

Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian interchange from the tenth to the twelfth century

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... the artwork, at home everywhere because rooted nowhere, has become an image of the mobility and internationalism of modern life. Wendy Steiner¹

In this paper I will consider the role of portable monuments in cross-cultural interchange between the Islamic and Christian medieval realms in the Mediterranean and beyond from the tenth to the twelfth century. The focus will be defined not by the style and subjects represented on these works, but rather by the circumstances of portability, shifting the emphasis from 'production' to 'circulation'. Portable arts are innately characterized by their potential for movement and indeterminacy. Many objects have travelled great distances or have been displaced from their original contexts, under a variety of circumstances. While portability destabilized and dislocated works from their original sites of production, it also re-mapped geographical and cultural boundaries, opening up vistas of intra- and cross-cultural encounters and interactions. It is my contention that through movement these objects participated in and defined the contours of visual culture and experience. Portability and circulation highlight the active 'lives' of objects; their openness and permeability; how objects referred to and merged with their makers and users, the people and cultures that exchanged them, and the relationships that they defined.²

Classification

My point of departure will be the museum setting where many of these objects currently reside and are now defined and recontextualized as 'works of art'. Within this framework, the scholarship on these itinerant works from Islamic and Christian Mediterranean realms from the tenth to the twelfth century has traditionally focused on tracing sources and localization, using familiar tools of analysis developed for Western European art – authorship, style, date and periodization.³ The limitations of such studies for this material may be illustrated by the abundant number of works in various media with uncertain attributions. The localization of a large group of animal metalwork sculptures of varying size



3 (left) Lion, Spain(?), 12th century. Bronze, Louvre, Paris. Photo: Réunion des Musées nationaux/Art Resource, NY.

4 (right) Lion, Egypt(?), 11th century. Cast bronze. Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo.

and function (plates 3 and 4) has routinely been shifted back and forth between such centres as North Africa, Egypt, Sicily and Spain.⁴

One of the most celebrated of these is a bronze work, known as the Pisa Griffin (plate 5), which has most recently been attributed to Spain.⁵ The Pisa Griffin stands impressively at a height of 108 cm (42 1/2 in) and was mounted on the Cathedral of Pisa sometime in the early twelfth century, where it remained until 1828. It was probably moved there from another Mediterranean location. While it contains an Arabic inscription with familiar wishes of blessings and happiness to the anonymous owner, it is silent regarding patronage, site of production and date. Similarly, a group of luxury textiles has been the subject of uncertain or conflicting attributions within sites in the Mediterranean. It is often impossible to tell the difference, for example, between textiles made in Byzantine and those made in Islamic centres.⁶ There are also comparable geographic ambiguities in the attributions of a large number of ivories made between the tenth and twelfth centuries. The carving of ivory was concentrated in Spain, Egypt, Sicily, Southern Italy and Venice, but unless the carving is identified by an inscription, it is difficult to determine, with absolute certainty, the specific site of its production (plates 6 and 7). A variety of conflicting attributions for these ivories can be found in the standard handbooks on Islamic art.⁷

In many of these cases, where specific documentation does not survive, or never existed, it is futile to attempt to identify the ‘original’ works and localize these objects to singular sites of production. The efforts to contain these works within individual national boundaries represent later constructions that mirror



5 Griffin, Spain(?), 11th century. Bronze. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Pisa. Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

modern ideologies shaped by nationalism rather than the more fluid medieval conception.⁸ Similarly, the taxonomic approach, designed for the classification of European 'works of art' within the art museum, has not always provided the best tools for the analysis of Islamic art. On the contrary, this approach, often resulting in uncertain attributions or in identifying and emphasizing an absence, has contributed further to the marginalization of these works already diminished by their categorization as 'minor' or 'decorative arts'. Even in cases where it has been possible to classify some Islamic works according to these criteria, the most celebrated of these works are still labelled by the names of their modern owners or collectors, such as the 'Bobrinski Kettle'.⁹ Such labelling makes it clear not only that the objects are categorized according to the criteria designed for the twentieth-century museum setting, but that their very identities are linked to those who have collected and classified them. The methodology also recalls early studies by such scholars as Panofsky and Seznev, who had studied Islamic and Medieval



6 (left) Plaque with Hunter and Harvester, Egypt or Sicily(?), 12th century. Ivory. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

7 (right) Plaque with scarf dancer, Egypt or Sicily(?), 12th century. Ivory. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

art, not for their own sake, but as stepping stones in the ‘development’ towards the pinnacle of Renaissance art.

These interpretations of Islamic works from the self-reflexive Western perspective, coupled with the resistance of these works to classification within the museum system, demonstrate the necessity to consider these works on their own terms, echoing the observations of scholars who have noted the dangers of defining the art of one culture in the terms of another, particularly with regard to the obvious disjunction between western and non-western visual arts. The territory

and criteria for classification must derive fundamentally from within cultural categories and practices. A number of recent studies provide models for this kind of contextualization.¹⁰ Textual accounts further provide a window into categories constructed within the culture. For example, the eleventh-century treatise *Book of Gifts and Rarities* (*Kitab al-Hadaya wa'l-Tuhaf*), despite our still imprecise understanding of all of its terminology, is a mine of information on the status and hierarchies of court treasures.¹¹ Here, slaves, animals and prized objects are all grouped together into a single classification, and value is assigned according to such criteria as size, quantity, luxury, exotic origin and cost.¹² Such accounts provide an insight into how works were perceived and used within their culture, an approach I will pursue here by exploring the implications of portability.

Implications of portability and visual identity in the Mediterranean

I will argue that the parameters of localization for these objects were defined along a network of portability extending well beyond fixed geographical sites of production to include the geographical and cultural arenas in which the works were circulated and viewed. Instead of attributing works to singular sites of production, we might ask why so many of these objects from Mediterranean centres dating from the tenth to twelfth centuries appear indistinguishable from one another and why it is possible to attribute the same works to any number of sites? The association of these works with multiple sites is an affirmation of portability and suggests that identity and meaning were informed through circulation and networks of connection rather than through singular sources of origin or singular identification. Multiple localization also replaces classification by the familiar centre/periphery paradigm. Instead of a single dominant culture radiating out from the capital to the provinces, what is suggested here is a 'pluritopic' model which allows for the existence of multiple sites and greater fluidity between various centres and peripheries.¹³ This helps to explain the similarities of these Mediterranean objects to one another and their uncertain specific attributions and it points to their belonging within a wider, shared visual culture. The Griffin, for example, is a work that could have been made and circulated in any number of these sites. The fantastic beast, carrying connotations of victory and power, would have been clearly understood throughout the Mediterranean sphere, regardless of where it was made. Localization along multiple axes acknowledges the continual interchange and interactivity of portable works within the representational practices of these cultures. Instead of asking where objects came from, the question might be reformulated to ask what were the implications of portability and how were objects used and perceived interculturally? I will argue that the identities of these objects – the way they were defined and are redefined – are tied to their portability.

What I would like to suggest here is not a cross-cultural exchange in the traditional sense of the transmission of individual objects and ideas among disparate cultures. I am proposing, instead, the existence of a broader cultural mechanism through which objects extended beyond themselves, both geographically and semantically; a discourse of portability that mapped a common

visual language across cultural and religious boundaries, whether those objects moved, as in the case of the Griffin, or remained fixed, as in the case of the so-called Mantle of Roger II (see plate 10, on page 29), a second work from the Mediterranean, at the opposite end of the attribution spectrum.¹⁴ The Mantle's border inscription in Arabic provides a precise date of 1133–4 and localization to the royal workshop in Palermo, and hence the likely patronage of Roger II (1111–54), the Norman ruler of Sicily and southern Italy. Yet despite such a definitive attribution, identity for the work cannot be confined within these finite limits. The content of the inscription may locate the Mantle within its Norman context, but the choice of Arabic text and script also forges a link beyond the Western Norman domain to the Islamic sphere. The same can be said for the theme represented on the Mantle, a lion subduing a camel disposed on either side of a palm tree. The theme of dominance and submission was a favourite royal theme on Norman monuments, explored through a number of different pairs of stronger animals dominating weaker animals.¹⁵ However, it was also a traditional and enduring theme originating in the ancient Near East and Persia, surviving into medieval times, and widely used in the visual cultures throughout the Mediterranean world as a recognizable display and claim of power and dominion.¹⁶ The choice of this theme for the Mantle, as in the case of the Griffin, represents a selection from a recognizable repertoire of emblematic images of animals, animal combats and court motifs, that, despite specific contexts and meanings, depended on and extended to an identity within the broader medieval Mediterranean sphere and the network of court art beyond the Mediterranean, as will be discussed in detail below. The expansion of borders through the discourse of portability resonates in the fluid exchanges in literary, intellectual and economic practices as well.

Much has been written about the lively multicultural interchange that took place in the Mediterranean between the tenth and twelfth centuries, most immediately between Islamic and Christian powers located in the Mediterranean arena at the crossroads of Europe, North Africa and Asia, including, among others, Norman Sicily, Fatimid Egypt and North Africa, al-Andalus and Byzantium.¹⁷ Interchange in the Mediterranean was neither new nor momentary. Geographically, the Mediterranean Sea had always been the natural connector between the people and cultures around its shores. Well-travelled routes were established in antiquity and the strong ties between Mediterranean centres during ancient times laid the ground for a common tradition that was retained and recognizable in varying degrees, in spite of great cultural changes after the heyday of ancient activity. Between the tenth and twelfth centuries, when interactions between Mediterranean centres became intense once again, these routes formed in antiquity and late antiquity were reactivated. During this time, the Fatimids, Byzantines, Normans and Umayyads in Spain flourished and competed in close proximity around the Mediterranean. Each sponsored its own impressive literary, scientific, artistic and commercial centres, and no single power dominated the others. The energetic competition between these powers sometimes took the form of military conflict but for the most part the rivalry was played out through commerce and diplomacy. The constant traffic of people and goods, at court level through gifts and at merchant-class level through trade, proved an effective recipe for sustaining a fragile co-existence and a delicate balance of power.¹⁸ Each of

these centres was inhabited by a mix of populations representing the ethnic and religious peoples of all the other Mediterranean centres, and members of these groups maintained networks of trading partners among co-religionists throughout the region.¹⁹ When travelling anywhere within the Mediterranean, S.D. Goitein noted that ‘one was, so to speak, within one’s own precincts.’²⁰ I would argue that, visually, it was the portable works in circulation that defined such familiar surroundings and imparted the ‘Mediterranean’ feeling and look.

Yet, a few qualifications are in order here. I do not wish to suggest a monolithic Mediterranean culture with an undifferentiated collective visual identity for all objects. This would simply substitute one fixed classification for another. As recent studies have pointed out, the availability and sharing of visual vocabulary did not necessarily imply the existence of a pluralistic culture.²¹ Interchange did not imply uniformity. It operated at different levels of intensity and within varying political, social and cultural networks and boundaries.²² A shared collective signification, furthermore, did not rule out the existence of individual identity. While the shared emblematic themes of animals and court activities was ubiquitous throughout the Mediterranean, this common vocabulary was used to frame particular messages and representations of specific identity, as, for example, the Mantle below.²³ Of importance, therefore, was not only the appearance of these themes but how these themes were used and perceived. The visual vocabulary itself could be used in different ways by different cultures. For example, palmette motifs on tenth-century luxury works found in both Byzantine and Umayyad Spanish courts (plates 8 and 9) form close visual analogues, but the syntactical organization of this vocabulary in each remains distinct.²⁴ The palmettes in the Byzantine works are generally used as a framing border pattern, whereas the palmettes in the Umayyad pieces constitute the image field itself. Even in instances where works appear to us visually indistinguishable, the eleventh- and twelfth-century viewers probably could have made distinctions, and even during the eleventh and twelfth centuries similar themes were not all perceived in the same way by all audiences. The discourse of portability also allowed for multiple identities.

