Introduction

There is an expression of wonder in the faces of most visitors to the imperial treasury in Vienna who see the large Norman mantle kept there (Fig. 1). Spread out in its dimly lit case, the vivid crimson and fine gold embroidery of this piece, almost nine hundred years old and known for centuries as the coronation mantle of the Holy Roman Empire, unfailingly attract the gaze and invite closer scrutiny. Colours turn into shapes as you draw closer: fierce lions are subduing camels. Camels? And then, at the bottom, a peculiar undulating line provokes bewilderment… Is that Arabic? An Arabic inscription on a Christian king's mantle?

Fig. 1: Mantle of Roger II on display in the Imperial Treasury, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna.

Inscriptions, probably more than any other form of ornament, lend themselves to associations with specific cultural spheres which are easily defined – or so it seems – by language boundaries and, in the particular case of Arabic writing, commonly related to the geographical spread of Islam. So, far from being a simple reaction, a visitor's spontaneous feeling of surprise can be seen as the expression of a tension between conventionally established concepts of cultural boundaries and the unconventional, boundary-transgressing aesthetics of this twelfth-century object from Sicily. The astonishment results from various preconceptions based on established notions of cultural and religious identity and the rigid separation, at least in theory, between Christian and Islamic visual cultures.

This book focuses on Arabic textile inscriptions in circulation in the medieval Mediterranean and beyond, as an example of an ornament that is 'transcultural' in the sense that it transgresses conventional boundaries. Through the case study of the royal garments with Arabic inscriptions from Norman Sicily, I propose to investigate

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the functions of this type of ornament using various contextual and methodological frames. My contextualising approach, drawing on various historical disciplines and encompassing historiographical considerations, Latin and Arabic court cultures, and Sicilian local concerns, is a means of highlighting idiosyncrasies and emphasising the choices that underlay the use of Arabic textile inscriptions at the Sicilian court. It sheds light on the context-related variability of the functions and meanings of this particular ornamental motif and thereby aims to counter universalising interpretations.

Among the Norman royal garments currently kept in the imperial treasury of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, there are an Arabic-inscribed alb and stockings associated with the reign of William II (r. 1166–1189), in addition to the mantle, which can be dated to the reign of Roger II (r. 1130–1154). These garments entered the collection as parts of the regalia of the Holy Roman Empire.[1] The use of Arabic textile inscriptions at the Norman – and in this case also the Hohenstaufen – courts of Sicily is also documented through another group of evidence: the funerary garments discovered during the opening of the royal sarcophagi in Palermo Cathedral in the late eighteenth century.[2] The main body of source material upon which this study is based is thus restricted and clearly defined. The material is also highly exceptional for several reasons: first, it is the only group of medieval garments of this type and quality which remains almost totally intact; and, secondly, the garments are also exceptional because they prominently display Arabic textile inscriptions, which is unusual for garments produced for medieval Latin Christian rulers. In medieval Arabic courts, in contrast, textile inscriptions – in Arabic – were common. Inscribed textiles, so-called ṭirāz, often inscribed with the names and titles of the ruling caliphs, were produced in state-controlled workshops and were endowed with a distinctly political function.[3]

Sicily was under Islamic rule for nearly two hundred years, from the middle of the ninth century until the Norman conquest in the mid-eleventh century.[4] Seeking connections between the Arabic past of the island and the arts produced at the Norman court would thus seem an obvious way to explain the appearance of Arabic textile inscriptions on the Norman royal garments. However, although the garments may well have been manufactured by local Arab artisans employed by the Norman court,

1 Hermann Fillitz, Die Insignien und Kleinodien des Heiligen Römischen Reiches, Vienna 1954.

2 Francesco Daniele, I regali sepolcri del duomo di Palermo riconosciuti e illustrati, Naples 1784.

3 Jochen A. Sokoly, Ṭirāz Textiles from Egypt: Production, Administration and Uses of Ṭirāz Textiles from Egypt under the Umayyad, ʻAbbāsid and Fāṭimid Dynasties, Ph.D. thesis, University of Oxford 2002.

