

Late Medieval Visual Culture in Eastern Europe

by Maria Alessia Rossi, Alice Isabella Sullivan, Alice Isabella Sullivan (ed)

DOI: [10.5040/9781350990005.0032](https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350990005.0032)

Theme Description

The recent global turn in medieval studies and art history has also brought attention to the rich artistic and cultural landscapes of Eastern Europe that have long remained marginal in scholarship. For much of the twentieth and twenty-first century, particular temporal and geographical parameters have defined the study of Western medieval and Byzantine art, architecture, and visual culture. What happens in Eastern Europe during the Middle Ages has remained more elusive.

The study of medieval art has generally focused on the artistic production of Western and Central Europe, sometime as far east as Bamberg, Germany or Kraków, Poland and has spanned temporally from about the third to the thirteenth centuries. The study of Byzantine art, in contrast, has centred mainly on Constantinopolitan artistic developments and some select regions around the Mediterranean and the Balkans, progressing temporally from the fourth century up until 1453 when the Byzantine Empire and its capital fell to the Ottoman Turks. In recent years, scholarship on medieval topics has seen work beyond Constantinople, the Mediterranean, and Western Europe, with significant contributions centring on the artistic production of Ethiopia and Armenia, for example. But these regions have been situated at the "borders" of the medieval and Byzantine worlds. With respect to Eastern Europe, the same holds true, although the material has received even less scholarly attention beyond largely formalist and iconographic studies.

No consistent or definitive definition exists for what constitutes Eastern Europe. For much of the medieval and early modern periods, Eastern European territories such as the Hungarian kingdom, the kingdoms of Kievan Rus', and Muscovy, as well as the powers of Serbia and Bulgaria, among others, experienced shifting political borders. Today, these regions are located in many different countries, including Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, and still others. The historical reality is still more complex. With respect to the Romanian principalities, for example, Transylvania was at one point included in the Kingdom of Hungary, while Wallachia and Moldavia oscillated between independence and Ottoman, Polish, or Hungarian suzerainty during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The specificities of each region, and in modern times, politics and nationalistic approaches, have reinforced the tendency to treat them separately, preventing scholars from questioning whether the visual output could be considered as an expression of a shared history. In efforts to expand and nuance the artistic landscapes of Eastern Europe during the late medieval period, the culture and artistic production of individual centres ought to be considered individually and as part of a larger network, thus revealing the shared heritage of these regions to the north of the Byzantine Empire and along the eastern border of Western Europe that formed a cultural landscape beyond medieval, Byzantine, and modern borders.

Within Eastern Europe, the regions of the Balkan Peninsula and the territories around the Carpathian Mountains (Southeastern Europe) in particular reveal dynamic cultural interactions between the Latin, Greek, Slavic, and Islamic traditions, especially between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Within Byzantine and medieval studies, these territories have been regarded as “peripheral” and often have been taken into account only as examples of “places of influence” from elsewhere. For Byzantine studies, Eastern Europe is in fact key to understanding how the Byzantine heritage was continued and transformed after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. For medieval studies, the eastern European material might help us understand how medieval forms were disseminated beyond cultural spheres. But instead of looking at the visual material through the lens of medieval European art or Byzantine visual culture, a deep engagement with the evidence can help reveal the regional specificities and the interconnectedness of the dynamic landscapes of Eastern Europe during the late medieval period. Transformations and appropriations of artistic and architectural forms rooted in different traditions alongside local developments become more and more evident. By extension, such analyses can begin to broaden the temporal and geographical parameters of the study of medieval and Byzantine art, architecture, and visual culture, while introducing new lines of scholarly inquiry and theoretical debates.