In the case of the Pisa Griffin, for example, the pan-Mediterranean theme of a fantastic griffin acquired a specific identity tied to its installation and meaning in the Pisan setting, where it became a trophy of Pisan victory, with the transfer of the Griffin’s apotropaic powers to its new site atop the cathedral.²⁵ Later, when the Griffin was placed in the Museum of the Campo Santo, it was defined as a ‘work of art’ and labelled the ‘Pisa Griffin’, the identity still claimed for the work today. The specific identity and value of the Pisa Griffin, therefore, may be tied primarily to how it was used. While the shared appearance and visual vocabulary signified collective belonging and a culture of interchange, the distinctions in the way the vocabulary was used defined nuances of individual identity. The full range of meanings, therefore, is produced through the balance between the local and the international spheres, a delicate balance at best. In the case of the Griffin, for example, our knowledge of the particular is admittedly partial as we cannot be certain where or how the Griffin was used before its transference and installation on the Cathedral of Pisa. Visually, the broader pan-Mediterranean identity dominates. This is the case for the many objects with conflicting attributions from the shared Mediterranean visual culture of the tenth to twelfth centuries. The



8 (above) Casket of Hisham II, Spain, 976. Silver, wood, gilt and niello. Treasury, Gerona Cathedral.



9 (left) Gospel Lectionary, Ms. M639, fol. 1r. The Anastasis, and John with Prochoros, Byzantine, 11th century. The Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York. Photo: The Pierpoint Morgan Library/Art Resource, NY.

price for regional participation and belonging was often the suppression or loss of local, particular identity. For these objects there is always the inherent conflict between retaining local meaning and culture on the one hand, and functioning in the broader global sphere, on the other. It is a dichotomy familiar in our own times, as we embark on the multi-ethnic, multinational globalization, fraught with fantasies about Utopian internationalism and, at the same time, with fears of losing local identities in the process.²⁶

Beyond the Mediterranean – An international court culture

Another qualification about Mediterranean culture is that, for the most part, the works belong to the realm of the court that extended beyond the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean formed a closely knit subsystem with its own core and regional coherence, but it was just one of several regions within a larger interconnected international system of trade and exchange that linked the large land areas of Europe to Asia by sea and overland routes.²⁷ On the west and north, the Mediterranean linked up with the Italian port cities and the European circuit. On the east, the Mediterranean sea route linked up to an overland route from the Levant to Baghdad which, in turn, connected and overlapped on the northeast to the overland route from Constantinople to China via Central Asia, and southward to the Indian Ocean. Each of the key Mediterranean powers maintained political and religious links well beyond the Mediterranean. Fatimid Egypt maintained contact with Islamic centres outside its boundaries, notably with Abbasid Baghdad and the Jaziran cities, while Byzantium maintained ties with Orthodox satellite states and independent affiliate states as far away as Kiev and Georgia.²⁸ In some cases, notably in areas that were within both the Islamic and Byzantine orbits, the cross-cultural connections were as thoroughly interwoven and as difficult to unravel as those within the Mediterranean.

Within this broader purview, in particular, was the closely knit international court culture that superseded geographic regional affiliations. The pathways of cultural exchange followed the more widely dispersed small independent states during the twelfth century, extending over Spain, Sicily, Anatolia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Byzantium and the Caucasus.²⁹ The affiliation with a ‘fellowship or family of kings’, exemplified by the Fatimid, Abbasid and Byzantine rulers, was taken with particular seriousness by the smaller states as a validation for identity and legitimacy.

This court culture was defined by a shared taste and classification of luxury and visual display.³⁰ While literary sources delight over descriptions of rare and unique objects acquired through imperial gifts and plunder, the quest for the prized singular object became a shared trope among the courts and the courts vied with one another within the same definitions and criteria for luxury and the exotic.³¹ Foreign objects enjoyed a higher status than local ones, and those from exotic ‘Eastern’ empires were held in highest esteem as paradigms of imperial luxury and grandeur. (Of course, the definition of ‘eastern’ depended on where one was located.) Authentic Eastern objects may, in fact, have existed and luxury materials such as silks, ivory and precious stones and jewels were, indeed,

imported from exotic, sometimes Eastern, locations. For the most part, the evidence suggests that imported materials were used locally to produce works that were perceived as exotic and eastern. Such exoticism applied to luxury textiles, which were often labelled as 'Eastern' but which were made locally.³² Not surprisingly, the shared perception of exoticism among the courts often resulted in a production of works which were indistinguishable from one court to another.

There was an underlying logic for the shared vocabulary of luxury. A common vocabulary provided a visual link between the courts and facilitated comprehensible and transferable communication. It has been rightly observed that most surviving luxury works today were either given as gifts or appropriated as booty.³³ Gifts given from one ruler to another were inscribed with a shared vocabulary of power and prestige, and those appropriated as booty displayed and solidified the transfer of that power and prestige.³⁴ Possession of the object implied participation in that power, as well as delineations of allegiance, alliance and hierarchy. Whether acquired as gifts or as booty, the objects represented much more than their literal selves. The objects may have referred to a ruler or, in some instances, acted as nothing less than substitutes for the actual presence of the ruler at the other end of the exchange.³⁵ Above all, objects established and stood for relationships between giver and recipient, engaging them in a continuous flow of reciprocity, thereby cementing the bonds between courts.

Textiles were the prime luxury medium for the circulation and exchange of the shared vocabulary of the international court culture. The portability and high status of textiles within the dominant Byzantine and Islamic cultures assured their significant mediating role in the exchange between all the affiliated cultures. It is the medium in which Byzantine participation occurred most fully in establishing this international visual vocabulary, and in which Byzantine-Islamic visual exchange flourished. The ubiquitous animal, hunt and court themes, symmetrically organized in pairs and enclosed in compartments, can be comfortably situated within Mediterranean textiles. The interrelatedness and difficulty in distinguishing between surviving textiles from different centres within these cultures, the documentation of tremendous quantities of textiles and their privileged use and display by the courts, and the frequent use of textile motifs in other media, all speak to their high value and to the depth of interchange.³⁶ The central place of textiles in international court culture will be highlighted in the following discussion of two works from Norman Sicily.

Norman Sicily

The twelfth-century royal court of Norman Sicily offers an excellent vantage point from which to study the boundaries and dynamics of this shared Mediterranean visual culture. The Normans wrested Sicily and southern Italy from an Arab dynasty in 1060.

During the twelfth century, under the reigns of Roger II, his son William I, and grandson William II, Norman Sicilian culture reached its height and played a crucial role in the political and cultural history of the Mediterranean at the time.³⁷ As westerners, the Normans kept close ties with their cousins in England and

Syria, and at the same time sponsored a culture in Sicily and southern Italy that included Byzantine and Islamic components. With Palermo as its capital, Sicily under the Normans became a meeting point in the Mediterranean geographical triangle comprising Islamic Spain, North Africa and Egypt, and served as a bridge among the medieval West, Byzantium and the Islamic world. Norman works of visual art participated in activating this interchange and have been duly noted as dynamic sites of interchange.³⁸

The Mantle of Roger II

One of the most celebrated of these sites of visual interchange is the Mantle of Roger II (1133–34, plate 10), a work discussed above for its ties to pan-Mediterranean culture despite its dynastic self-referentiality.³⁹

Mantles had traditionally functioned as attributes of political and religious prerogative. In the biblical account, after the prophet Elijah is carried off to heaven in a fiery chariot and disappears,

[Elisha] picked up Elijah's mantle, which had dropped from him; and he went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. Taking the mantle which had dropped from Elijah, he struck the water and said, 'Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?' As he too struck the water, it parted to the right and the left, and Elisha crossed over. When the disciples of the prophets at Jericho saw him from a distance, they exclaimed, 'The spirit of Elijah has settled on Elisha!' And they went to meet him and bowed low before him to the ground (Kings II, 2.13–15).⁴⁰

Such is the description of the literal and figurative passing of the mantle of leadership from the prophet Elijah to his successor Elisha. Since biblical and ancient times, mantles had been used as instruments for the designation and transmission of holiness and power and were worn by rulers and clergy as signifiers of authority. Also embedded in the mantle's conferral and authentication of power was its protective function. Through the power conferred by the mantle and under the mantle of authority, the rulers and their realms received protection. Since, for the most part, the claim of authority was divine, the protection was considered divine as well.

Whatever other meanings and associations would accrue, the Mantle of Roger II was anchored by this dual function of power and protection. Significantly, well after its specific Norman use, from the sixteenth century onwards, the Mantle was designated as the official coronation robe of the Holy Roman emperors.

In court culture, royal dress was an essential component of identity and self-representation of the ruler, and was taken with particular seriousness by rulers of smaller states who represented themselves in robes based on the Byzantine and Islamic models.⁴¹ Portability was a key factor in the wide dissemination of these garments throughout the courts and ironically, contributed to some degree to their present-day survival.⁴² It is often possible to match representations of robes in royal portraits with surviving luxury textiles that belonged to the shared visual court culture of the twelfth century. In some cases, the textiles or robes may have



10 Mantle of Roger II, 1133/34. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Photo: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

been gifts given directly from the Byzantine and Islamic sovereigns to rulers of smaller states, granting or acknowledging the authority of these rulers, and in all cases the choices of self-representation in these garments carried political messages of allegiance and identity.

Norman robes did in fact imitate Islamic and Byzantine models, as represented in the celebrated portraits of King Roger II. The portrait of Roger II in the Church of St Mary's of the Admiral (1146–7) clearly represents Roger in the guise of a Byzantine emperor, while his costume in the ceiling paintings of the Cappella Palatina (begun in 1143) presents him in the image of the Islamic Caliph. It has been suggested that the choice of garment may distinguish the various roles of the king, the guise of the Byzantine emperor signifying the holy sphere, and that of the Caliph signifying the royal sphere.⁴³ The garments here are transferred to the Norman self-image, and at the same time, they perhaps challenge the Byzantine and Islamic originators of these images. However, as Kitzinger has shown for the Byzantine garment, and as Johns and Tronzo have shown for the Islamic garment, these representations are no more than generalized and abstract images.⁴⁴ The Mantle, by contrast, is a singular Norman design that was probably worn by Roger and referred specifically to Norman rule and its ruler.

The Mantle's theme of dominance and submission, represented metaphorically through the representation of the stronger animal dominating the weaker animal, was not a motif used exclusively by the Normans but rather was widely disseminated, as noted above. The specificity of 'Norman' meaning, however, was determined by the choice of the lion and camel, and how that theme was used. Ultimately, the meaning of the theme on the mantle depended on and was completed by its wearer. While wearing the mantle, Roger animated the animal combat, enacting the full theme as it is spelled out in the medallions of the Byzantine royal hunting silks, representing victorious hunters/rulers flanking a central tree with emblematic, metaphorical animal combats echoing the theme below (plates 11 and 12).⁴⁵ The real king, Roger, embodied and substituted the image of the ruler/hunter, while the animal combat on the Mantle duplicated the emblematic image represented below the ruler/hunter. The semi-circular form of the mantle may be understood as the lower portion of the medallion on the hunting silk with the person of the king completing the theme of the upper portion.

