Tanja Tolar

IMAGES OF A SEATED RULER IN THE CAPPELLA PALATINA – A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON ART IN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

May 2011

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by

Tanja Tolar

(Slovenia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

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of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

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I, the undersigned, **Tanja Tolar**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 23 May 2011

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Signature

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Dedication

The thesis is dedicated to my mother, who would be so proud of me and to E. who changed my year at CEU.

"The inner vision is stronger than the outer one, the 'heart' keener in perception than the eye, and the beauty of the objects perceived with 'reason' is greater than the beauty of the other forms which present themselves to the eye."

Al-Ghazali, Alchemy of Happiness (1106)

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INTRODUCTION

The Mediterranean, with a centuries' old tradition of dynamic continuity and cultural exchange, was termed the Middle Sea from late antiquity onwards. Its centrality prevailed as its main characteristic and the longevity of this label speaks for a continued perception of the Mediterranean as 'the sea in the middle,'[1] enabling it to become the crossroads of Europe, Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East. It is this specific of the Mediterranean that has led scholars such as S. D. Goitein[2] and David Abulafia[3] to describe it as the place of "interaction across space, and the exchange of ideas and culture through movement across the sea."[4] Within the Mediterranean hardly any other island has played such an important role in the transmission of ideas and cross-currents as Sicily, hybrid of nations and artistic developments. Palermo, with its Cappella Palatina, the royal chapel built under the patronage of King Roger II, offers a perfect example to study a variety of ideas that infiltrated Western art from both Islamic and Byzantine artistic centres.

The focus of this thesis is selected imagery from the Cappella Palatina wooden ceiling showing the iconographical element of a seated ruler as the main visual representation. I will argue that the image of a seated ruler in the Cappela Palatina has political connotations and is not accidental. Such an image and its context had a long development in the history of art, originating in the sphere of the images of deities and

[1] Eva R. Hoffman, "Remapping the Art of the Mediterranean," in Eva R. Hoffman, ed., *Late Antique and Medieval Art of the Mediterranean World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 3.
[2] S. A. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
[3] David Abulafia. *Italy, Sicily, and the Mediterranean, 1100-1400* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987).
[4] Hoffman, *Remapping*, 3.

connected to royal ceremonials. Through examining such a setting in order to understand the seated ruler image I will discuss the concept of using an image of a seated ruler in different comparative material that show a broad application of the same imagery in Islamic art of the twelfth century. I will also pose the question of why was it used in the Cappella Palatina in Roger's palace and what, if any, relation it had to the king himself. The question of the origin of the artists should be addressed here, but cannot be discussed in detail at this stage of research. It would be interesting, however, to see future research focus on connections between some clearly Christian iconographical attempts and the traditional scholarly claim for the Egyptian origin of the Cappella Palatina ceiling artists. Here I will still be arguing for the Fatimid (or at least North African) origin of the master workers, although the note should be added that future research might show the workshop executing the ceiling to have been of mixed origin, combining artists from various environments including the Christian West. The influence of local Sicilian population also should not be omitted since the island's history was closely connected to Islam and Islamic art for over two centuries before the Norman conquest.

I will center my research on a description of selected images of a seated ruler, for which I will explain why I would use the term "ruler" when otherwise I would refer to a seated "prince," how I see distinctions between these terms, and why I see some images as a seated ruler type, while I would omit others. It must be noted, however, that some scholars see the two images on the ceiling as portraits of King Roger himself,[5] connecting them to a mosaic in Martorana in Palermo.[6] It will therefore be necessary to address the

[5] William Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom: Roger II and Cappella Palatina in Palermo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 59.
[6] Ernst Kitzinger, "On the Portrait of Roger II in the Martorana in Palermo," *Studies in Late Antique, Byzantine and Medieval Western Art*, vol. 2 (London: The Pindar Press, 2003), 1055-1062.

question of possible portraits in the Cappella Palatina, including some information on twelfth-century painting and the notion of the idealized portrait.