4 The most complete study of Islamic Sicily to date is Michele Amari, Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia. Seconda edizione modificata e accresciuta dall'autore, pubblicata con note a cura di Carlo Alfonso Nallino, ed. by Carlo A. Nallino, Catania 1933–9 (henceforth Amari/Nallino). More recent publications include, for example, Alexander Metcalfe, The Muslims of Medieval Italy, Edinburgh 2009.

there is no evidence to suggest that any inscribed textiles had been produced in Sicily before the coming of the Normans, nor do we know of any pre-Norman, Islamic textile institutions under court control. So the presence of Arabic inscriptions on the Norman kings' garments cannot be explained as a mere continuation of a *ṭirāz* tradition taken over from Islamic Sicily. Rather, it must be understood as the result of a conscious and active transfer of an originally Arabic ornamental motif to the Latin Christian court of Sicily. As I shall argue, this transfer was motivated not only by an aesthetic appreciation of this ornament's form, but also by a specific understanding of the functions of textile inscriptions in Arabic courtly contexts.

The Norman kings' garments and the extent of the indebtedness of Norman royal representation to the Arab tradition have received a fair amount of scholarly investigation.[5] Stylistic affinities between the courtly arts of Norman Sicily and a great number of other – mostly Mediterranean – centres have been noted and the agency of the underlying movements of transfer has been explored. The main focus has been laid on relations between Sicily and Byzantium, the Islamic Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean;[6] only very recently has more interest been manifested in the tracing of relations between Sicily and the Maghreb or Islamic Spain.[7] However, apart from Roger II's mantle, which has been the subject of several articles,[8] the royal garments themselves have not been much studied individually and independently from their use as coronation garments in the Holy Roman Empire. An important exception to this is the catalogue *Nobiles Officinae*, to which I refer throughout, published in two versions to accompany an exhibition held in Palermo and Vienna in 2003 and 2004.[9]

5 Bibliographical references will be given in the pertinent sections of the text.

6 One particularly noteworthy volume of collected studies is David Knipp (ed.), Art and Form in Norman Sicily (Proceedings of an International Conference, Rome, 6–7 December 2002) (Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana 35), Munich 2003/4.

7 For example, Lev Kapitaikin, 'The Daughter of Al-Andalus': Interrelations between Norman Sicily and the Muslim West, in: Alexander Metcalfe and Mariam Rosser-Owen (eds), Forgotten Connections? Medieval Material Culture and Exchange in the Central and Western Mediterranean, Al-Masaq 25/1 (2013), pp. 113–34.

8 An excellent bibliography can be found in the section 'The so-called mantle of Roger II' of: Oleg Grabar, The Experience of Islamic Art, in: Irene A. Bierman (ed.), The Experience of Islamic Art on the Margins of Islam, Los Angeles 2005, pp. 44–48. More recent publications include Almut Höfert, Königliche Objektgeschichte. Der Krönungsmantel des Heiligen Römischen Reiches, in: Wolfram Drews and Christian Scholl (eds), Transkulturelle Verflechtungsprozesse in der Vormoderne (Das Mittelalter. Perspektiven mediävistischer Forschung. Beihefte 3), Berlin 2016, pp. 156–73; Isabelle Dolezalek, Fashionable Form and Tailor-made Message: Transcultural Approaches to Arabic Script on the Royal Norman Mantle, in: ead., Vera Beyer and Monica Juneja (eds), Contextualising Choices: Islamicate Elements in European Arts, Medieval History Journal 15/2 (2012), pp. 243–68.

9 Maria Andaloro (ed.), Nobiles Officinae: Perle, filigrane e trame di seta dal Palazzo Reale di Palermo (Palermo, Palazzo Reale, December 2003–March 2004), Catania 2006 – henceforth refered to as Nobiles Officinae (2006). An earlier and less complete version of the catalogue is: Wilfried Seipel

The present study of Arabic textile inscriptions on the garments of the Christian kings of Sicily draws extensively on recent transcultural approaches to art history and to Mediterranean art history in particular.[10] Building upon the influential works of Fernand Braudel, Shelomo D. Goitein, and, more recently, Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell,[11] Mediterranean studies have gained increasing importance in current historical and art historical research, allowing me to benefit from and build upon a considerable number of publications. In these, the medieval Mediterranean, as a space encompassing both the sea and its adjoining lands under Byzantine, Arab and Latin rule, is conceived not only in geographical terms, but as a social space defined by the mobility of people and objects, knowledge and ideas.[12] Methodological concepts to approach such Mediterranean exchanges and encounters include those of transcultural transfer, a shared Mediterranean court culture and transcultural comparison; all of these have shaped the present study. Textiles from the medieval Mediterranean region were easily movable, highly prestigious objects of trade and diplomacy.[13] Their status and their inherent functions both as ornamental objects and as portable agents of ornament-transfer make this artistic medium a particularly fruitful one for bringing these transcultural methodological strands together.