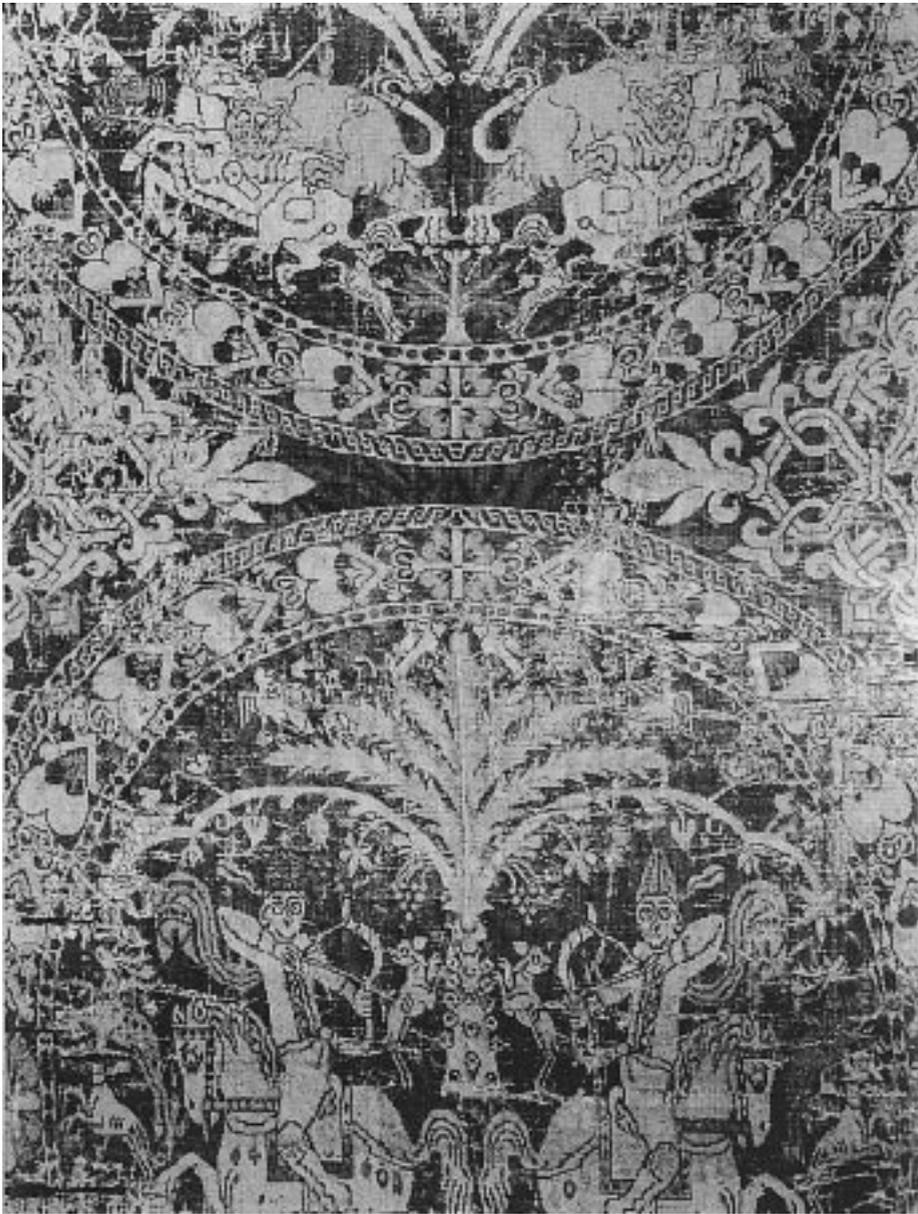
The lion, which appeared as the royal symbol in a number of Norman royal monuments, clearly signified Norman victory and was personalized by Roger, who identified with the image of the victorious lion.⁴⁶ By wearing the image of a victorious lion over his shoulders, the lion was transferred and fused to his person, transforming Roger into the embodiment of victory. Therefore, by performing its traditional role of granting power and protection, the Mantle conferred and validated Roger's power and authority. The unusual choice of a camel as the opposing, defeated, larger but weaker animal, seems to have been as deliberate as the choice of the lion, and, through the eyes of the Normans, could only have signified Islam.⁴⁷ Yet the triumph is defined not only through the clarity of present identities in the contemporary Norman–Islamic context, but also through a reversal of the motif's past associations. Thus, while the lion may once have represented Islamic victory, it now represents Norman triumph, turning the tables



Fig. 11. Hanging shawl, Byzantine, 7th century (?), Vatican Museums, Rome.

on the Muslims and proclaiming a shift in the balance of power between the Muslims and the Christians. The reversal in the use of the motif, in fact, goes beyond appropriation and demonstrates an act of expropriation.⁴⁸ Such expropriation finds parallels in other royal Norman works and fits into the overall pattern of Roger's patronage, where Islamic and Byzantine visual motifs were used to glorify the Norman dynasty and the imperial self-image, while at the same time disempowering Islamic and Byzantine hegemony.⁴⁹

The actual shape and type of the Mantle follows the form of medieval European mantles, linking the Mantle to yet another sphere, and connecting Roger II to the Western rulers and clerics who wore these as signs of political and religious authority.⁵⁰ Logistically, this connection was made possible by the



12 Hunting Silk, Byzantine, 9th century. Church of Saint-Calais, Sarthe.

implications of portability. Several of the Western mantles were tied to the Mediterranean visual realm. One of the most celebrated and one of the few surviving of these, the mantle of the Ottonian ruler Henry II, who was crowned in 1014, may have been made in southern Italy or Sicily and presented as a gift to Henry II by Melus (Ishmael) of Apulia during his visit to Germany between 1017 and 1019. This would suggest strong southern Italian and Norman associations.⁵¹ Furthermore, two celebrated mantles for European clerics, the Fermo Chasuble of

St Thomas of Becket and the Suaire of St Lazare, were made from twelfth-century Islamic Andalusian textiles with the familiar shared Mediterranean vocabulary of peacocks, lions, griffins and eagles.⁵²

These Western mantles share cosmic themes which include representations of animals, and animals triumphant over prey.⁵³ Such themes fit the traditional function of mantles in granting power and protection. Wrapped in the mantle, the wearer would receive the benefit of cosmic protection, while at the same time he would himself become part of the cosmological programme, occupying the honoured central position, the focal point of the theme.⁵⁴ In the case of the Mantle of Roger II, cosmological implications may have been incorporated into the overriding theme of kingship. It is possible, for example, that the dots on the animals still retained some residual signification of their original ancient association with stars and constellations.⁵⁵ Roger's interest in astronomy and astrology supports such a reading, as does the association with other related works created under Roger's patronage that carry probable cosmological connotations, such as the celebrated nave ceiling of his Cappella Palatina.⁵⁶

A key marker of identity and one of the most significant connections for the Mantle is the visually striking Arabic inscription, which clearly spells out the date and localization of the piece, while serving as its elegant border design. The inscription reads:

This is what was made in the royal treasury (*khizannah*). Full happiness, honour, good fortune, perfection, long life, profit, welcome, prosperity, generosity, splendour, glory, perfection, realization of aspirations and hopes, of delights of days and nights, without end or modification, with might, care, sponsorship, protection, happiness, well-being (success), triumph and sufficiency. In Palermo (*Madinah Siquiliyah*) in the year 528 [1133–34].

Why was this specific information inscribed in Arabic? The choice of Arabic for the inscription was as carefully considered as the representation of the camel. For those who could read Arabic, most obviously the Muslims within the Mediterranean sphere, including those present in Roger's domain, it would clarify, once and for all, the reversal of power and the expropriation of the perquisites of victory. Arabic was by no means restricted to Muslims; it was a language used at Roger's court. Roger himself was fluent in Arabic, as well as in Latin and Greek. The use of Arabic was a sign of Roger's cosmopolitanism. It was also a sign of the international flavour of the Norman court, where the highest artistic and intellectual achievements of Islam could be found and where artists employed by Roger were capable of executing their work in flawless Arabic and authentic Islamic design.⁵⁷ As a display of Roger's conceit, the inclusion of Arabic marked the fullness of the expropriation of the Islamic theme. Here Roger's control and mastery extends to the language and culture of his adversaries.

Beyond the legibility and authenticity of the text, the Arabic script was recognized in the first place as the visual sign of Islamic culture. In fact, when the mantle was draped over Roger's shoulders, the inscription could not be fully visible, and at best, only words or fragments of phrases could be deciphered.⁵⁸ What was at stake here was Roger's royal image. The inclusion of the Arabic

inscription lent an air of an authentic Islamic – probably Fatimid – royal work.⁵⁹ Robes inscribed with the name of the caliph were the royal Islamic prerogative and would be presented by the ruler to officials and visitors as gifts.⁶⁰

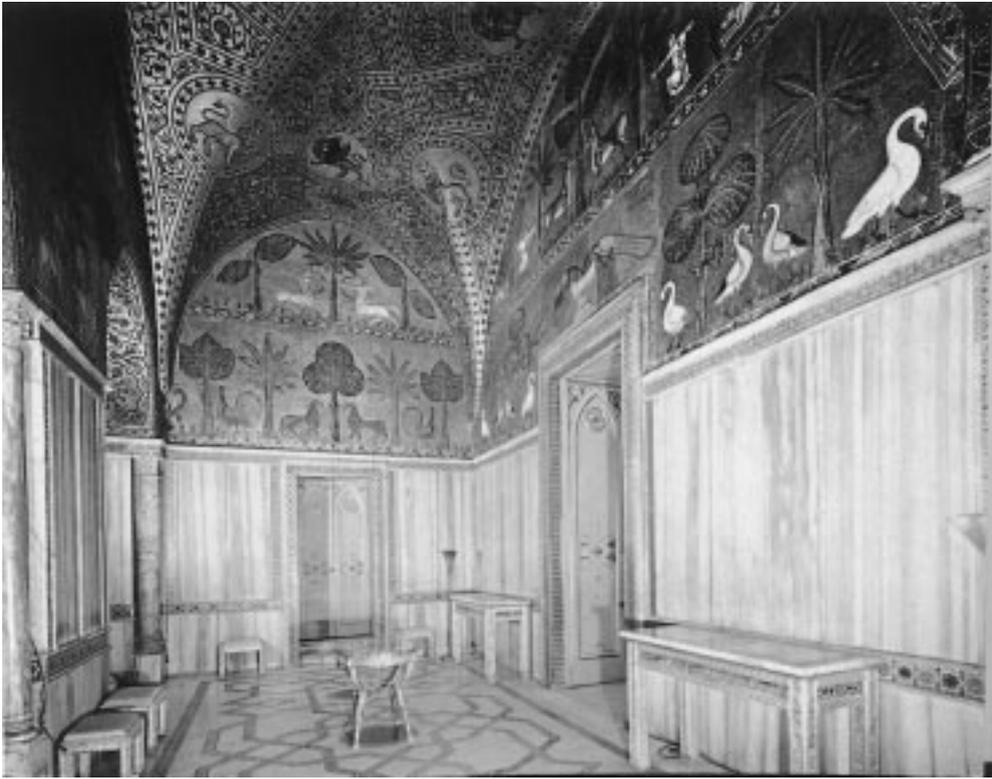
Finally, from the vantage point of medieval Western use and perception, an Arabic inscription would have signified an apotropaic function and religious aura, meanings which support the cosmological/victory themes and the practical and metaphorical protective functions of the Mantle discussed earlier.⁶¹

The message of the Mantle, therefore, would have been clear to a number of different audiences, depending on the access of each to any single one of these connections. Following the pattern of Norman specificity, an inscription supplied details of factual information. Yet, the full localization of the work required a weaving together of an entire network of connections, including traditional functions of royal prerogative, themes from the collective Mediterranean repertoire, links to the specifically Islamic royal sphere and actual mantle types used in medieval Western Europe. In other words, the full implications and nuances of meaning of the Mantle could only be understood through access to the multiple coordinates – Western, Norman, Mediterranean and Islamic. Identity and meaning occurred and spread beyond the barriers of specific localization through the intricacies and networks of connections.