Further, the complex problem of dating the chapel itself will also need to be addressed, but I intend to limit the problem solely to information about the possible relation between Roger II's coronation and the appearance of the chapel at the time of his death, that is to say, the state of the chapel and its decoration in a time scale of some 20 years. I will refer to several possible iconographical solutions of the ceiling imagery, combining the idea of the political connotations of the depiction on the ceiling compared to mosaics in Palermo's Martorana and the cathedral in Cefalù. Through comparative visual material of relevant sources from pre-Islamic and early Islamic art, along with some distant references to the Central Asian pictorial tradition, I intend to show a connection between the image of a seated ruler and the well-developed and widespread iconography of a "princely cycle" and give possible explanations for this reading of the imagery. I will argue for political motivation in choosing such a program and I will compile an accompanying catalog with images showing a development of such motifs. However, I do not plan to compile all possible visual references, since an attempt at such a compilation can be found in Ernst J. Grube's *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and their Relation to the Artistic Traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages*, an exquisite work of scholarship and an unprecedented bibliographical resource on the Cappella Palatina. That said, the compilation of visual references does not entirely answer the questions of the program and may leave a scholar in doubt whether tackling the topic from this angle is a suitable decision at all.

Inner decoration, mosaics, their iconographical program, and the floor decoration will not be discussed in the present thesis, although they all play important role in understanding the function of the building, as well as in the iconographic relations between the mosaics and the wooden ceiling. I believe the study of the chapel using such a comparative method will give the best results in understanding the impact it had on the viewer and serve to properly evaluate chapel's function. However, such an undertaking is a too large a task for a present thesis and exceeds its limits. Hence, the focus of this paper will be on the image of a seated prince, which will be connected through comparisons to other decorative elements of the chapel when they provide suitable support for the main argument.

I propose to see the very notion of the formation of a kingdom as a point of departure to understand the Cappella Palatina's decoration. What I intend to show is that a variety of motifs used in the chapel, on either its walls or ceiling, should be seen as political tools in connection with the newly established kingdom. A combination of motifs, varying from Byzantine to Islamic art, should be understood as intending to confirm Roger as a legitimate ruler and communicate his sovereignty and power to all his subjects, whatever their religion. His high political aspirations can also be seen in the iconography used within the Cappella Palatina, including the ceiling's imagery, which might not be clearly seen from the ground, yet I would like to believe that the iconography so widely used all over Islamic lands was well known and *muqarnas* was understood as a typical Islamic feature. The gaze of the observer seems to be guided by the selection of the elements in the chapel. What the visitor saw and how he beheld it was what the king wanted to achieve. As Georgia Frank points out in her research on the gaze

in the age before icons: "prior to questions of what images or relics meant to the beholder is the question of what it meant to behold or to view."[7]

[7] Georgia Frank, "The Pilgrim's Gaze in the age before icons," in Robert S. Nelson (ed.), *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seing as Others Saw* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 109.

CHAPTER 1

Sicily – Island in the Middle Sea

a) Historical overview

> It is the metropolis of these islands, combining the benefits of wealth and splendour, and having all that you could wish of beauty, real or apparent, and all the needs of subsistence, mature and fresh. It is an ancient and elegant city, magnificent and gracious, and seductive to look upon. Proudly set between its open spaces and plain filled with gardens, with broad roads and avenues, built in the Cordova style, entirely from cut stone known as *kadhan* [a soft limestone]. A river splits the town, and four springs gush in its suburbs. The King, to whom it is his world, has embellished it to perfection and taken it as the capital of his Frankish Kingdom – may God destroy it.[8]

The above account is a description of Palermo by Ibn Jubayr in late 1180s, showing what the center of Norman Kingdom[9] was like and attesting its importance for this newly established royal realm of the twelfth century. The Normans were adventurers from the North who entered Italy in the early eleventh century. Linked in small groups through family ties, they soon found themselves in the service of the pope, under whom they were granted new titles and gained new territories in southern Italy. When, in 1059, Pope Nicholas II invested Robert Guiscard with the duchy of Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily, the latter was still under Arab rule; even before Robert and his brother Roger

[8] Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr: Being the Chronicle of a Medieval Spanish Moor Concerning his Journey to the Egypt of Saladin, the Holy Cities of Arabia, Baghdad the City of Caliphs, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the Norman Kingdom of Sicily*, trans. R. J. C. Broadhurst (London: J. Cape, 1952), 348.