The idea of transfer has been of particular importance to recent approaches to Mediterranean artefacts and will be discussed extensively in the first chapter in terms of its relevance to Arabic ornamental inscriptions in Latinate contexts. Considerations of artistic transfer have entered art historical discourse as a means of looking

(ed.), Nobiles Officinae: Die königlichen Hofwerkstätten zu Palermo zur Zeit der Normannen und Staufer im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2004; Palermo, Palazzo dei Normanni, 2003–4), Vienna 2004 – henceforth Nobiles Officinae (2004).

10 On Mediterraneanism as an academic field and the political background to the increased interest in Mediterranean interchange, see Mariam Rosser-Owen, Mediterraneanism: How to Incorporate Islamic Art into an Emerging Field, in: *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (2012): https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/rosserowen.pdf (last accessed 08/2016).

11 Peregrine Horden, Nicholas Purcell, The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History, Oxford 2000; Shelomoh Dov Goitein, The Unity of the Mediterranean World in the 'Middle' Middle Ages, in: Studia Islamica 12 (1960), pp. 29–42; Fernand Braudel, La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II, Paris 1949.

12 For a critical overview of art historical approaches, see, for example, Ulrike Ritzerfeld, Zu Problematik und Erkenntnispotential der Untersuchung materieller bzw. visueller Kulturen im Mittelmeerraum, in: ead. and Margit Mersch (eds), Lateinisch-griechisch-arabische Begegnungen, Berlin 2009, pp. 19–38; Ulrike Koenen, Martina Müller-Wiener, Prolog zum Thema Grenzgänge, in: eaed. (eds), Grenzgänge im östlichen Mittelmeerraum. Byzanz und die islamische Welt 9. bis 13. Jahrhundert, Wiesbaden 2008, pp. 9–26.

13 Eva Hoffman, Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century, in: Art History 24 (2001), pp. 17–50; Anna Muthesius, Silken Diplomacy, in: Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (eds), Byzantine Diplomacy (Papers from the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies), Aldershot 1992, pp. 237–48.

beyond cultural boundaries, by laying an emphasis on mechanisms of interchange.[14] While the concept has only recently been applied to the study of the medieval Mediterranean, it is used here to provide a framework within which the parts of 'otherness' observed within any given culture can be analysed with an emphasis on active reception and adaptation. This is an important step away from the thought of passively received 'influences.'[15] The notion of transcultural transfer, which has gained particular impetus in recent German scholarship on the medieval Mediterranean, has various components: the transferred object, characterised by its mobility; the spaces across which the object is transferred; and the agents (both people and things) occasioning the transfer.[16] Concentrating on the different processes of transmission of Arabic written ornament and its integration into the Norman aesthetic idiom is a means to account for the visual complexity of the Norman objects without necessarily having to identify specific sources of influence. This focus also highlights the complexity of the multilingual, culturally diverse Sicilian society itself.

The notion of a shared court culture in the medieval Mediterranean, on the other hand – which has been equally influential and is also discussed in the first chapter – transcends the boundaries imposed by cultural and stylistic classifications. The first and probably most complete exposition of the concept of shared court culture in the medieval Mediterranean appears in Oleg Grabar's article 'The Shared Culture of Objects', in which he focuses on the diplomatic exchange of artefacts between the Byzantine and Islamic courts.[17] Grabar's concept is based on the observation that a number of high-quality objects share certain visual characteristics, so that it is often difficult or impossible to establish their precise provenance: they do not openly display religious affiliations and were used and appreciated in Christian and Muslim courts alike. The circulation of these objects facilitated the creation and spread of a

14 Transfer as a concept is derived primarily from Michel Espagne's theoretical considerations on modern Franco-German relations. See Michel Espagne, Les transferts culturels franco-allemands, Paris 1999.

15 A comprehensive overview of approaches to transcultural history is given in the introduction to Wolfram Drews, Christian Scholl, (eds), Transkulturelle Verflechtungsprozesse in der Vormoderne (Das Mittelalter. Perspektiven mediävistischer Forschung. Beihefte 3), Berlin 2016, pp. VII–XXIV.