Norman Reception Room

The implications of portability and networks of connections extended beyond peripatetic pieces. Through circulation, the court vocabulary inscribed on movable objects was transferred to large-scale static architectural programmes fixed in space and time. Such a transfer may be proposed for a room in the Joharia section of the Norman Palace in Palermo, the so-called Norman Stanza (plate 13), which probably served as a reception room, dating to the reigns of either William I or his son William II. Despite restorations, the room preserves remarkably well the original twelfth-century mosaic programme, covering the vault and the upper portions of the walls.⁶² In the vault (plate 14) a geometric framework of lattice bands connects the four roundels enclosing lions at the four corners and the four eight-lobed medallions enclosing griffins, placed symmetrically in the intervening spaces between the lions. The geometric strapwork meets at the centre of the vault in a star-shaped compartment enclosing an eagle triumphant over a hare. On the walls (plate 15) the imagery comprises pairs of real and imaginary animals, sometimes with hunters, disposed symmetrically on either side of central palm trees.

All these motifs are familiar from the international court imagery of royal power and glorification.⁶³ The animals served as royal signs and guardians, and wielded power in the cosmic realm as well. The motif of paired animals flanking a tree descends from the ancient 'Tree of Life/Tree of Paradise' motif, and in medieval times, it was associated with a royal or paradisaical setting.⁶⁴ These motifs, individually and in combination, may be found within the Norman court context, in particular, in works associated with the Islamic sphere. The animals on the vault of the reception room are represented in the earlier paintings on the nave



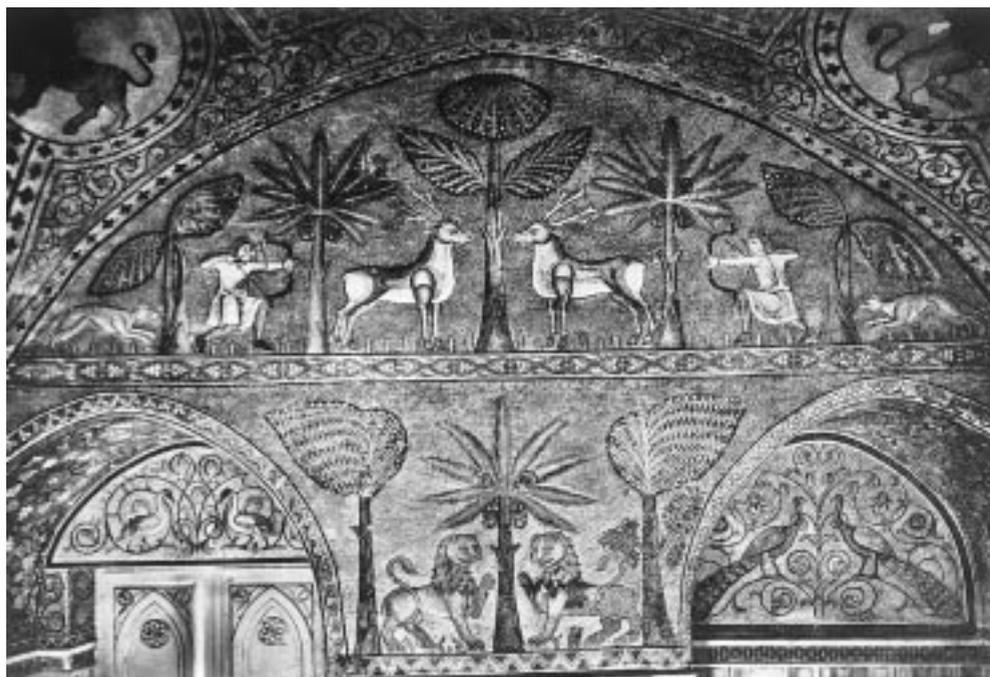
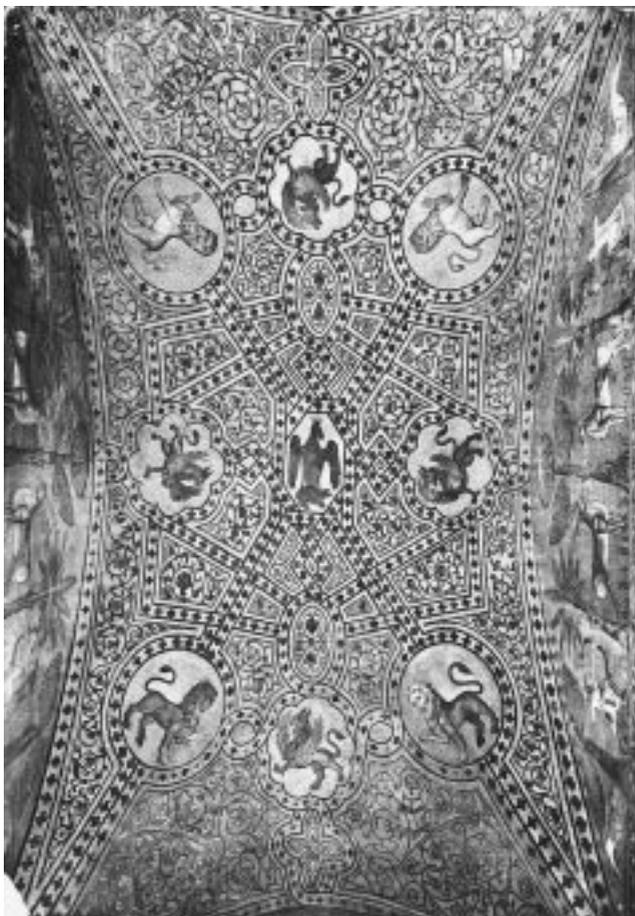
13 Reception Room, 1150–1200. Norman Royal Palace, Palermo.

ceiling of the Cappella Palatina, located in the same Norman palace as the reception room.⁶⁵ The triumphant eagle, in the centre of the room's vault, which can also be found in the Cappella Palatina, is a variant of the victory theme encountered on the Mantle. Like the victorious lion on the Mantle, the crowned eagle here metaphorically represents the Norman king. The eagle/king also refers to the theme of royal apotheosis represented in the Cappella Palatina ceiling, where the eagle holds its prey in its talons as it lifts up the king on its breast.⁶⁶ The motif of paired animals flanking trees on the lunettes of the reception room is familiar from the Mantle of Roger II, where triumphant lions symmetrically flank a palm tree. Furthermore, on the lining of the Mantle the theme of the tree flanked by human figures and animals appears in a repeat pattern.⁶⁷

It is hardly possible to overestimate the mediating role of textiles in this design. The enclosure of animals in compartments, the static representations, the inclusion of eagle and griffins, and the consistency of paired hunting and animal motifs symmetrically flanking central trees, all clearly point to textile design and the shared textile vocabulary of the international courts between the tenth and twelfth centuries, from Islamic, Byzantine and Norman centres.⁶⁸ As in the case of the Mantle, the themes on the lunettes of the reception room find close comparisons in Byzantine hunting silks (plates 11 and 12). The wide dissemination of textiles among these centres may also account for parallel translations of these motifs on a range of other works in more monumental scales as well.⁶⁹

14 (right) Vault, Reception Room, 1150–1200. Norman Royal Palace, Palermo. Photo: Alinari/ Art Resource, NY.

15 (below) East Wall, Reception Room, 1150–1200. Norman Royal Palace, Palermo.



The connection of the reception room design to textiles is especially fitting, considering both the visual canopied tent-like effect of the vaulting in the reception room and the way textiles were used at court. The vault's lattice bands suggest the poles that support the canopy, while the vault's mosaic decoration extending down to the tops of the walls reminds one of a cloth whose edges overhang its frame. The plausibility of interchange between mosaic sheathing and textile wall-hanging is confirmed when we consider that textiles made up an important part of palace furnishings. Textiles with representations of traditional royal themes of animals and vegetation were used both as wall-hangings, and as complete substitutions for and simulations of built architecture.⁷⁰ Within the Norman court William Tronzo has noted that tapestries hung over the mosaic decoration on the walls of the Cappella Palatina.⁷¹

The relationship of canopies to vaults and their heavenly associations had long ago been noted in the classic study by Karl Lehmann⁷² and is supported here by the astral associations of the animals represented in the reception room vault. In the Norman realm, canopies surmounted royal and episcopal thrones which incorporated lions, eagles and griffins on the thrones and throne supports as guardian and astral beasts. In Sicily and southern Italy, lions appear on the Palatina and Monreale thrones (both of which date, at latest, to William II); griffins appear on the Monreale throne, and eagles are present on the episcopal throne at Canosa, c.1080.⁷³ Astral associations of thrones were known from Byzantine, Islamic and earlier Sasanian contexts.

In addition to textile designs, the reception room offers striking comparisons to a number of celebrated royal ivory boxes from Islamic Spain (plates 16 and 17).⁷⁴ The specific motifs on the reception room's lunette of symmetrically paired animals and archers on either side of a palm tree are duplicated on an ivory casket dated 1049–50 made at Cuenca (plate 16), for Husām al-Dawla, son of the Taifa king al-Ma'mūn.⁷⁵ The lions and griffins on the vault of the reception room ceiling design are echoed in the corner compartments on this ivory box. The eagle triumphant over a hare, in the centre of the room's vault, can also be found on other royal ivories from Islamic Spain, as on the lid of the box for 'Abd al-Malik, son of al-Manṣūr, dated 1004–5 (plate 17).⁷⁶ The room and the boxes even share a similar shape and structure, confirming the jewel-box effect of the Norman reception room. To be sure, the Andalusian ivories probably carried specific messages of royal propaganda relating to specific local and regional events and politics, utilizing the universal royal imagery of hunt, animals and vegetation, as visual metaphors for privilege and power.⁷⁷ Yet the comparisons between the structures and programmes of the reception room and the ivories are so specific that they appear to be direct translations from one medium into the other. It is possible that this inter-media exchange was effected through textiles. As in the reception room, the symmetry and paired motif patterns on the ivories are clearly related to the textile format.⁷⁸ Later on, these ivories were paired with textiles when the ivory containers served as reliquaries and were often lined with nearly matching textiles.⁷⁹ Yet, while the initial impetus for these patterns on the ivories may ultimately have come from textile design and their use may have referred to the prestige of the textile medium, once these designs were absorbed on works in other media, such as ivories and other portable arts, these works themselves



16 Casket, Spain, 1049/50. Ivory, leather and gold. Museo Arqueologico Nacional, Madrid.



17 Casket lid, Spain, 1004/5. Ivory. Museo de Navarra, Pamplona.

became conduits of interchange. The designs were so thoroughly integrated and disseminated in the full range of media throughout the Mediterranean that it is difficult to trace the exact conduits of exchange. The extension of the inter-media exchange to include also the broader visual arena of non-portable works expanded the implications of portability even further. For while architectural monuments are obviously not mobile, through their participation in this network, they too served as conduits of interchange and they too may be located along the pathway of portability.

While the same visual vocabulary is used as the focus and signifier of a royal space of privilege and power in both the portable works and the Norman reception room, the viewing experiences and functions speak to differences inherent in the nature of each medium. Even the privacy of a small reception room cannot compare with the intimacy of contemplating a portable object held in one's hand. For the reception room, which must be experienced from within, the dimension of space and the potential for public display are critical factors in creating meaning and for the understanding of function. As a site for royal reception, the room served as a place where luxury works were displayed and where diplomatic gifts were exchanged. But more than just a setting for exchange, the room itself played an active part in the inter-media interchange, which included portable objects, furnishings and wall mosaics, as well as the users and viewers of the room. The visitors in the room would be completely surrounded by the visual discourse of royal privilege and power, echoed throughout in various scales, precious materials and textures. The room certainly served to magnify further the Norman pretensions of grandeur and royal status, though it represented much more than an enlargement of a luxury court object.⁸⁰ Under the glittering canopy, presumably seated on an actual throne, surrounded by his courtiers and valuable objects, the king could project himself into this visual programme of magnificence. The astral association of the animals represented on the vault, may even support a heavenly association, suggesting not only actual glorification of the king but also a metaphorical ascent to paradise.⁸¹

The insertion of this visual programme into a stationary architectural monument may also be read as a declaration of Norman dynastic claims and aspirations of durability. The fixed nature of architectural space stands in obvious contrast to the indeterminacy of the object and the vicissitudes of portability. Architectural monuments suggest permanence and invariability while portable ones appear ephemeral and vulnerable. Ironically, these roles are sometimes reversed. It is, in fact, rare to find architectural monuments, like the relatively well-preserved reception room, that still survive today and that can also be linked to their portable counterparts. The large-scale works, intended as monuments to posterity, have often fallen into disrepair or have been targeted for destruction in acts of political aggression and violence, whereas small-scale works, seemingly more vulnerable, have often survived precisely because of their size and portability. They are simply easier to rescue and hide. Alternatively, small-scale works have survived through looting, an act of aggression which often accompanies the destruction of large-scale monuments, serving as a counterpart to the violence directed at the buildings. In such cases, the object then becomes a valued souvenir, signifying victory.