Approaches

The richness of the artistic production of Eastern Europe is equal to how unexplored it has been. For the Balkans and the Carpathians, the study of medieval art, architecture, and visual culture has for a long time been discussed within the limits of narrow geographical and chronological parameters, or excluded altogether from scholarly conversations. Lack of access to resources, as well as the politics and nationalistic approaches of the twentieth century are just some of the issues that have contributed to the ongoing marginalization of the material and the issues it raises. Furthermore, little is known about the local specificities and common traditions of the cultural and artistic landscapes of Eastern Europe during the late medieval period. This has prevented scholars from comparing local visual productions and questioning whether similar trends can be noticed as expressions of a shared history. Much has changed in recent decades, and more remains to be done.

The art, architecture, and visual culture of Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Muscovy, for example, have all received individual attention. Articles, monographs, collections of essays, and handsomely produced volumes written in the national language (and sometimes in translation), have made some of the objects and monuments known through careful descriptions, colour plates, and detailed plans. But the artistic production of each of these centres did not develop in isolation. Given the ongoing movement of people, objects, and ideas across medieval borders, regional production should be discussed in relation to the other traditions that have contributed in smaller and larger parts to local developments. Similarly, recent scholarly contributions in English have brought to the fore aspects of the art and architecture of Eastern European centres, but these are limited in focus and have carved out particular geographies, treating the individual regions mostly in their own right and offering limiting viewpoints. Attention has often been focused on formal examinations of single monuments, or parts of them, such as specific iconographic studies or architectural analyses. While this allows for the circulation of knowledge and original viewpoints regarding these monuments in the international scholarly community, it does often leave them in isolation geographically and from a disciplinary perspective.

When treated as a whole, for a long time these regions of Eastern Europe have been solely discussed in relation to other medieval geographies, such as the Byzantine Empire. The pivotal role that Serbia, Kosovo, Bulgaria, and the Romanian principalities of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania, as well as further north into the lands of modern-day Russia, among others, took on in the transmission and appropriation of the cultural legacy of Byzantium in the later centuries of the empire, and in the decades after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, had often been relegated to the margins, giving priority to the artistic production of Italy and the Middle East, for example. Recent scholarship is beginning to engage with the rich legacy of Byzantium within and beyond its northern borders. These studies, moreover, aim to reveal larger connections between the Byzantine cultural sphere and regions beyond the empire's margins, while challenging earlier assumptions about the artistic production of the Balkans and the Carpathians, and the notion of "decline" generally associated with late and post-Byzantine art, architecture, and visual culture.

Western European artistic and cultural traditions also left their mark in these areas. The visual cultures of Slovakia and Hungary, for example, are deeply rooted in Western artistic models. Italian artists are known to have worked at the Hungarian court for much of the fifteenth century, giving rise to new visual forms informed by the Italian Renaissance (P. Farbaky and L. Waldman, eds., *Italy & Hungary: Humanism and Art in the Early Renaissance*, 2011). Jan Białostocki's *The Art of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe: Hungary, Bohemia, Poland* (1976) focuses on the famed monuments of the Corvinian and Jagiellonian "Renaissances," and highlights their ties to contemporary artistic developments in Venice and Florence, for example. Western European models certainly contributed to the development of art, architecture, and visual culture in regions of Eastern Europe, through the movement of artists and objects, but the late medieval and early modern world of Western and Central Europe was not the only dominant artistic force in the East. Byzantium's spiritual power contributed to new visual forms in art and architecture developed alongside local traditions and other models adopted from elsewhere. Moreover, beginning in the fifteenth century, the Ottoman presence in the Balkans increased, and their subsequent influence in political, military, and economic matters, as well as in smaller and larger parts on the development of local artistic forms, cannot be denied and deserves more directed scholarly attention. But not in isolation; rather, in the context of these regions' networked position relative to diverse neighbouring cultures.