16 There is a historiographical overview and definition of 'transfer' in its application to the history of the medieval Mediterranean in Rania Abdellatif et al., Construire la Méditerranée, penser les transferts culturels: Approches historiographiques et perspectives de recherche, Munich 2012.

17 Oleg Grabar, The Shared Culture of Objects, in: Henry Maguire (ed.), Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204 (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection), Washington DC 1997, pp. 115–30. The concept had already made its appearance in a lecture given by André and Oleg Grabar, observing Byzantine-Christian and Islamic courts from a comparative perspective: André Grabar, Oleg Grabar, L'essor des arts inspirés par les cours princières à la fin du premier millénaire: Princes musulmans et princes chrétiens, in: Giovanni Antonelli (ed.), L'occidente e l'islam nell'alto medioevo (Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 12), Spoleto 1965, pp. 845–92.

Mediterranean aesthetic, in which possible Christian or Islamic provenances had no or only little importance. Grabar's thesis frees objects, such as the Norman garments, from the search for their origins. It thus offers a methodological perspective that complements the idea of transfer, acknowledging a Mediterranean unity with a common elite aesthetic in which precious textiles were an important component. Both these approaches will be assessed for their merits, but also for their limitations in the interpretation of the Norman Arabic textile inscriptions.

The central focus of Chapter 1 lies in the visual analysis of the royal garments, the presentation of their inscriptions and the question of the technical and stylistic coherence of these Norman textiles as a group within Latinate court culture. However, far from being a merely descriptive introduction, this chapter also discusses the impact that historical receptions of the Norman garments have had on their subsequent interpretations, including the most recent ones. I argue that scholarly interpretations of the Arabic inscriptions on the Norman garments were frequently shaped by the historical reception of this ornament as foreign, and influenced by the perception of Arabic inscriptions as an inherently Islamic ornament. Building further upon the methodoligcal considerations briefly introduced here, Chapter 1 discusses the foundations of later art historical interpretations of the objects and ultimately touches upon the problem of the contingency of cultural boundaries. In fact, as is shown here, textiles with Arabic inscriptions were more common in medieval Latin Europe than one might think. Costly fabrics of this type circulated widely throughout Europe and were appreciated and used both in courtly and religious contexts regardless of the language and content of their inscriptions. Unlike the Sicilian garments, however, these fabrics were imported; they were not produced at a Latin court and for a Latin ruler.

While the first chapter establishes the specificity of the Norman textiles within the frame of Latin court culture, casting a glance at their biography and their scholarly reception, it is the aim of Chapter 2 to analyse written textile ornament in Norman Sicily with reference to Arabic court culture. Pursuing the hypothesis that the use of textile inscriptions in Norman Sicily was based on an awareness of their use in contemporary Arabic contexts, the chapter concentrates on production, as well as on the form, content and function of the inscriptions. To provide an anchor for an otherwise abstract argument, the chapter relies on a comparison of Norman Sicily and Fatimid Egypt.

The comparative method, which I apply in Chapter 2 to contrast the Norman garments with Fatimid textiles is less prominent in Mediterranean art history, though in this case study it is – I believe – a necessary complement to the concepts of transfer and shared court culture. The methodological implications of transcultural comparative approaches with reference to medieval Islamic and Christian arts are an impor-

tant component of Vera Beyer's work.[18] Her research and recently published works by Wolfram Drews, Almut Höfert and Jenny Oesterle, whose comparative historical approach is specifically concerned with forms of medieval rulership and the Fatimids, have contributed to widening my outlook beyond the strict disciplinary frame of art history, and offered valuable guidance for this study.[19] An interesting comparative study by Leonie von Wilckens, on the other hand, deals with Sicilian, Fatimid and Andalusian textiles.[20] Her focus is quite different to my own, however, as her main interest lies in tracing stylistic resemblances between Egyptian and Spanish textiles and those of the lining of Roger II's mantle, rather than in analysing the functions of one particular textile ornament, as I have done, and revealing differences. In fact, the results of my comparison clearly show that the Arabic textile inscriptions were not merely copied, but carefully adapted to suit local Sicilian needs. Looking at the Norman inscribed textiles from a comparative perspective underlines their idiosyncrasy. Moreover, the comparison highlights not only the transformations that may occur in the course of the transfer of an ornamental motif, but also the way in which its meaning and function vary depending upon the context in which it is used. This raises the question of the choices underlying the creation of these written ornaments in their original context at the Norman court of Sicily, which is addressed in the second part of the study.