The Innsbruck Dish

Portability opens up the possibility of otherwise unlikely connections between distant geographical and cultural realms. Such is the case for the celebrated copper gilt dish with cloisonné and champlevé enamel housed in the Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum in Innsbruck (plates 18 and 19).

The Innsbruck Dish, as it is popularly known, represents the very essence of portability. Considered as a singular work, it has thus far defied any definitive and undisputed classification and attribution.⁸² The circumstances of the making and reception of the enamelled dish are unclear and scholars have puzzled over how to reconcile ambiguous and even – at times – contradictory evidence that has caused this work to slip between the constructed definitions of Islamic and Byzantine art.⁸³

The inscriptions in Arabic and Persian on the Innsbruck Dish supply Islamic links and an association with a ruler from the mid-twelfth-century Artuqid dynasty from either eastern Anatolia or northern Mesopotamia. However, the inscription is so poorly rendered that the precise identity of an historical figure cannot be ascribed with absolute certainty.⁸⁴ On the other hand, the enamel technique suggests a Byzantine connection. Even so, its rough workmanship has cast doubt on its Byzantine court production and has raised speculation that it was made in some unidentified provincial centre, with access and receptivity to this medium. In most studies of the work, the goal has been to isolate and identify the single site of production for the dish.

Recognizing the complexity of cultural identification for the enamelled dish, Scott Redford proposes Georgia as the most likely site of production. This attribution is reasonable since, as Redford notes, ‘medieval Georgia possessed a hybrid culture, oriented toward Byzantium by virtue of its orthodoxy, but partaking of many features of medieval Muslim culture due to its geography’.⁸⁵ Indeed, as Redford points out, well before the twelfth century this area was marked by an intermingling of peoples and cultures.

While Redford’s hypothesis is persuasive, I will focus on the work’s connective relationships rather than pursuing the identification of its specific site of origin. Redford has noted parallels with Norman works and other Mediterranean centres.⁸⁶ I would like to add the visual connection between the dish and the programme of the Norman reception room, and ask: how we can explain such striking and unexpected connections and what can we learn from them?

The comparison of the dish to the reception room is striking. The roundels on the dish contain eagles and winged beasts triumphant over weaker animals, recalling the themes on the vault of the reception room, while themes in the interstices between the roundels on the dish contain paired animals flanking palm trees, including leopards in one case, corresponding to the lunette design in the reception room. The emblematic treatment of the motifs in the reception room is expanded on the dish to contain more narrative details, as well as details that unmistakably link the iconography to the Ascension–Paradise theme. In the roundels the animals are clearly linked to the astral realm: the two eagles have projecting arms holding moon crescents and each winged astral beast is shown triumphant over a weaker animal. Between the roundels, the paradisa-



18 Bowl with the Ascension of Alexander, Anatolian(?), mid-12th century. Copper gilt with cloisonné and champlevé enamel. Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck.

background is further expanded. Alternating with the palm-tree motifs are figural scenes of a lutist, a dancer and a group of entertainers (acrobats?). Hovering over these figures are paired birds, perhaps connoting the paradisal context. A similar programme of themes is combined on the exterior of the dish.

In the centre of the dish, enclosed in a medallion, there is a crowned ruler, shown seated on a winged griffin-supported wheeled chariot-throne, about to alight. The scene has been identified as the Ascension of Alexander the Great, surely representing the aspirations to glory on behalf of the dish's patron in the merging of his identity with that of Alexander. The closest analogies for the motif may be found on Byzantine 'charioteer silks' (c. ninth century).⁸⁷ While it is spelled out fully on the dish, the central Ascension–Paradise theme is essentially the same as that in the vault of the Norman reception room, where it is suggested emblematically, through the crowned eagle.

In short, in addition to expected ties to textile motifs, the dish is covered with similar themes found on both the vault and the lunette of the Norman reception room. Once this programmatic link is made, the transference and interchangeability in media between mosaic and enamel techniques become apparent.



19 Detail of bowl with the Ascension of Alexander, Anatolian(?), mid-12th century. Copper gilt with cloisonné and champlevé enamel. Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck.

Regarding the reception room, this connection confirms and enlarges its place in intermedia exchange. As for the dish, however, these compelling visual ties seem to complicate further the coordinates of identification. Unlike the reception room and the related Andalusian ivories, the Innsbruck Dish was probably not made in the Mediterranean sphere. The close connection need not necessarily be explained through direct contact.

Instead, this connection and the range of connections inscribed on the enamelled dish articulate the pluritopic model of multiple sites and suggest the truly far-reaching implications of portability. Identity for the dish extends well beyond any single geographic region or nationality. Even if the dish originated in Georgia, it was made for a foreign Artuqid prince, and it contains links to Byzantine, Islamic and Norman Sicilian works. Unlike the fixed medium chosen by the Normans, here is a work that is completely shaped and defined by portability. It is an object that fully suited and represented the complexities and transitory nature of princely authority in a twelfth-century minor court of the Artuqids. Mobility in this context represented not only the form taken for the portable work, but also a metaphor for the instability and impermanence of such courts, which relied on transferable Islamic and Byzantine visual tropes for royal identity. To ascribe the Innsbruck Dish to a single location would run the risk of excluding or overlooking other branches within this rich network and context. The dish is far more interesting for what it tells us about the interchange and

connections between these realms than for any one of these affiliations separately. It is an object that stands at the meeting point of interchange, which defined an international court culture during the twelfth century and united such disparate frontier kingdoms as the Artuqids of Turkman descent and the Normans of European descent. For the dish and the related works in this visual network of culture, identity is mapped, not by physical boundaries of the object nor by the geographical boundaries of a particular place but, rather, through the pathways of portability. Through their circulation, the portable arts were true connectors for court cultures between the tenth and twelfth centuries.

What is proposed here is a reconceptualization of cultural space, predicated on the notion that movement is inherent in the nature of the object and that through movement the coordinates for identity may be defined. This approach offers a more complex and expansive view of the object; highlighting its dynamic potential and defining it, not simply as a static product of culture contained within physical and geographical boundaries, but rather as an active agent engaged in self-definition and in shaping the contours of culture. The object may literally traverse cultural and geographical distances. The object itself also serves as a point of departure for a journey leading in many directions, following continuous and changing relationships and connections over space and time. The implications of portability, therefore, allow the object to extend beyond its literal self to an expandable field of identifications and meanings. Identity is relational. Through its exchanges, the object both defines and is defined by its relation to other objects, people and representational practices along its pathway of portability.

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Notes

A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the conference of the College Art Association, in Boston, February 1996, in a session chaired by Marianna Shreve Simpson entitled 'Expanding the Limits of the Object in the Islamic World'. I would like to thank Cristelle Baskins, Madeline H. Caviness and Sally Anne Duncan for their careful reading of drafts and for their excellent suggestions. I am also grateful to Anna Gonosová for discussions on textiles.

- 1 Wendy Steiner, *The Scandal of Pleasure. Art in an Age of Fundamentalism*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 80.
- 2 On the life of an object, see Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. A. Appadurai, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 64–94; Patrick Geary, 'Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics', *Social Life of Things*, pp. 169–91; Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra. Theft of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1978.
- 3 From the considerable literature on the recontextualization of non-western and medieval

objects in the Western European museum setting and their transformation into 'art', see Susan Vogel, 'Always True to the Object, in our Fashion', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, Washington DC and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991, pp. 191–204; James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1988, pp. 209, 235 and chaps. 9 and 10; Howard Morphy, 'Aesthetics in a Cross-Cultural Perspective: Some Reflections on Native American Basketry', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford*, vol. 23,

- no. 1 (1992), pp. 1–16. Robert S. Nelson, ‘The Discourse of Icons, Then and Now’, *Art History*, vol. 12, no. 2 (1989), pp. 144–57, and Joan Branham, ‘Sacrality and Aura in the Museum: Mute Objects and Articulate Space’, *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, vols 52/53 (1994/5), pp. 33–47. On periodization, see, for example, Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science*, New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1989, p. 20; for the classic statement of authorship as a way to privilege certain works and erase others see Michel Foucault, ‘What is an Author’, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, London and New York: Penguin Books, 1984, pp. 101–21.
- 4 For the lion in Cairo, see *Tresors fatimides du Caire*, exhib. cat., l’Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, 1998, no. 52; for the lion in Paris, see *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*, ed. Jerrilynn D. Dodds, exhib. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1992, no. 54.
 - 5 For a full treatment of the Griffin and its attribution to Spain, see *Al-Andalus*, op. cit. (note 4), pp. 216ff. with full bibliography of conflicting attributions and an acknowledgement of its broader regional connection. See, in particular, *The Art of Medieval Spain A.D. 500–1200*, exhib. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1993, pp. 80–1 (a different attribution in a catalogue produced by the same museum). For examples of conflicting attributions of other works in metal compare the following: A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World, 8th–18th Centuries*, exhib. cat., Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1982, pp. 68–9; Umberto Scerrato, *Metalli islamici*, Milan, 1966, p. 70ff.; Géza Fehérvári, *Islamic Metalwork of the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century in the Keir Collection*, London, 1976, pls. 9–10; Gaston Migeon, *Manuel d’art musulman: arts plastiques et industrielles*, vol. 1, Paris: Picard, 1927, p. 376ff.
 - 6 See Anna Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving AD 400 to AD 1200*, Vienna: Verlag Fassbaender, 1997, and the collected studies by Anna Muthesius, *Studies in Byzantine and Islamic Silk Weaving*, London: Pindar Press, 1995; this issue is also discussed in Priscilla Soucek, ‘Byzantium and the Islamic East’, in *Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A.D. 843–1261*, ed. Helen Evans and William Wixom, exhib. cat. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1997, pp. 405–407 and entries in the catalogue by Anna Gonosová, nos. 269–71 and 344, noting the resemblance of high-quality Sicilian textiles to Byzantine works.
 - 7 For example, compare the attributions of the ivory oliphants to southern Italy by Ernst Kühnel, in his *Die Islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen VIII–XIII Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1971, nos. 54ff. and the attribution by David MacKinnon Ebitz to Venice with contacts to Fatimid Egypt and Southern Italy, in his ‘Fatimid Style and Byzantine Model in a Venetian Ivory Carving Workshop’, *The Meeting of the Two Worlds. Cultural Exchange between East and West during the Period of the Crusades*, eds Vladimir P. Goss and Christine Verzár Bornstein, Studies in Medieval Culture, vol. XXI, Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986, pp. 309–29. See also the same carved ivory plaques, attributed to Egypt by Kühnel, nos. 88–89) and to southern Italy by Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, in *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650–1250*, Harmondsworth and New York, 1987, pp. 203–5, fig. 196. Another group of ivory plaques in the Bargello, Florence, are, similarly, of uncertain attribution (Kühnel, no. 90).
 - 8 For a parallel in the Mediterranean literary sphere, see Maria Rosa Menocal, *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origin of the Lyric*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1994, and review of this work by Gregory R. Stone, ‘The Age of Others’, *Medieval Encounters*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1996), pp. 155–63.
 - 9 Richard Ettinghausen, ‘The Bobrinski “Kettle”’: Patron and Style of an Islamic Bronze’, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 24, 1943, p. 193, n. 1. On the value and pedigree of works determined by the chain of Western ownership, see Sally Price, *Primitive Art in Civilized Places*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 100ff.
 - 10 Notable studies in Islamic art are Lisa Golombek, ‘The Draped Universe of Islam’, *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World. Papers from a Colloquium in Memory of Richard Ettinghausen*, ed. P. Soucek, University Park, PA. and London, 1988, pp. 25–39; and Cynthia Robinson, ‘Palace Architecture and Ornament in the “Courtly” Discourse of the Muluk al-Tawa’if: Metaphor and Utopia’, PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995. Among studies in other areas and disciplines, see Nelson, ‘Discourse of Icons’, op. cit. (note 3), p. 144ff.; David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989; Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972; Clifford Geertz, ‘Art as a Cultural System’, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 94–120.
 - 11 The work survives only partially preserved through a later copy. See now, *Book of Gifts and Rarities: Kitab al-Hadaya wa al-Tuhaf*, trans. and annotated Ghada Hijjawi Qaddumi, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996, with references to earlier editions and translations.
 - 12 Note, for example, Qaddumi, op. cit. (note 11), paras. 192, 139 and 402 for evaluations of carpets based on size and rock crystal containers based