In efforts to expand and nuance the medieval artistic landscapes of Eastern Europe, the culture and artistic output of individual centres ought to be considered individually and as part of a whole. Such an approach will, firstly, reveal the uses, meanings, and functions of Western medieval visual forms, such as Romanesque and Gothic features, for instance, in Orthodox buildings and iconographic cycles. Secondly, a more expansive line of inquiry could also highlight the shared heritage of these territories and their relationship with some of their most influential neighbours, first the Byzantine Empire and later the Ottoman Empire. Finally, by allowing for an interdisciplinary discussion, Eastern European history, archaeology, art, and architecture can begin to be visualized in their entirety through a variety of case studies in dialogue with one another, as demonstrated by the fifty-seven volumes published so far by Brill in the series *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*.

An initial way forward would be to continue encouraging object- and monument-focused studies that address in more detail and in more innovative theoretical frameworks issues of architecture and monumental decoration, the role of dynastic, ecclesiastical, and secular networks, workshop practices, patterns of patronage, as well as the formation of local identities

and new sacred landscapes. Then, studies could explore the interconnectedness of the artistic landscapes of the Balkans and the Carpathians during the medieval period by focusing on the direct and indirect links that extended between the objects and buildings under scrutiny and other local sites, as well as regional associations and developments that would point to the connectivity between the territories north and south of the Danube River or the Carpathian Mountains, for example. In addition to the local and regional significance, the dialogue surrounding the production of these territories needs to overcome modern-day national and international borders in an effort to acknowledge the (shared) roots of the regions' respective cultural and artistic traditions in Byzantium and the West, as well as in Slavic and Islamic models. In Eastern Europe during the medieval period, and in particular between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, different artistic traditions continued, transformed, and were deployed alongside local developments to shape notions of identity and visual rhetoric in the artistic and cultural spheres.

Scope

Scholarship has not done justice to the wealth, complexity, and heterogeneity of the cultural and artistic landscapes of Eastern Europe. Nationalistic approaches and imposed geographical and chronological limits have allowed for a fragmented treatment of what is the local specificity and shared heritage of regions of the Balkan Peninsula and the Carpathian Mountains. As Robert S. Nelson writes, "The map of art history is drawn by the modern, the national, and the Euro-American and by their culturally derived senses of order, classification, and system" ("The Map of Art History," *The Art Bulletin*, 1997). Within this "map," Eastern Europe has not yet found its footing. The territories that once formed kingdoms and empires are now part of many different countries. History and politics have traced these regions, and communication and cooperation have been impossible at times, let alone comparative art historical analyses. Although national borders have shifted, the visual culture of these territories can reveal dynamic networks of contact and interchange that may allow scholars to paint richer pictures of the development of local artistic and cultural models and the shared traditions of these Eastern European lands. But the scholarly approaches to date—either within narrow geographical or chronological focuses, or within nationalistic frameworks, or selective in their lines of inquiry and material evidence studied—have done little to encourage dialogue and more nuanced historical considerations. And physical access to sites and collections, as well as the limits of language knowledge and training have contributed to the problems and the marginalization of this material in scholarship.

Of the latter, in order to be able to carry out comparative art historical research in Eastern Europe, one ought to be versed not only in the local languages—be it Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek, Romanian, Russian, etc.—but also have a strong foundation in the languages and paleography of the primary sources, often written in Greek, Church Slavonic (of various recensions), or Latin. These are necessary skills to understand the textual evidence as well as the visual production of the late medieval period. Objects and monuments are particularly valuable in these regards because they help tie together history, text, material culture, and archaeology as well as shed light on the social, religious, and political circumstances that led to their creation, usage, and afterlife. Luckily today, more and more institutions are offering opportunities for travel and language study. Alternatively, making connections with local scholars may help initiate long-term collaborations through which the language obstacles could be overcome.

