



CONVIVIUM

Exchanges and Interactions in the Arts of Medieval
Europe, Byzantium, and the Mediterranean
Seminarium Kondakovianum, Series Nova



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edited by Julian Gardner & Serena Romano

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Italy and Beyond

Julian Gardner & Serena Romano

This second number of *Convivium*, now in its ninth year of existence is a miscellaneous volume, and it would therefore be fruitless to search for an overarching thematic unity among the published articles. Rather their unity lies in a shared diversity of research methodologies, an aspect which *Convivium* has always tried to encourage and to publish. Yet, undeniably also, the volume contains a preponderance of articles dealing with Italian material. To a certain extent this obviously reflects the shared specialisms of the two editors, but it also indicates perhaps that the most interesting articles submitted concerned Italian topics.

The issue begins with a paper on the Late Antique (to employ a periodization championed by Peter Brown) written by Jacek Wiewiorowski which concentrates on representations of insignia of *proconsul Africae* and especially on its references to maritime shipping in the famous *Notitia Dignitatum*. There follow two papers which should probably be characterized as Early Medieval, but which are concerned with widely different areas of the Italian mainland. The first, by Chiara Croci, discusses a Longobard theme by way of epigraphical texts, through which the author seeks to recover lost visual contexts: in particular to illuminate a period of Pavian history to some extent over-shadowed by mythical episodes linked to Theodolinda and Liutprand, but in fact replete with lively artistic activity on a monumental scale. The second paper, by Manuela Gianandrea is an investigation of Early Mediaeval Rome by means of two small painted fragments of female faces now in private collections. Skillfully exploiting the minutest details of the painted surfaces, and carefully scrutinizing their provenances during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the author successfully recovers important and fascinating aspects of eighth-century Rome. The paper by Mzia Janjalia, in contrast, has a different geographical and chronological horizon, investigating the artistic context of the Church in Georgia between the late tenth and early eleventh centuries at the intersection of liturgical traditions emanating from Jerusalem and Constantinople.

The latter half of the issue is devoted to two fourteenth-century investigations, once again within the context of Italy. Maria Harvey examines a masterpiece by Simone Martini, the *Saint Ladislas* painted for Filippo Sangineto of Altamonte. She isolates what she terms “transnational” characteristics in an artistic panorama which comprehends South Italy, Provence, and the Mediterranean littoral in the context of crusading events, notably the so-called Smyrna Crusade which dates from the final years of Simone’s career. Stefania Gerevini provides an initial approach to her current research project on the metal altar-frontals of the Veneto, a topic which is still poorly studied. In particular she identifies their still mysterious mechanical and optical functions. Important in part because of their justly celebrated archetype, the *Pala d’Oro* in San Marco at Venice these frontals are revealed as multidimensional machines of considerable visual and liturgical efficacy. Her paper touches also on problems of great current art-historical interest, the materiality and also the performative aspect of the frontals.

The issue concludes with two book reviews, one devoted to the Camposanto at Pisa, the second to Netherlandish painting at the Aragonese court of Naples.