- on capacity. An excellent discussion of this point regarding luxury works in the eleventh-century Taifa court culture in Spain, may be found in Cynthia Robinson, 'Palace Architecture and Ornament', op. cit. (note 10), p. 419ff.
- 13 Discussion of the pluritopic model and the reassessment of the centre/periphery model may be found in the literature of post-colonial theory. See, for example, Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance. Literacy Territoriality, and Colonization*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995, p. 8ff. and n. 13.
- 14 Hermann Fillitz, *Die Schatzkammer in Wien*, Vienna, 1964, fig. 6; idem., *Die Insignien und Kleinodien des Heiligen Römischen Reiches*, Vienna and Munich, 1954, p. 24, 57ff. figs. 23–6; Percy Ernst Schramm and Florentine Mütterich, *Denkmale der deutschen Könige und Kaiser: Ein Beitrag zur Herrschergeschichte von Karl dem Grossen bis Friedrich II 768–1250*, Munich, 1962, no. 179. Josef Deér, *The Dynastic Porphyry Tombs of the Norman Period in Sicily*, Cambridge, Mass., 1959, p. 40ff.; Ugo Monneret de Villard, 'La tessitura palermitana sotto i normanni e i suoi rapporti con l'arte bizantina', *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, vol. 3, *Letteratura e storia bizantina*, Vatican City, 1946, p. 464ff. Recently discussed in William Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom: Roger II and the Cappella Palatina in Palermo*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, pp. 142–3; and O. Grabar, 'Experience of Islamic Art', Levi della Vida lecture, U.C.L.A., March, 1996, kindly made available to me in typescript).
- 15 For the theme in the Norman realm see below pp. 33–4 (Norman reception room) and n. 65 (the ceiling of Cappella Palatina). Also discussed with respect to a group of eleventh–twelfth-century ivory oliphants either from southern Italy or Venice, in David MacKinnon Ebitz, 'The Medieval Oliphant: Its Function and Meaning in Romanesque Secular Art', *Explorations: A Journal of Research at the University of Maine at Orono*, vol. 1 (1984), pp. 11–20. The meaning of the palm tree is discussed in Tronzo, *Cultures of His Kingdom*, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 142–3, n. 31 and in terms of its royal and religious connotations in W. Tronzo, 'The Mantle and the Garden: Some Possibilities for Thinking About the Role of Gifts in Twelfth-Century Sicily', delivered at the conference of the College Art Association, Toronto, February, 1998, in the session, 'The Discourse of the Gift'.
- 16 The history of this theme from ancient times is explored in R. Etinghausen and Willy Hartner, 'The Conquering Lion, The Life Cycle of a Symbol', *Oriens*, vol. 17 (1964), pp. 161–71. For the appearance of this motif in the wider realm of Islamic court art, see the tenth-century Andalusian ivories, below, p. 36 and the twelfth-century lion-bull motifs on the entrance gateway of the Great Mosque in Diyarbakir, in Max van Berchem and Josef Strzygowski, *Amida: Materiaux pour l'épigraphie e l'histoire musulman du Diyarbekr*, Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1910, p. 67. A new interpretation of the lion and gazelle motif from Khirbat al-Mafjar has been proposed in Doris Behrens-Abouseif, 'The Lion-Gazelle Mosaic at Khirbat al-Mafjar', *Muqarnas*, vol. 14 (1997), pp. 11–18; for Byzantine examples, see the hunting textiles, n. 45, below.
- 17 See the classic study, S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 5 vols, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1967–1988, esp. vol. 1, pp. 1–74 for an historical overview. For the Normans, see David Abulafia, 'The End of Muslim Sicily', *Muslims under Latin Rule 1100–1300*, ed. J.M. Powell, Princeton, N.J., 1990, and idem., *Commerce and Conquest in the Mediterranean 1100–1500*, Aldershot: Variorum Press, 1993. Connections to Spain are discussed in Olivia Remie Constable, *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain: The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula, 900–1500*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994. For discussion of visual interchange in the Mediterranean, see Dalu Jones, 'Romanesque East and West?', *Connoisseur*, vol. 191 (April 1976), pp. 280–5; Oleg Grabar, 'The Shared Culture of Objects', in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. H. Maguire, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 1997, pp. 115–30.
- 18 This point is made for a later period in Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System AD 1250–1350*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- 19 Abu Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, op. cit. (note 18), p. 354; Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, op. cit. (note 17), vol. 1, p. 48, points out, for example, the practice of arranged marriages to facilitate and forge these international bonds.
- 20 *Mediterranean Society*, op. cit. (note 17), vol. 1, p. 42.
- 21 Among these studies: Tronzo, *Cultures of His Kingdom*, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 134–5; B. Zeitler, "'Urbs Felix Dotata Populo Trilingui": Some Thoughts About a Twelfth-century Funerary Memorial from Palermo', *Medieval Encounters*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1996), pp. 114–39; Robinson, 'Palace Architecture and Ornament', op. cit. (note 10).
- 22 For the relationship and distinction between the art of the court and that of the middle class, see Oleg Grabar, 'Imperial and Urban Art in Islam: The Subject Matter of Fatimid Art', *Colloque international sur l'histoire du Caire, mars-avril 1969*, Cairo, 1972, pp. 173–89; also Oleg Grabar, 'Trade with the East and the Influence of Islamic Art on the "Luxury Arts" in the West', *Il medio oriente e l'occidente nell'arte del XIII secolo* (Atti del XXIV congresso internazionale di storia dell'arte), Bologna, 1979, vol. 2, pp. 27–34, for

- distinctions between art and commerce, and between trade during the eleventh–twelfth centuries with that during the thirteenth century.
- 23 For the use of emblematic themes in this way, see E. Hoffman, 'A Fatimid Book Cover: Framing and Re-framing Cultural Identity in the Medieval Mediterranean World', in *L'Egypte Fatimide: son art et son histoire*, ed. Marianne Barrucand, Paris, 1999, pp. 404–19, and Francisco Prado-Vilar, 'Circular Visions of Fertility and Punishment: Caliphal Ivory Caskets from al-Andalus' *Muqarnas*, 14, 1997, pp. 19–41.
- 24 This comparison was made in Priscilla Soucek, 'Byzantium and the Islamic East', *Glory of Byzantium*, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 409–10, also cat. no. 38, and discussed by Soucek in a lecture at Harvard University, Spring, 1997.
- 25 Such a transfer follows a (Roman) tradition of defeating the enemy and taking possession of holy sites and spoils. See the discussion in Linda Seidel, 'Images of the Crusades in Western Art: Models as Metaphors', in *Meeting of the Two Worlds*, op. cit. (note 7), p. 384ff. Seidel also points out the specific analogy that was made between the Pisans in their North African raid on the Muslims in 1087 and the Roman victories. Further discussion on the magical absorption of the church of the powers of the ancient charms, the 'pagan powers submitting to new glory' and on the appropriation of the visual vocabulary of one's foes 'to mitigate some of their power by possessing their forms' appears in Linda Seidel, *Songs of Glory, The Romanesque Facades of Aquitaine*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981, pp. 61, 78 and 81. For an interesting application of ideas of appropriation, see Jerrilynn D. Dodds, 'Islam, Christianity, and the Problem of Religious Art', in *Art of Medieval Spain*, op. cit. (note 5), pp. 27–40; and Julie A. Harris, 'Muslim Ivories in Christian Hands: the Leire Casket in Context', *Art History*, vol. 18, no. 2 (1995), pp. 213–21.
- 26 See, for example, the anthology of essays by Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994.
- 27 For the mapping and extension of connections beyond the Mediterranean, I follow Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, op. cit. (note 18), pp. 12ff. and 32ff. Many of her conclusions for the period between 1250 and 1350 are in fact valid for the earlier period as well, between the tenth and twelfth centuries. Goitein, op. cit. (note 17), vol. 1, p. 47, points out, for example, that during the eleventh and twelfth centuries Egypt and Syria were way stations for trade between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. For the fluid perception of geographic boundaries, see Ralph W. Brauer, 'Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 85, part 6 (1995), pp. 1–69.
- 28 See *Glory of Byzantium*, op. cit. (note 6), p. 273ff.
- 29 Grabar, 'Shared Culture of Objects', op. cit. (note 17), p. 127.
- 30 Robin Cormack, 'But is it Art?', *Byzantine Diplomacy* (Papers from the twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990) ed. Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin, Aldershot: Variorum, 1992, pp. 231–6; Jones, 'Romanesque, East and West?', op. cit. (note 17), pp. 282–3. See the foundation studies by André Grabar on shared court tastes and the adaptation of Islamic court art, 'Le Succès des arts orientaux à la cour Byzantine sous les Macédoniens', *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, ser.3,2, 1951, pp. 32–60; and Oleg and André Grabar, 'L'Essor des arts inspirés par les cours princières à la fin du premier millénaire', *L'Occidente e l'Islam nel'alto medioevo* (Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 2–8 aprile 1964), vol. 2, Spoleto, 1965, pp. 845–92, reprinted in Oleg Grabar, *Studies in Medieval Islamic Art*, London, 1976, no. viii.
- 31 For the definition and hierarchy of luxury, see Robinson, 'Palace Architecture and Ornament', op. cit. (note 10), pp. 419 ff. and 431. The elevated status of spoils taken during the Islamic conquests is noted in the *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, op. cit. (note 11), pp. 167–75 (paras 176–202), 177 ('Table of Solomon', para. 209), 179 (para. 215), 187 (paras 238–9), 194–6 (paras 254–62), 225–8 ('Chapter on Booty in Conquests and Shares in Raids', paras 359–69) and 229–41 ('Fatimid Treasury', paras 372–414). For the looting of the Fatimid Treasury during the eleventh century, see Grabar, 'Imperial and Urban Art'. For the looting of Constantinople in 1204, see D.E. Queller, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople, 1202–1204*, Philadelphia, 1977. The prestige attached to looted works and their superiority to gifts is discussed in Geary, *Furta Sacra*, op. cit. (note 2), p. xii. Also, Beat Brenk, 'Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: Aesthetics Versus Ideology', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 41 (1987), pp. 103–9.
- 32 See Cristina Partearroyo, 'Almoravid and Almohad Textiles', in *Al-Andalus*, op. cit. (note 4), p. 105ff.
- 33 Ioli Kalavrezou, 'Luxury Objects', *Glory of Byzantium*, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 218–23; Avinoam Shalem, *Islam Christianized, Islamic Portable Objects in the Medieval Church Treasuries of the Latin West*, Frankfurt am-Main: Peter Lang, 1996; and Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, op. cit. (note 6).
- 34 See the classic study by Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. I. Cunnison, New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1967 [1925]; Cormack, 'But is it art?' op. cit. (note 30); and Anthony Cutler, 'Les échanges de dons entre Byzance et l'Islam (IXieme-XIieme siècles)', *Journal des Savants* (Jan–June 1996), pp. 51–7.