The final frame that I use to contextualise the Norman Arabic textile inscriptions in the last three chapters is strictly local, therefore, and mainly centred on Palermo. To understand the processes of appropriation and adaptation of Arabic textile inscriptions in Norman Sicily, both the wider transregional and the local contexts need to be taken into account.[21] Concentrating on inscriptions in one particular medium, as done in the earlier chapters with reference to textiles, is a useful way of keeping a transcultural discourse within manageable limits. However, to contextu-

18 See, for example, Vera Beyer, Das Kleinkarierte lesen: Zum Verhältnis von Ornament und Figur in persischen und niederländischen Bildern um 1400, in: Lorenz Korn and Anja Heidenreich (eds), Beiträge zur Islamischen Kunst und Archäologie, Wiesbaden 2012, pp. 266–91.

19 Almut Höfert, Wolfram Drews, Monarchische Herrschaftsformen im transkulturellen Vergleich. Argumentationsstrategien zur Rechtfertigung von Usurpationen bei Karolingern und Abbasiden, in: Michael Borgolte and Bernd Schneidmüller (eds), Hybride Kulturen im mittelalterlichen Europa. Vorträge und Workshops einer Frühlingsschule, Berlin 2010, pp. 229–44; Jenny R. Oesterle, Kalifat und Königtum: Herrschaftsrepräsentation der Fatimiden, Ottonen und frühen Salier an religiösen Hochfesten, Darmstadt 2009.

20 Leonie von Wilckens, Byzantinische, griechische, sizilische, italienische und andere Stickereien des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts, in: Birgitt Borkopp, Barbara Schellewald and Lioba Theis (eds), Studien zur Byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte, Festschrift für Horst Hallersleben zum 65. Geburtstag, Amsterdam 1995, pp. 279–85.

21 Contextualisation as a tool has also been advocated by William Tronzo. See William Tronzo, The Cultures of His Kingdom: Roger II and the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, Princeton 1997, p. 14.

alise the transcultural phenomenon of Arabic textile inscriptions within the artistic and socio-political frames of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Sicily, I have chosen to lay aside the strict focus in this last part, to take into account aspects not only of both European and Islamic art history, but also of tangent historical disciplines, such as epigraphic, administrative and legal history. In the last chapters, the phenomenon of ornamental writing on the garments is thus assessed within a broader, yet local, frame of political writing in the service of the Norman court, including epigraphy and administrative documents.

After having established the specificities of the Norman textile inscriptions within Latin and Arabic court culture in the first two chapters, Chapter 3 shows that in Norman Sicily, the use of public writing in Arabic was an active choice, largely independent of such practical considerations as the language of the craftsmen – or indeed of the audience of the inscriptions. Reconstructing, as far as possible, the original context of the Norman royal garments in Norman Palermo, in the treasury and royal ceremonies, I look at the aesthetic dimensions through which the Arabic textile inscriptions may have functioned, including their materiality, visibility (or indeed invisibility) and sound. My contention is that they did not carry a single message alone, but depending on when and where the inscriptions were seen or heard, and by whom, functions and meanings could change.[22] Moreover, the use of Arabic textile inscriptions on Norman royal garments was, as I argue, also based on varied motivations, depending on the political context of the different Norman kings.

As an extension of Chapter 3, the political needs determining Roger II and William II's Arabic royal image are assessed in the last two chapters. The focus of Chapter 4 is on Roger II's mantle; it seeks to establish how rooted it was in a local Sicilian artistic tradition. This chapter proposes that the use of Arabic inscriptions under Roger II may be the result of an adaptation of pre-Norman Sicilian traditions, and assesses the extent to which they reflect a political need to demonstrate uninterrupted authority. While political continuity is key also to understanding William II's inscribed garments, I argue in the last chapter that the alb's bilingual inscription has a distinctly legal function as a textile document attesting to William II's sovereignty. Drawing upon aspects of legal history, this chapter assesses this documentary function of the inscription and the materials of the alb in the specific political frame of the reigns of William II and, beyond the Norman realm, of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen.