[9] For the history of the Norman kingdom see, among others: David Abulafia, "Italy in the Central Middle Ages 1000-1300," *Short Oxford History of Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Pierre Aubé, *Les Empires Normands D'Orient* (Paris: Perrin, 2006); Donald J. A. Matthews, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); John Julius Norwich, *The Kingdom in the Sun 1130-1194. Norman Sicily* (London: Longmans, 1970); William Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom. Roger II and Cappella Palatina in Palermo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 5-16.

conquered the rest of the island, they used the well-established monetary system and struck coins with the Arabic inscription "Malik of Sicily" and "Emir of Sicily"[10] and when they conquered Palermo in 1072 it became the centre for the new rulers. By the late eleventh century the Normans had reached sufficient power to claim a higher political rank. This came with the Count Roger's son, Roger II.

The coronation of Roger II as king of Sicily took place in Palermo in 1130. He was crowned by a representative of the antipope, Anacletus II, and brought his regnum from the mainland duchies to the island. In the privilege, the pope made Sicily the centre of the kingdom (*caput regni*) and Palermo the coronation site of Norman kings. It took Roger an additional decade to settle matters with Rome and gain recognition by Pope Innocent II. With recognition, Roger accepted a new title, *rex Siciliae, ducatus Apuliae et principatus Capuae*;[11] this change influenced the later history of the Italian kingdom, when, in 1302, the island and mainland parts of the kingdom separated for good and consequently influenced the fifteenth-century title: "Kingdom of the Two Sicilies."[12] With all these changes the island became the most important territory in the new kingdom of Roger II. Its strategic position in the Mediterranean, already established efficient administration and monetary system, as well profitable trade routes, made Sicily a place of Norman power and prestige in the eyes of the world. But no matter what the island's past and the historical justification for the new constitution of the Norman state, King Roger wasted no time in seeking recognition beyond his borders and achieving outward

[10] Helene Wieruszowski, "Roger II of Sicily, Rex-Tyrannus, In Twelfth-Century Political Thought," *Speculum* 38, no. 1 (1963): 48. For the monetary system see James D. Breckenridge, "A Classical Quotation in Twelfth-Century Sicily," *Gesta* 15, no. 1-2 (Essays in Honor of Summer McKnight Crosby) (1976): 279-284.
[11] Wieruszowski, "Rex-Tyrannus:" 49.
[12] James D. Breckenridge, "The Two Sicilies," in *Islam and the West*, ed. Stanley Ferber, Exhibition cataloque May 2-4 (Binghamton, NY: Catalogues and Papers of the 9th Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1975), 39-59.

legality for his new political entity. To gain approval for his enthronement, Roger II called upon feudal constitutional law in the Coronation Ordo[13] which was used at the coronation ceremony in 1130. The idea that "God speaks his will through the voice of those who find the new king and house qualified to rule the people,"[14] was asserted in an effort to achieve the world's recognition.

b) Roger II's political ambitions and their impact on artistic development in Palermo

Roger ascended the throne with great ambition and the image of the kingdom he was building was an impressive combination of influences and as mixed as the country he inherited. The uniqueness in the population of Sicily which gave the kingdom a special character has not escaped previous scholars, who have stressed the specific connections between the different religions, cultures, and political entities that once occupied the island. What is important for this thesis is the idea of Roger's political ambition, claiming for himself all possible royal titles[15] as well as recognition from the important entities of political power such as Byzantium, the German kingdom, and the Papal State. Therefore, it is not surprising that:

> according to his chroniclers, Roger carefully adopted 'what was most useful and sound from the customs and institutions of other kings, and this

[13] As Wieruszowski pointed out, the Sicilian Ordo was borrowed from Coronation Ordo of the German kings of the Saxon house but changed according to the circumstances. See Wieruszowski, "Rex-Tyrannus:" note 25. See also: Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae. A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Medieval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958).
[14] Wieruszowski, "Rex-Tyrannus:" 51.
[15] For an account by Otto of Freising of Roger's ambition to claim the title of *basileus* and his intention to establish an alliance with the Byzantine Empire through marrige, see Wieruszowski, "Rex-Tyrannus:" 61-62, also notes 67-69.

> explains not only the mixed character of the chapel's design, structure, ceremonial, and decoration, but also the style of the monarchy itself.[16]

That such an aspiration of power was proclaimed in art is not a surprise in itself. What is more interesting and will be the focus of the present text is the idea that Roger was using every possible means of artistic expression to make it evident where his ambition lay.

[16]Eve Borsook, *Messages in Mosaic: The Royal Programmes of Norman Sicily (1130 – 1187)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 19 - 20.