- I am grateful to Professor Cutler for sending me his article. Now, see the important anthology *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. Alan D. Schrift, New York and London: Routledge, 1997.
- 35 This relationship between the representation and the actual person of the ruler will be explored with respect to the Mantle of Roger II, below pp. 28–33. On this topic, see Freedberg, *Power of Images*, op. cit. (note 10); and Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-making in Medieval Art*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. For relics and reliquaries as substitutes for the saints and as the sources of power and holiness, see Geary, 'Sacred Commodities', op. cit. (note 2), p. 176; idem., *Furta Sacra*, op. cit. (note 2), p. xii. See also Amy Remensnyder, 'Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory', *Speculum*, vol. 71 (1996), p. 887ff.
- 36 See note 6 above. The status and cultural role of textiles in the Islamic world has been explored in J. Sadan, *Le Mobilier au proche orient médiévale*, Leiden, 1976, and Lisa Golombek, 'Draped Universe of Islam', op. cit. (note 10), pp. 25–39, where she interprets the complexity and variety of textile terminology as indicators of its status in the culture and concludes, p. 36, that 'the preeminence of textiles also helps to explain why it was possible, and perfectly acceptable, in Islamic art for different media to share the same decorative treatment . . .'. The privileged status and richness of textiles and its far-reaching geographic distribution is fully supported in the sources in the *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, op. cit. (note 11), paras 30, 51, 52, 63, 75, 79, 162 and 302. Textiles as sites of interchange have been studied in depth by Anna Gonosová in 'The Role of Ornament in Late Antique Interiors with special reference to intermedia borrowing of patterns', PhD diss., Harvard University, 1981. Also, Anna Muthesius, 'Silken Diplomacy', in *Byzantine Diplomacy*, op. cit. (note 30), pp. 237–48; Cutler, 'Les échanges de dons', op. cit. (note 34); and Cormack, 'But is it art?', op. cit. (note 30).
- 37 *I normanni. Popolo d'Europa 1030–1200*, ed. M. D'Onofrio, Venice, 1994; *L'eta normanna e sveva in Sicilia: Mostra storico documentaria e bibliografica*, Palazzo dei Normanni, Palermo, 1994. For history see Robert S. Lopez, 'The Norman Conquest of Sicily', in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K.M. Setton, vol. 1, Philadelphia, 1955, p. 54ff; and Helene Wieruszowski, 'The Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Crusades', in *History of Crusades*, vol. 2, pp. 3–49. For Roger II, see Helene Wieruszowski, 'Roger II of Sicily, Rex-Tyrannus, in Twelfth-Century Political Thought', *Speculum*, vol. 38 (1963), p. 46ff.
- 38 See, for example, the profusely illustrated catalogue by Francesco Gabrieli and Umberto Scerrato, *Gli arabi in Italia: cultura, contatti e tradizioni*, Milan, 1979, especially the chapter, 'Arte islamici in Italia', pp. 275–571.
- 39 A pervasive self-referentiality in the Norman appropriation of Western, Byzantine and Islamic visual vocabulary has been noted in studies of Norman art. See, for example, Ernst Kitzinger, 'Mosaic Decoration in Sicily under Roger II and the Classical Byzantine System of Church Decoration', *Italian Church Decoration of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. Functions, Forms and Regional Traditions*, ed. William Tronzo, Bologna, 1989, pp. 147–65; Kitzinger, *The Mosaics of St. Mary's of the Admiral in Palermo*, Washington DC, 1990, pp. 191–6; Tronzo, *Cultures of His Kingdom*, op. cit. (note 14), p. 134ff.; Zeitler, 'Urbs Felix Dotata Populo Trilingui' op. cit. (note 21); J. Johns, 'The Norman Kings of Sicily and the Fatimid Caliphate', *Anglo Norman Studies*, vol. 15, (1992), pp. 133–59.
- 40 Kings II, 2.13–15 following the translation in *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985.
- 41 For royal dress, see Golombek, 'Draped Universe', op. cit. (note 10). Also see examples in the *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, op. cit. (note 11), paras 106 (the offering to the conqueror of Aleppo, al-Dazbari, of the cloak of the Byzantine emperor Romanos which was taken during the Byzantine siege of the city) 112 and 397 (jewelled garments); 163 (gifts of precious garments to Byzantine envoys) and 263 (description of and fascination with a massive costume worn by Byzantine emperor). For Byzantine court dress, see Elizabeth Piltz, 'Middle Byzantine Court Costume', in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. H. Maguire, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, pp. 39–52. Among the smaller states that adapted Byzantine and Islamic costumes were Georgia, Armenia and the Crusader state in Jerusalem. The Georgian royal family is represented wearing Byzantine imperial dress in the hall church at the palace complex at Vardzia, 1184–86) in *The Georgian Chronicle: The Period of Giorgi Lasha*, trans. K. Viihian, Amsterdam, 1991, p. 166. Also see the Armenian portraits of Gagik and Leo II, each wearing robes with the ubiquitous pattern of roundels enclosing animals, in *Glory of Byzantium*, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 352 and 354; and 'Der Nercessian', *L'Art arménien*, Paris, 1978, pp. 108–9, fig. 75 for a painting showing King Gagik-Abas of Kars wearing a robe with roundels enclosing elephants and ibex, motifs found in Islamic and Byzantine court textiles. For the Crusader context, see the Western king in Byzantine regalia represented on the Melisenda Book cover, in *Glory of Byzantium*, cat. no. 259, with references and illustration on p. 388. For western robes, see n. 50 below.
- 42 Textiles also survived as the result of their recontextualization as wrappings for holy relics

- and transfer into Western European treasuries. See Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, op. cit. (note 6), especially chap. 14, and catalogue with listings of provenance; and Shalem, *Islam Christianized*, op. cit. (note 33).
- 43 Tronzo, *Cultures of His Kingdom*, op. cit. (note 14), p. 143. A parallel opposition of Byzantine and Islamic visual modes has been noted in the Armenian palace church at Aght'amar. Byzantine themes of royal power are used abundantly inside the church to justify King Gagik's rule. On the facade, however, King Gagik is represented in the image of an Islamic ruler. Helen Evans has suggested that the Islamic robe may have been a gift from the caliph of Baghdad and that the choice of the Islamic mode may signify a claim of independence from Byzantium. See *Glory of Byzantium*, op. cit. (note 6), p. 352.
- 44 Kitzinger, *Mosaics of St. Mary's of the Admiral*, op. cit. (note 39), pp. 191–6; Tronzo, *Cultures of His Kingdom*, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 140–3; Johns, 'Norman Kings of Sicily', op. cit. (note 39), p. 135.
- 45 Full references for the hunting silks may be found in Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, op. cit. (note 6), M 31 on p. 174 and comparisons on p. 213; also in *Byzance, L'art byzantine dans les collections publiques françaises*, exhib. cat., Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1992, 195, no. 130.
- 46 For lions in context of the throne platform in the Cappella Palatina, see Tronzo, op. cit. (note 14), p. 68ff. For other royal Norman contexts see, Deér, *Porphry Tombs*, op. cit. (note 14), p. 66ff.; and Josef Deér, 'Die basler Löwenkamee und der süditalienische Gemmenschnitt des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts', *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 14 (1953), p. 129ff.
- 47 While the camel was not widely used in Islamic contexts, Grabar, 'Experience of Islamic Art' op. cit. [note 14]), it may be found in the non-Muslim Norman and related Crusader contexts, where it signified the Muslim 'other'. For representations in the Norman context, see, for example, U. Monneret de Villard, op. cit. (note 14), figs. 25–6; and Kühnel, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, op. cit. (note 7), no. 82, pls. 82–4. Additional support for the interpretation of the triumph over the camel as the Christian triumph over the Muslim may be found in Ebitz, 'Medieval Oliphant', op. cit. (note 15), pp. 13–17, with a discussion of the metaphoric use of the motif on oliphants and its literary counterpart in the medieval epic of the *Chanson de Roland*, written in Anglo-Norman by the mid-twelfth century). It is worth noting that in addition to literary similes in the *Chanson de Roland*, ('Just as the deer run before dogs/ So the pagans flee before Roland'), oliphants appear in the poem in the context of battle and victory against the Saracens.
- 48 This distinction between appropriation and expropriation is discussed in C. Owens, 'The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Post-Modernism', *Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, ed. Norman Broude and Mary D. Garrard, New York: HarperCollins, 1992, pp. 487–502.
- 49 Evident in Norman coinage, robes, adaptation of Arabic inscriptions and titles. See Johns, 'The Norman Kings of Sicily', op. cit. (note 39), pp. 133–59.
- 50 Western mantles are discussed in Elizabeth Carroll O'Connor, 'The Star Mantle of Henry II', PhD Diss., Columbia University, 1980; and Schramm and Mütterich, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 46–8, 163ff. The mantles designated the wearer as God's representative on earth, as explored in Anabelle Simon-Cahn, 'The Fermo Chasuble of St Thomas Becket and Hispano-Mauresque Cosmological Silks: Some Speculations of the Adaptive Re-use of Textiles', *Essays in Honor of Oleg Grabar, Muqarnas*, vol. 10 (1993), p. 4.
- 51 O'Connor, 'The Star Mantle of Henry II', op. cit. (note 50), pp. 6ff. and 147ff., for literary sources describing another mantle with a related cosmic theme, donated by a pilgrim to Monte Cassino during a military campaign in southern Italy led by Henry II. See also the so-called Mantle of Charlemagne in the catalogue *Europa und Der Orient 800–1900* (Berliner Festspiele), ed. Gereon Sievernich and Hendrik Budde, Gutersloh: Bertelsmann Lexikon Verlag, 1989, p. 542, no. 634.
- 52 Simon-Cahn, 'The Fermo Chasuble', and Eva Baer, 'The Suaire de St Lazare: An Early Datable Hispano-Islamic Embroidery', *Oriental Art*, vol. 13 (1967), pp. 36–49.
- 53 O'Connor, op. cit. (note 50), p. 147ff.; Simon-Cahn, op. cit. (note 50), pp. 1–5.
- 54 See the representation of the ruler in the centre of Islamic astrological programmes, see Eva Baer, *Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art*, Albany: State University Press, 1983, pp. 258–74.
- 55 For support of a cosmological association, see Grabar, 'Experience of Islamic Art' op. cit. (note 14). These dots, however, also appear in textile design, notably in the related Byzantine hunting textiles. See Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, op. cit. (note 6), pl. 24b.
- 56 While it is generally agreed that some level of cosmological interpretations for the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina is justified, the precise nature of cosmological association is less certain. See Dalu Jones, 'The Cappella Palatina, Problems of Attribution', *Art and Archeology Research Papers*, vol. 2 (1972), p. 41ff.; Annabelle Simon Cahn, 'Some Cosmological Imagery in the Decoration of the Ceiling of the Palatine Chapel in Palermo', PhD Diss., Columbia University, 1978; and Tronzo, *Cultures of His Kingdom*, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 59–62, suggesting that the cosmological scheme was integrated within the realities of Roger's kingdom. The star shaped