Interdisciplinary work is necessarily selective and may frustrate expectations. In Paul Bowman's words, 'the claim of interdisciplinarity signals an eminently pure academic activity, consisting, as it would seem, of a redoubling of academic effort.' But

22 A collection of recently published case studies of medieval inscriptions corroborates this approach to inscriptions as carrying multiple dimensions. Anthony EASTMOND (ed.), Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World, Cambridge 2015.

'the "interdiscipline" will be less, or at least other than, *improper in terms of*, each discipline it travels between.'[23] Despite its clear focus on textiles and Norman Sicily, this study is not what historians of Norman Sicily, or indeed textile historians, might have been be waiting for: a publication of new source material. Yet trying not only to juxtapose different disciplines, but also to work with and within each of their limits, integrating different methods and linking different types of historical knowledge in one argumentative strand, can also be extremely rewarding for opening entirely new perspectives on already known objects that have been previously studied within distinct disciplinary frames.[24] Taking the boundary-transgressing composition of this study's objects as my point of departure, I have aimed to think beyond the traditionally rigid disciplinary boundaries between Islamic and European art histories and to work with ideas of the function of writing borrowed from other historical disciplines.[25] The symbolic and ritual use of writing in the performance of medieval legal acts, a theme which has come to the fore in recent legal history, is but one example.[26] The result of this, I would hope, is a novel and more integrated approach to the Norman Arabic textile inscriptions, one which offers insights into the objects of this study from many different perspectives.

The very restricted focus in my work on Arabic inscriptions as a textile ornament in use at the Latin Christian court of Norman Sicily is an attempt to complement the multitude of recently published and more theoretical works in the field of transcultural history and art history by a concrete case study, and to experiment practically with transcultural approaches. My narrow focus on Arabic script at the Norman court has also directed the choice of the contextual frames with which I have worked towards the Arabic and Latin contexts, thus excluding Byzantium, which is less relevant to the contextualisation of this particular aspect of the visual culture of Norman Sicily. The categories of Latin and Arabic court culture, drawn upon in this study, are, of course, shaped by the conventions of art historical discourse, which acknowledge cultural boundaries and the separation of Islamic and European art history. In fact, the division along the disciplinary boundaries of 'Islamic', 'Byzantine' and 'Euro-

23 Paul Bowman, 'Alarming and Calming. Sacred and Accursed' – The Proper Impropriety of Interdisciplinarity, in: Stefan Herbrechter (ed.), Cultural studies. Interdisciplinarity and Translation (Critical Studies 20), Amsterdam, New York 2002, p. 61.

24 As opposed to multidisciplinarity, an approach which 'juxtaposes disciplines', Julie Thompson Klein defines 'interdisciplinarity' as a means of 'integrating, interacting, linking and blending' different disciplines. Julie Thompson Klein, A Taxonomy of Interdisciplinarity, in: Robert Frodeman et al. (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity, Oxford 2010, p. 17.

25 The constructedness of disciplinary boundaries, and of interdisciplinarity itself, as an 'interdiscipline' is discussed in Harvey J. Graff, Undisciplining Knowledge. Interdisciplinarity in the Twentieth Century, Baltimore 2015, p. 5.

26 Hagen Keller, Mündlichkeit – Schriftlichkeit – symbolische Interaktion: Mediale Aspekte der 'Öffentlichkeit' im Mittelalter, in: Frühmittelalterliche Studien 38 (2004), pp. 277–86.

pean' art history is customary in the study of the arts of Norman Sicily, which are often analysed in terms of their dependence on one or another artistic tradition. The problems arising from this fragmentation will be addressed throughout this study. However, such categories, as well as the alternative category of 'transculturalism',[27] can provide useful analytical frameworks to operate – carefully – within, not only to underscore the idiosyncrasy of the Norman objects, but also to reveal the problems and limitations of pre-defined concepts of cultural entities.

27 Almut Höfert, Anmerkungen zum Konzept einer transkulturellen Geschichtsschreibung in der deutschsprachigen Forschung, in: Wolfram Drews, Jenny R. Oesterle (eds), Transkulturelle Komparatistik. Beiträge zu einer Globalgeschichte der Vormoderne, Comparativ | Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung 18/3.4 (2009), pp. 15–26.