Like the restrictions posed by language knowledge, lack of physical access to local sites and collections has posed problems to researchers in the past. For one thing, at times, the Iron Curtain created actual and ideological barriers to the study of much of Eastern Europe, sometimes rendering relevant literature inaccessible and, often, the study of objects and monuments close to impossible. By limiting access to and within Eastern Europe, twentieth-century politics instead enabled the development of isolated local "narratives," at times with little to no consideration of neighbouring traditions. As such, the theoretical dimensions of this material remain to be fully revealed and deployed in scholarship. But first, the objects and monuments of study need to be made known. More and more Eastern European art collections are now searchable online, manuscript digitization projects are underway, and a great number of monuments entered UNESCO, receiving funds for their restoration and becoming popular tourist sites in recent years. Local sites and collections are thus gradually made accessible with longer opening hours, enabling visitors and researchers to appreciate the visual and spatial qualities of objects and monuments, and inquire into their origins and historical contexts. This is especially important for the collections held in monasteries that for a long time have been concealed and only recently placed on display as key objects for the understanding of the community and the region.

The kinds of questions that we ask of the material evidence we study are sometimes more important than the observations we make about their physical and material qualities. While overcoming the isolation is part of a bigger and longer project, one way to move around geographical issues is to use a comparative approach with visual production beyond Eastern Europe. By introducing new questions and methodologies for the study of the eclectic artistic production of the Balkans and the Carpathians that go well beyond formal analyses, iconographic studies, and geographies, it is possible to look at comparative material in Venice, Crete, and Cyprus after the Fourth Crusade, for example. What makes the Eastern European art historical material most interesting is its compound visual character, which speaks to the dynamics of cultural contact and transfer at particular historical moments. The geographic and nationalistic limits posed by the territory itself can find partial solution in situating Eastern Europe into the wider network of medieval studies and using it as a key case study for the continuous development of theoretical lines of questioning. For instance, addressing the issues raised by terminology such as "hybrid," "influence," "appropriation," and "eclecticism." What can we learn from Eastern Europe regarding the problems and benefits posed by these terms to the study of diverse and prismatic visual cultures?

The study of late medieval art, architecture, and visual culture of Eastern Europe raises some of the same issues and questions that any medieval culture does, which is why this material is valuable to medieval studies, Byzantine studies, and art history more broadly, and should be seriously considered. Recent scholarship that questions and pushes traditional boundaries is beginning to bring the artistic and cultural traditions of marginal Eastern European regions into larger dialogues with the more established accounts of Western medieval and Byzantine art, contributing thus to the push towards a more geographically and also methodologically global approach to the study of the Middle Ages. Such studies could help us define networks of contact and agents of exchange, and better understand models of transmissions, especially in the case of Byzantine artistic developments after 1453. Similarly, this research is central in questioning and redefining current periodization models within art history, challenging the limits of a "late medieval" or "early modern" division.

“Just how many centuries are included in the Middle Ages everybody knows but no two can define in the same way” (E. K. Rand, *Speculum*, 1926). Although an artificial construct, a scrutiny of existing periodizations in the field of art history is necessary because medieval artistic forms were produced in regions of Eastern Europe well into the sixteenth century, posing problems to the study of early modern art, for instance. This is, in part, due to the strong power of Byzantium and Eastern Orthodoxy in the regions of the Balkans and the Carpathians. But this is also a post-Byzantine moment—a term denoting Slavic and Greek Orthodox art produced in the period after the fall of Constantinople in 1453—but one that coincides chronologically with the period in Western art history known as the Renaissance, generally defined as a revival of the art of classical antiquity. Byzantine and post-Byzantine art and Western medieval art have also largely been studied as separate phenomena. A number of scholarly publications in recent decades have re-evaluated the evidence, demonstrating that certain visual cultures, at particular historical moments, mediated in fact between Western medieval and Byzantine traditions, among others, to give rise to different kinds of local artistic styles. Although the issue of periodization remains problematic and a topic of conversation, defining the parameters of the corpus of objects and monuments under consideration is important. The chronological framework of the Eastern European material already pushes the boundaries of what is often defined as medieval or post-Byzantine, but it is carrying out the necessary work in questioning these established categories and their geographical and chronological frameworks. Within the recent global turn in medieval studies and art history, organizations and scholarly journals have also broadened their geographical and chronological focus, thus signalling that the borders remain open to interpretation and can become more encompassing.