- frames enclosing the motifs on the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina may be adaptations from textile design. These compartments appear on the lining of the Mantle of Roger II and the Mantle of Henry II. On the latter the frames enclose astronomical imagery as well as Christian themes.
- 57 For the important distinctions in the use of types of Arabic titles and inscriptions by Norman rulers, see Jeremy Johns, 'The Norman Kings of Sicily', *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 135.
- 58 I owe this observation to Susan Spinale, a student in a seminar I taught on the Islamic Portable Arts, Fall 1995, Harvard University.
- 59 Johns, 'Norman Kings', *op. cit.* (note 39), p. 149ff.; Tronzo, *op. cit.* (note 14), p. 137, points to inscriptions as the essential difference between the Byzantine and the Norman appropriations of Islamic vocabulary.
- 60 Golombek, 'Draped Universe', *op. cit.* (note 10), p. 29; Robert B. Serjeant notes, 'It is an emblem of dignity reserved for the sovereign, for those whom he wishes to honor by authorizing them to make use of it and for those whom he invests with one of the responsible posts of government', in *Islamic Textiles: Materials for a History up to the Mongol Conquest*, Beirut, 1972, p. 7. Quoted by Golombek, 29 and by Partearroyo in *Al-Andalus*, *op. cit.* (note 4), p. 105.
- 61 The possibility of an apotropaic function for inscriptions is discussed in Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 83ff.; for the relationship between inscriptions and other accompanying visual forms see Scott Redford, 'How Islamic Is It? The Innsbruck Plate and Its Setting', *Muqarnas*, vol. 7 (1990), pp. 119–32; Richard Ettinghausen, 'Arabic Epigraphy: Communication or Symbolic Affirmation', in *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History: Studies in Honor of George C. Miles*, ed. D. Kouymjian, Beirut, 1974, pp. 297–317.
- 62 Otto Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily*, New York, 1950, pp. 180ff. Ernst Kitzinger, 'The Mosaic Fragment in the Torre Pisana of the Royal Palace in Palermo: A Preliminary Study', *Mosaique: Recueil d'hommages à Henri Stern*, Paris, 1983, p. 243. Tronzo, *Cultures of his Kingdom*, *op. cit.* (note 14), pp. 129–30, suggests the possibility of an expansion of the role of this room for court receptions under the successors of Roger II. Regarding the restoration of the mosaic program, Demus noted (p. 185, n. 23–24) that the vault was 'much restored; design probably genuine', and that the lunette mosaics have been 'restored in places but comparatively well preserved as a whole. The design is authentic.' Furthermore, he dismissed earlier claims that the central eagle in the vault was a later addition, noting, however, that 'the crown may have been added at any time.' (p. 186, n. 33)
- 63 Comparable large scale Byzantine court decoration is described in John Kinnamos's Epitome, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453: Sources and Documents*, trans. Cyril Mango, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972, p. 225. Hunt scenes in this genre were also represented in the twelfth century frescoes for St Sophia in Kiev, in Viktor N. Lazarev, *Old Russian Murals and Mosaics from the Xth to the XIV Century*, trans. B. Roniger, London, 1966, p. 53ff., and in André Grabar, 'Les Fresques des escaliers à Sainte-Sophie de Kiev et l'iconographie impériale byzantine', *Seminarium Kondakovium*, vol. 7, (1935), p. 103ff.
- 64 The ancient motif and its transformations are discussed in Ernst Kitzinger, 'The Mosaics of Nikopolis', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 6, (1951), fig. 36; Ettinghausen and Hartner, 'Conquering Lion', *op. cit.* (note 16), pp. 161–71.
- 65 Ugo Monneret de Villard, *Le Pitture musulmane al soffitto della Cappella Palatina in Palermo*, Rome, 1950, p. 34ff.; for representations of lions, see figs. 149, 150, 152, 173; for lions on the throne, see Demus, *Mosaics of Norman Sicily*, *op. cit.* (note 62), fig. 9; and Andrea Terzi, *La Cappella di S. Pietro nella Reggia di Palermo*, 1889 (reprinted Palermo 1987), pl. Xi-A. For griffins, see Monneret de Villard, *ibid.*, figs. 147–8; and Deér, *The Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*, *op. cit.* (note 14), p. 91ff. For eagles, see Monneret de Villard; for single heraldic eagles, see figs. 10, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 36, 44; for eagles triumphant over weaker animals, see figs. 115, 29, 33, 44 and 45; for eagles supporting capitals, see figs. 24, and 51.
- 66 Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, Lausanne, 1962, p. 44ff.; See also, H.P. L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World*, Cambridge, Mass., 1953, p. 69ff.
- 67 Part of the lining has now been attributed to a later period in Anne Wardell, 'Panni Tatarici', *Islamic Art*, vol. 3 (1988–89), p. 110.
- 68 See note 36 above. For examples of this shared vocabulary, see *Glory of Byzantium*, *op. cit.* (note 6), pp. 224–5, no. 149 (Byzantine silk with image of imperial eagle); and p. 412f., nos. 269–70; p. 505, no. 344 (for related Islamic, Sicilian and Mediterranean silks). Also, note 52 above, and examples in *Al-Andalus*, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp. 104–10, nos. 23–4, 87–88; and *Art of Medieval Spain*, *op. cit.* (note 5), nos. 57 and 60.
- 69 See, for example, the translation of textiles into marble and stucco in Southern Italy, in Gabrieli and Scerrato, *Gli arabi in Italia*, *op. cit.* (note 38), figs. 303–4; 306–7; 326; 393; 398–401. Also, Simon-Cahn, 'Fermo Chasuble', *op. cit.* (note 5), p. 3, compares motifs found in textiles to those in the paintings of the ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo.
- 70 These themes are recorded on brocade curtains, among the reported 38,000 curtains that were hung in the palace in Baghdad to impress the

- Byzantine envoys in the year 917. See J. Lassner, *The topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages*, Detroit, 1970, pp. 88–99. Textiles with similar themes were sent as gifts to Baghdad by the Byzantine Emperor Romanos, in the year 983, in *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, op. cit. (note 11), para. 73, p. 99ff. Golombek, 'Draped Universe', op. cit. (note 10), pp. 30–1, also notes reference to variations of these themes in the Fatimid tent of the vizier, al-Yazuri (al-Maqrizi, *al-Mawa'iz wa-al-I'tibar fi Dhikar al-Khitat wa-al-Athar*, Bulaq, 1854, I, 419) and in the Hamdanid tent made for Sayf al-Dawlah.
- 71 Tronzo, *Cultures of His Kingdom*, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 67–8.
- 72 Karl Lehmann, 'The Dome of Heaven', *Art Bulletin*, vol. 27 (1945), pp. 1–27; see also H.P. L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic kingship in the Ancient World*, Oslo, 1953, p. 134ff.
- 73 For the Cappella Palatina and Monreale thrones, see Josef Deér, *Dynastic Porphyry Tombs*, op. cit. (note 14), p. 35ff. Deér attributed the canopies to Roman sources. For the Bari throne, see Francesco Gabrielli and Umberto Scerrato, *Gli Arabi in Italia*, op. cit. (note 38), figs. 333–4; also see figs. 353, 451; and Emile Bertaux, *L'art dans L'Italie Meridionale*, vol. 1, Paris and Rome, reprint, pp. 444–6. For the episcopal thrones see André Grabar, 'Trônes Épiscopaux du XI et XII siècles en Italie Meridionale', *Art de l'antiquité et du moyen age*, Paris, 1968, pp. 365–93; and Deér, op. cit., pp. 113–14, note 38. Grabar claimed a Roman origin for the thrones while Deér noted Islamic associations. See also Christine Verzár Bornstein, 'Romanesque Sculpture in Southern Italy and Islam: A Reevaluation', in *Meeting of Two Worlds*, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 285–93. The canopied royal porphyry tombs commissioned by Roger II, linked to both the episcopal throne canopies and the Norman church 'canopies', may also be related to the intertwined tracery of the vault of the reception room. Deér noted an Islamic association for these panels, in his *Porphyry Tombs*, p. 87ff., fig. 125.
- 74 Renata Holod, 'Luxury Arts of the Caliphal Period', and Cynthia Robinson, 'Arts of the Taifa Kingdoms', both in *Al-Andalus*, op. cit. (note 4), pp. 41–62 and catalogue entries with bibliography, nos. 1–7, pp. 190–206. Also see Julie Harris, 'Muslim Ivories in Christian Hands', op. cit. (note 25), pp. 213–21; Robinson, 'Palace Architecture', op. cit. (note 10), pp. 490–1; Avinoam Shalem, 'From Royal Caskets to Relic Containers: Two Ivory Caskets from Burgos and Madrid', *Muqarnas*, vol. 12 (1995), pp. 24–38; Prado-Vilar, 'Circular Visions', op. cit. (note 23), pp. 14–19.
- 75 *Al-Andalus*, op. cit. (note 4), pp. 204–6, no. 7; Robinson, op. cit. (note 10), pp. 486–95, 668–9. This visual comparison has also been made in Shalem, 'From Royal Caskets to Relic Containers', op. cit. (note 74), p. 29, where similarity of victory and paradise themes are noted.
- 76 *Al-Andalus*, op. cit. (note 4), pp. 198–201, no. 4. In addition to the eagle triumphant over the hare, the triumph theme is explored through a number of different paired animals on this work. For other examples of the theme, see the al-Mughira ivory, in *Al-Andalus*, no. 3. Also note Gabrielli and Scerrato, *Gli Arabi in Italia*, op. cit. (note 38), p. 505, no. 552, an ivory plaque attributed to Spain (?) or Sicily (?), twelfth–thirteenth centuries with a geometric strapwork enclosing figural images that closely echoes the design of the Norman vault. On the ivory, a lion triumphant over a human figure substitutes for the central image in the Norman vault of the eagle triumphant over the hare, and rabbits are enclosed in corner compartments.
- 77 Robinson, 'Palace Architecture and Ornament', op. cit. (note 10), pp. 490–4.
- 78 Also, see *ibid*, pp. 668–9, for specific references to textile fragments related to the Cuenca ivory and Caliphal ivories. For the link between motifs on Umayyad Spanish ivories and Byzantine textiles, see Soucek, 'Byzantium and the Islamic East', op. cit. (note 24), p. 409.
- 79 For example, the textile for the lining of the Reliquary of San Millán, in *Al-Andalus*, op. cit. (note 4), no. 23; and no. 21, the so-called veil of Hisham II, which was wrapped around a reliquary. Also, see Soucek, 'Byzantium and the Islamic East', op. cit. (note 24), p. 409.
- 80 For the fashioning of objects in the shape of buildings, see *Glory of Byzantium*, op. cit. (note 6), no. 176, an incense burner in shape of domed building, with connections to objects from southern Italy and no. 300, a reliquary in form of miniature tomb/church.
- 81 For Near Eastern legends of soaring palaces and halls, see L'Orange, *Cosmic Kingship*, op. cit. (note 72), pp. 59–60. For the tenth-century Islamic fascination with the Sasanian Throne of Khosrau and astral halls see Ernst Herzfeld, 'Thron des Khosro: Quellenkritische und Ikonographische Studien über grenzgebiete der Kunstgeschichte des Morgen- und Abendlandes', *Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, vol. 41 (1920), pp. 103–47.
- 82 *Glory of Byzantium*, op. cit. (note 6), pp. 422–3, no. 281, with full bibliography.
- 83 The problem is fully discussed in Scott Redford, 'How Islamic Is It?', *Muqarnas*, vol. 7 (1989), pp. 120–32. It should also be noted that cloisonné enamel was used widely for precious objects of royal prerogative in many circumstances. See, for example, the Alfred Jewel, a gold and cloisonné work with a portrait (Christ?) made for the King Alfred the Great (871–899) in David A. Hinton, *A Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork, 700–*

- 1000 in the Department of Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum*, Oxford, 1974, pp. 29–48.
- 84 Redford, *op. cit.* (note 83), p. 124.
- 85 *ibid.*, p. 128.
- 86 *ibid.*, p. 124, and n. 24, where he compares motifs to paintings on the ceiling of the Cappella

- Palatina and to the painted beams in the cathedral of Cefalù, as well as to Sicilian inlaid bone and painted ivory boxes.
- 87 Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving*, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 173, cat. M 29–30 and comparisons on p. 212.