and Interactions in the Arts of the Premodern World

*Seminarium Kondakovianum, Series Nova*

# CONVIVIUM XI/2 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,  
Margarita Khakhanova, Katarína Kravčíková, Janette Rendeková

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](mailto:convivium@earlymedievalstudies.com)

[www.earlymedievalstudies.com/convivium.html](http://www.earlymedievalstudies.com/convivium.html)

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Published / November 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.

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# XI/2

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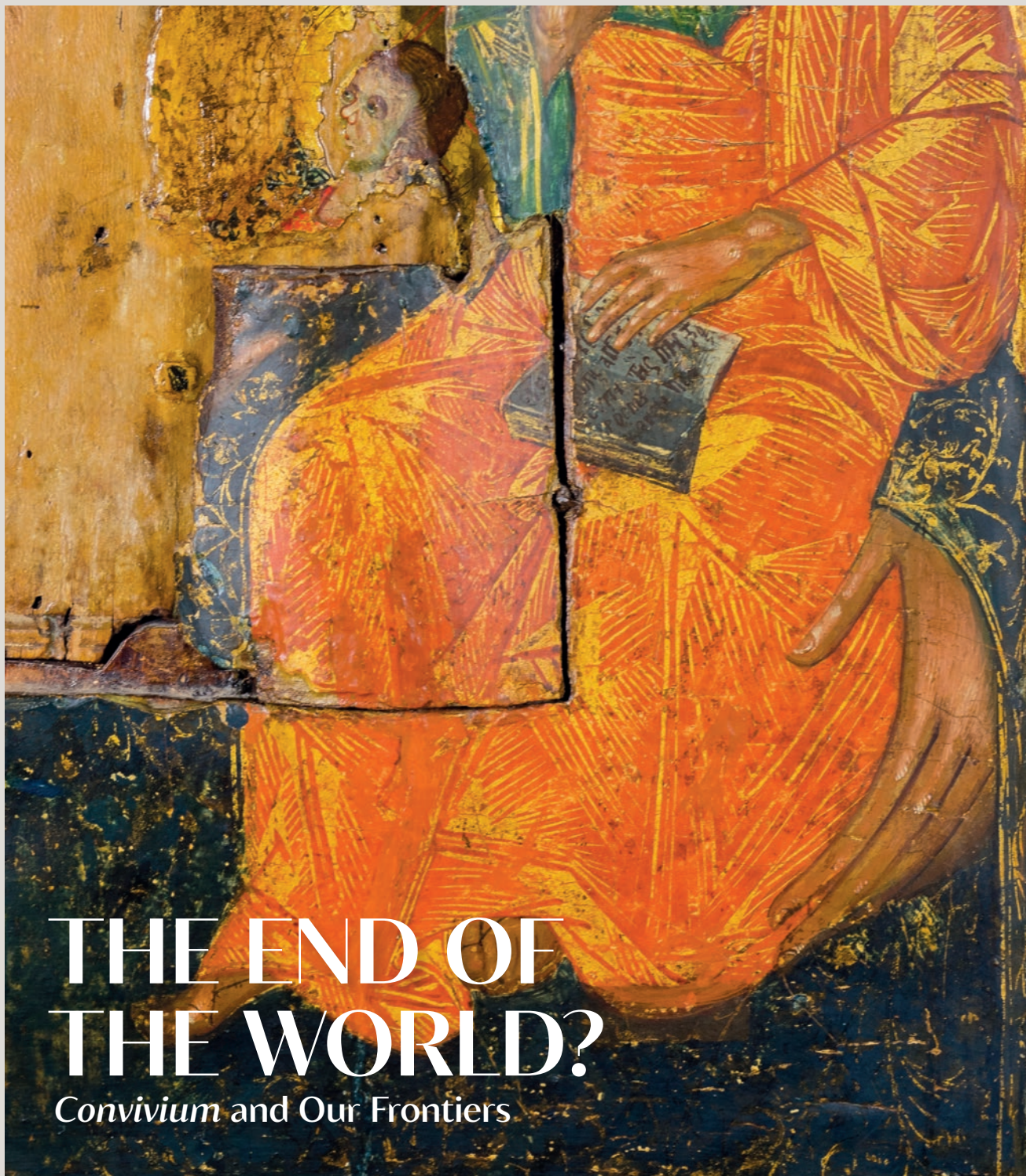




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# EDITORIAL



## THE END OF THE WORLD?

*Convivium* and Our Frontiers

Ivan Foletti / Masaryk university, Brno / foletti@phil.muni.cz  
Jan Klípa / Institute of Art History, Czech Academy of Science / klipa@udu.cas.cz

IVAN FOLETTI  
JAN KLÍPA

*Convivium* is a journal created to tell about a world in dialogue, a world of the past but the tradition of our magazine is not to be afraid to confront the present as well. We have discussed issues related to natural landscape and its preservation (in the past). We have considered the relationship between totalitarian regimes and art history. We devoted volumes to areas that have become peripheries due to persistent contemporary geopolitical problems and post-colonial legacy. *Convivium* has also become a platform for promoting the study of the premodern world in the current Global South. In other words, *Convivium* acts as – and the articles in this free issue also demonstrate this – not only a space to develop new themes and methodologies, but also a platform for discussing a past significantly connected to the present.

In light of this, it is impossible not to see that trends in our current world are increasingly at odds with the values that *Convivium* embodies: terrible wars not only destroy innocent lives, but also monuments and cultural landscapes. In Karabakh, while the local population have been driven out of a territory where they have lived for millennia, now in 2024, artistic monuments are being physically wiped off the face of the earth [fig. 1]. At the same time, the monuments of not only Jewish and Arab, but also strong Christian (both Byzantine and Crusader) traditions in Gaza are being irretrievably destroyed. And with them, the memory of the Mediterranean as once a place of fruitful cultural exchange is disappearing. In addition, devastating wars have an unforgettable ecological dimension. They contribute to the ecological crisis in an alarming way, having a critical indirect impact on the whole biosphere, not to mention their direct impact on the lives of those affected.

This then inevitably begs the question of the role of research today, especially in the field of medieval art history. What, in short, is the purpose of *Convivium*? The answer, of course, is not an easy one. Still, when considering a journal that has its editorial office located in Central Europe, where scholars



[fig. 1] The Church of Holy Ascension in Berdzor before and after its destruction in May 2024

from very different backgrounds, as diverse as the historiographical traditions of the South Caucasus, Germany, and the United States meet, it starts to become clear. We are concerned with the role of art history in healing cultural wounds in the present world. We refer, for example, to our journal's vocation to collaborate on forming a more united Europe, where the culture of the past can be an inspiration from the Caucasus to the Iberian Peninsula. Thirty-five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, we must recognize that academia is still divided by the memory of the Iron Curtain. This rupture is in our view a growing problem not only for the world of research. A meticulous, scholarly study of the past thus becomes a powerful tool for building a culture where bridges become more important than barriers and walls, not only in the academic sense. We are convinced that this is the reason for *Convivium*.





# ARTICLES