To be able to appreciate the material remains of the past, investigate the interesting questions it raises, and see its value in a larger context, the final challenge is for objects and monuments to become known and accessible. Once scholars have had the opportunity to see and study this material in the field, it is equally important for it to be circulated in order for the remaining scholarly community to be exposed to it. It is essential for handbooks and manuals to include the visual culture of Eastern Europe as part of the medieval coverage in order for the new generations of art historians to be aware of it from the very beginning. The same could be said for the general public: the addition of Eastern European material in collections and its display in exhibitions are substantial means for the widespread diffusion of the significance of these regions and their histories, cultures, and artistic productions.

Similarly, recent initiatives are beginning to encourage and support the study of medieval art, architecture, and visual culture in Eastern Europe. Summer programs are offering increasingly more diverse language study and travel opportunities for students and researchers, and private and government-funded grants and fellowships enable students and scholars to travel for research to sites and collections. Moreover, the “North of Byzantium” (NoB) project (<https://www.northofbyzantium.org>) works to connect students, scholars, teachers, artists, and curators to resources related to the medieval and early modern artistic production of Eastern Europe. Sponsored by the Mary Jaharis Centre for Byzantine Art and Culture, NoB also explores through its annual events and publications the rich history, art, and culture of the northern frontiers of the Byzantine Empire in Eastern Europe between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. This project, in line with the global efforts within medieval studies and art history, aims to encourage scholars to look, and look anew, at the edges and the borders of great empires and better-known cultural centres in efforts to expand the temporal and

geographical parameters of the study of Western medieval and Byzantine art, as well as introduce new questions and methodologies for the study of the eclectic artistic production of Eastern Europe.

Key Debates

The multifaceted, rich, and complex medieval visual culture of Eastern Europe sits at the core and should continue to be the focus of numerous debates in scholarship, ranging from issues of temporal borders and peripheral status, to questions of terminology and isolation. The “centre-periphery” dichotomy has been an angle used to look at this material, be it to the east of medieval Central Europe or to the north of the Byzantine Empire, as it is the case that everything, in fact, borders something else. Instead of looking at Eastern Europe through the eyes of its neighbours, it is necessary to shift the focus and challenge the way we think about this region. One way is to explore the artistic production of the Balkans and the Carpathians as a crossroads where cultural contact, transmission, and appropriation of Western medieval, Byzantine, Slavic, and Islamic artistic and cultural traditions took place, and consider how this heritage was deployed to shape notions of identity and visual rhetoric. Such an approach would aim to strike a balance between local specificity and larger networks of contact.

Similarly, the emphasis on the legacy of Byzantium in Eastern Europe has been a double-edged sword. The pivotal role that these territories situated to the north and south of the Danube River played in the transmission and appropriation of Byzantine artistic models, after 1204, and then again after 1453, has been key in the interest in the region. However, this has also often led scholars to dismiss the rich effects of cross-cultural contact and the spiritual power of Byzantium on the local development of art, architecture, and visual culture, in favour of a model-copy notion. Monuments need to be examined as representative of local developments (eclectic with respect to sources), that, in turn, helped shape the artistic landscapes of their respective regions. This is the case, for example, with monastic architecture such as the *katholika* (the main church of a monastery) at Dečani and Gračanica in the Serbian cultural context, or the monastic church at Pătrăuți in the Moldavian sphere.