CHAPTER 2

The Cappella Palatina and its decoration

a) A short history of the chapel and its unique combination of decorations

The Cappella Palatina (Fig. 1) was built by the first Norman king of Sicily, Roger II (1130 – 1154). Begun probably shortly after his coronation in 1130, the Cappella was issued a major royal charter in 1140, and its mosaics were at least partially finished by 1143. The decoration of the chapel was done under the rulership of Roger's son, William I (1154 – 1166), though probably following the original concept of decoration already planned in the time of King Roger.[17] The exact division of work done in the times of the first and the second rulers is still debatable. The idea prevails in the scholarship that the triumphal arch (Fig. 3) separating the domed portion of the building from the basilica part forms the chronological break between the first phase and the second.

The Cappella Palatina is a type of palace chapel with a two-storey arrangement[18] (Fig. 1) and uniquely preserved decoration. It has been classically described as a hybrid of several influences, Byzantine, Islamic, and Western Christian, which are traditionally

[17] This information is important for understanding the appearance of the chapel at the time of Roger's crowning as king and his death; showing the original plan of the structure and its execution, gives answers to what kind of chapel Roger was able to see in his lifetime, that is to say, what iconographical program was planned for the Sicilian Norman king. For scholarship dealing with this question and supporting the idea of one program executed in two parts under two rulers see: Slobodan Ćurčić, "Some Palatine Aspects of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41, Studies on Art and Archaeology in Honor of Ernst Kitzinger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday (1987): 125-144.

[18] André Grabar and Wolfgang Krönig were the first to stress the importance of such an arrangement, finding comparative cases with the Western type of medieval palatine chapels, focusing on German two-storied buildings (*Doppelkapellen*). See Ćurčić, "Palatine Aspects," 126, note 6. Kitzinger rejected this idea pointing to the idea of a lower part of the chapel being a crypt. See Ernst Kitzinger, "The Mosaics of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo: An Essay on the Choice and Arrangement of Subjects," *The Art Bulletin* 31 (1949): 269 – 292.

attributed to the twelfth-century Sicilian environment. The chapel has a centralized eastern part and basilica-type western section,[19] with wooden ceilings over both aisles[20] and a *muqarnas* in the nave (Fig. 4). What is important here is the idea of mixed cultural influences, which, as I hope to show below, might not have resulted in such an artistic hybrid as is usually thought. It is also significant to note that the architectural structure has, as successfully argued by Ćurčić, direct connections to the Middle Byzantine palatine tradition.[21]

That Sicily was a culturally mixed island in the twelfth century and that people undoubtedly influenced each other can be seen as early as the diary entries by Ibn Jubayr, made when he visited Sicily on his journey back from pilgrimage to Mecca in the 1180s. While in Palermo, he admired Christian women wearing Muslim garments as the latest fashion in the city.[22] He complemented King William II for speaking fluent Arabic and compared Palermo's architecture to the main artistic achievements of the East.

The clearly Muslim addition to the Cappella Palatina, its wooden ceiling, has long been established as the work of Muslim artists, generally accepted to be of Fatimid origin. It has been seen as a "foreign" element within its cultural setting, always admired for its full visual effect, but not until recently researched more closely. While the ceiling has raised many unsolved questions, the walls of the chapel have had the attention of a different history of research. The mosaics, executed in two phases as suggested by

[19] Ibid., 126.
[20] For a description see Lev Kapitaikin, "The Paintings of the Aisle-Celings of the Cappella Palatina, Palermo," in *Art and Form in Norman Sicily (Proceedings of an International Conference, Rome, 6-7 Dec. 2002),* ed. David Knipp (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2005) , 117 – 147.
[21] Such a notion has been accepted traditionally among scholars, but it needs to be noted that a ground plan of the chapel shows close relations to South Italian Latin Romanesque churches (e.g., Ravello) and according to its structure it would probably fit into this group better.
[22] "The Christian women follow the fashion of Muslim women, are fluent of speech, wrap their cloaks about them, and are veiled. … Thus they parade to their churches, … bearing all the adornments of Muslim women, including jewelry, henna on their fingers, and perfumes." In Ibn Jubayr, *The Travels*, 349 – 350.

Kitzinger,[23] are of Orthodox origin and correlate with the origin of the architectural form[24] itself, placing both in the proximity of Byzantium and its artistic influences. What Kitzinger pointed out is the question of why such Byzantine influences were adopted by a Western dynasty which was in political conflict with the Eastern empire. Why would a dynasty, in a struggle for recognition, employ the ideas of its political rival?

