

Editors' pick: Cultural Interactions in the Medieval Subcaucasian Region

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Cultural Interactions in the Medieval Subcaucasian Region: Historiographical and Art-Historical Perspectives, vols I & II

Michele Bacci, Ivan Foletti eds

This two-volume set focuses on the material and visual cultures of one of the central territories in the premodern world: the Southern Caucasus, the stretch of land joining the Caspian and Black Seas, Eastern Europe, and Western Asia. This transcontinental and transcultural region has been a land of fascination and awe due to its uncommon material and visual culture since the birth of art history. This unique place also inspired a darker response: covetousness, colonial and orientalist desires, and violent nationalism and conflict since the field of art history.

These two volumes form the main result of a project co-funded by the Swiss National Research Foundation and the Czech Science Foundation. The regional complexity of the Southern Caucasus is here explored through two distinct but complementary perspectives. Volume I presents historiographical research stretching from the nineteenth century to 1991. It seeks to highlight and deconstruct the most persistent historiographical myths about this region – ranging from orientalism to academic imperialism. Volume II takes an art-historical perspective and probes some of the region's most remarkable religious buildings, images, and sites, bringing depth to previously shallow understandings of the interaction between communities, nature, and cultural production in the region. Together, these collaborative volumes, fully illustrated in color and housed in this elegant slipcase, outline avenues for future research in this previously marginalized field whose importance to our general understanding of medieval and premodern cultures should now be vibrantly acknowledged.