Within Eastern Europe not all regions have been researched and examined in the same way. For the Balkans, Slobodan Ćurčić was the first to emphasize the common roots and parallel strands in art and architecture. In his massive volume, *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (2010), Ćurčić analysed both secular and religious structures, and traced the architectural developments of particular regions in the Balkans over many generations, up to the middle of the sixteenth century. But while his noteworthy contribution treated the architectural history of the Balkan Peninsula as a whole, the architecture of the north Danubian territories—much indebted to the artistic innovations of the Balkans and Byzantium—received little attention. The Danube River served as the main northern geographical divide for Ćurčić’s study, but the famed river was in fact a much more fluid and porous border during the medieval period. We now know that artists and masons trained in Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Athonite workshops worked at the Wallachian and Moldavian courts during the fifteenth century, for example. Considerations of the transfer of artistic forms and ideas between the territories north and south of the Danube River would enrich our picture of the cultural contacts that extended in Eastern Europe during the later Middle Ages, and the central role played by Byzantium in shaping local artistic styles. Most recently, Robert

Ousterhout's volume, *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands* (2019), offers a different model, treating regional differences within larger traditions.

For the Carpathian Mountains, and in particular the principalities of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania, a great deal of art historical work remains to be done. Some art historians are beginning to incorporate aspects of the late medieval artistic production of these territories into their individual considerations of large issues centred on Byzantine artistic production. Romanian historians and archaeologists have studied the art and architecture of the medieval principalities that form the modern-day country of Romania largely from specific viewpoints. Their efforts have revealed a great deal about the formal and iconographical aspects of certain objects and monuments, but their somewhat limited approaches have been, to a large degree, the consequence of twentieth-century politics. As a result, both the local and the international intellectual communities lacked access to the resources necessary to examine more fully and seriously the artistic production of the Carpathians and its relation to neighbouring and more distant traditions.

The territories under scrutiny also sit at the heart of the Orthodox monastic landscape. By leaving behind political and geographical borders, it becomes possible to expand the sacred topography of the Balkans and the Carpathians, and understand the material under discussion as a fundamental expression of a shared Orthodox Christian identity among the communities north of Byzantium. A focal point throughout the centuries, and still today, has been Mount Athos—the pan-Orthodox and multinational community of Christians that served as an enduring emblem of Orthodox Christianity, especially after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. Over the centuries, this Orthodox monastic community received support from the Byzantine emperors, as well as the rulers of neighbouring regions, including Serbia, Bulgaria, and the Romanian principalities, and those further afield, such as Georgia and Muscovy. This multinational character of the Holy Mount is often reflected in its representation in visual material, such as engravings that include descriptions and exhortations to visit Athos written in Greek, Latin, and Slavonic. These images work to emphasize the role of Athos as a locus of Orthodox religious practices, past and present, and as a site of mediation between many different cultures and traditions.

Recent scholarship is beginning to look at the medieval artistic production of Eastern Europe through cultural connections, historically grounded methodologies, and more nuanced interpretative strategies. Scholars are studying select objects and architectural monuments that serve as models for subsequent local developments. These projects engage with the rich legacy of Byzantium within and beyond its borders between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, as well as Western medieval, Slavic, and Islamic traditions, while building on recent scholarship that has treated the individual regions under consideration mostly in their own right. Future studies ought to focus on local specificities but also on connections and larger cultural influences in efforts to allow the rich medieval artistic landscapes of the Balkans, the Carpathians, and beyond, to emerge more fully.

Further Reading

Ćurčić, Slobodan. *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.

This remarkable book offers an unprecedented overview of the architectural landscape of the Balkan Peninsula beyond contemporary, historical, political, or ethnic borders. The comprehensiveness of this work, which covers ecclesiastical monuments, military and secular architecture, and urban developments, from late antiquity to about 1550, is paralleled by the invaluable bibliography, plentiful illustrations, and stunning photographs that document the monuments.

Curta, Florin and Dušan Zupka, eds. *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450*. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

This is an interdisciplinary series and an unparalleled platform focusing on bringing East Central and Eastern Europe to the centre of scholarly attention. Subjects range from archaeology to numismatics, and from history to language and art history, from roughly 450 to 1450.

Eastmond, Antony. "The Limits of Byzantine Art." In *A Companion to Byzantium*, edited by Liz James, 313–22. Malden, MA: Wiley, 2010.

This essay challenges our understanding and definition of what is "Byzantine" today and what it might have meant during the long life of the empire.

Erdeljan, Jelena. *Chosen Places: Constructing New Jerusalems in "Slavia Orthodoxa."* Leiden: Brill, 2017.

In drawing on a variety of textual sources ranging from biblical texts and medieval literature to historical chronicles and biographies, as well as visual material related to sacred objects, images, buildings, and ceremonies, this book examines the role played by Jerusalem and the notion of *translatio Hierosolymi* in shaping sacral spaces and local identities among Christians throughout the medieval period, and among Orthodox Christians in the Slavic cultural sphere during the late Middle Ages.

Jaritz, Gerhard and Katalin Szende, eds. *Medieval East Central Europe in a Comparative Perspective: From Frontier Zones to Lands in Focus*. London: Routledge, 2016.

This interdisciplinary collection of essays engages with political, religious, urban, and artistic concerns related to East-Central Europe during the late medieval period, highlighting the value of comparative studies and questioning the geographic limits and the wider connections of these lands with the rest of Europe, both further east and west.

Mattiello, Andrea and Maria Alessia, Rossi, eds. *Late Byzantium Reconsidered: The Arts of the Palaiologan Era in the Mediterranean*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2019.

This edited volume paints an interdisciplinary and comparative picture of the artistic achievements of Mediterranean centres linked to the Byzantine Empire between 1261 and the decades after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. By focusing on specific case studies, each essay aims to challenge the established ideas concerning the late Byzantine period such as decline, renewal, and innovation.

Nelson, Robert. "Byzantine Art vs. Western Medieval Art." In *Byzance et le monde extérieur: Contacts, relations, échanges*, edited by Michel Balard, Élisabeth Malamut, and Jean-Michel Spieser, 255–70. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2005.

This essay engages with and problematizes the relationship between Byzantine art and Western medieval art, and their respective fields of study, stressing that the spiritual and emotional power of Byzantium enabled less stylistic change over time than did the developments evident across the medieval and early modern world in Western Europe.

Ousterhout, Robert. *Eastern Medieval Architecture: The Building Traditions of Byzantium and Neighboring Lands*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

With a broad geographical and chronological focus, this volume traces the developments in medieval architecture across the eastern Mediterranean from early Christian times and through the century after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, including also discussions of regional styles indebted to Byzantium in North Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria, in the Romanian principalities north of the Danube River, and in Russian.

Rossi, Maria and Alice Isabella Sullivan, eds. *Byzantium in Eastern Europe in the Late Middle Ages*. Leiden: Brill, 2020.

This collection of essays addresses how the heritage of Byzantium continued, transformed, and was deployed alongside local traditions, to shape notions of identity and visual rhetoric in the artistic and cultural traditions of the Balkans and the Carpathians from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.

Rossi, Maria and Alice Isabella Sullivan, eds. *Eclecticism at the Edges: Medieval Art and Architecture at the Crossroads of the Latin, Greek, and Slavic Cultural Spheres (c. 1300–c. 1550)*. Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming.

The comparative and multidisciplinary framework of this volume, ranging from art history to archaeology and from material culture to architectural history, explores the visual cultures of regions of the Balkan Peninsula and the Carpathian Mountains (ca. 1300– ca. 1550). The essays raise issues of cultural contact, transmission, and appropriation of Western, Byzantine, and Slavic artistic production and challenge the ways we understand these eclectic visual vocabularies that form a cultural landscape beyond medieval, Byzantine, and modern borders.

Vojvodić, Dragan and Danica, Popović *Sacral Art of the Serbian Lands in the Middle Ages. Byzantine Heritage in Serbian II*. Belgrade: Serbian National Committee of Byzantine Studies, 2016.

This collection of essays focuses on the transformation and appropriation of the Byzantine heritage in medieval Serbia and is part of a three-volume publication examining the art of Serbia. The volume includes essays by different authors offering insights into the history, culture, and artistic production of this region from the Middle Ages throughout the Ottoman period.