What is of interest here is the question of the transformation of "foreign" motifs in a new setting and their adaptation to new liturgical and political practices. To put it differently, for the question of the image of a seated ruler it is important to understand the possible transformation of the motif as understood in Islamic art and its application in a different, Christian, environment. To indicate cultural interchanges in medieval Sicily is one thing; to ask a question about the reception of new styles is another matter. What has already been argued by Kitzinger is, namely, the idea that certain iconographical representations on the mosaics were not so much bound to Byzantium as they were of Western origin. A striking question which should be raised here is how this formal idea could have been executed in the wooden ceiling itself. Can one see an Islamic realization of the depictions, but expressed in Christian iconography? This is not the place to answer this question, as it will need to be explained in the chapter to follow, but the point needs to be made that "interconnections" can be understood in many ways and can also apply to many types of artistic achievements. That is to say, when a visitor sees the ceiling, he sees an Islamic hand at work, but the inner idea of the depictions might be more complex and not Islamic at all.

[23] Kitzinger, "Mosaics: " 270.
[24] Ćurčić, "Palatine Aspects:" 138 – 142.

The same goes for the architectural structure of the Cappella Palatina. Architecturally, palatine chapels were not exceptions in either the East or West, so why does this one pose so many questions? Part of the answer might be taken from the problems with the origin of the ceiling described above: it is simply not a plain palatine structure, but a sort of a hybrid, combining a Western basilica nave with a domed sanctuary. As argued above, the chapel's decoration has played an important role in explaining the architectural structure itself. It has been connected to liturgical practices[25] as well as royal *officia.* As Kitzinger pointed out, "the designers of the mosaic program also looked upon the sanctuary as though it were a Greek *naos* and chose their subject accordingly."[26] A suggestion like this is important for understanding how the chapel as a place was understood by contemporary visitors and by the king himself. It is interesting to ask why a newly elected king used a combination of Orthodox mosaics and Islamic ceiling depictions for his private chapel. The question as to why the king commissioned such a combination is significant in itself, and will be addressed below in connection with the political images of both a new kingdom and a new king.

For establishing a visual impression of the kingdom and its power, the display of rulership and of the king himself was of great importance. This, along with the development and application of the seated ruler motif in a Western cultural setting, will be the centre of this thesis's discussion. But before I go into more detailed discussion of the iconography, I shall refer to one more detail of the chapel's decoration, the king's throne.

[25] For the Byzantine liturgy see Robert Ousterhout, "The Holy Space: Architecture and the Liturgy," in *Heaven and Earth. Art and the Church in Byzantium*, ed. Linda Safran (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 81 – 120.
[26] Kitzinger, "Mosaics: " 270.

In the Cappella Palatina there are two places that were especially made for the use of the king: the balcony in the northern transept and the throne platform set against the western wall of the nave. The balcony[27] cannot be discussed here, since its position is important for the mosaic program and not for the ceiling, and ceiling is of most concern here. It is the throne that needs to be addressed, since the way it is built and the place it occupies play important roles in understanding what the king saw when sitting there and how such a throne correlates to pictorial thrones on *muqarnas* depictions.

A throne is an official seat upon which a ruler is seated in state.[28] It has always been of special symbol of power. The Greeks were known to place a special empty chair for the gods; the Romans also had two types of thrones – one for the emperor, the other for the goddess, Roma. In the Old Testament both, King David and King Solomon[29] are described as having thrones, according to the Scripture: "Moreover the king made a great throne from ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold" (1 Kings 10:18). A throne is normally thought of as an elevated chair led up to by several stairs. Byzantine emperors used an elaborate throne flanked by stone lions and the emperor was initially hidden behind a silk screen, while in Persia the throne was connected to solar rituals, of which more will be said below.

What I refer to as a throne in the chapel in Palermo (Fig. 5) is composed of two elements – a low platform (a seat) and a wall decoration behind it. The seat, constructed from the same marble used for the pavement,[30] is a large construction, 234 cm long and

[27] For more on balcony structure and its function see Tronzo, *The Cultures of his Kingdom*, 49 – 56.
[28] For more on the throne and its function see: Aziz al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship. Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan Polities* (I.B. Tauris Publishers: London, 2001), 31.
[29] King Solomon is traditionally depicted seated on a lion throne, but other animals are also used to support and flank a royal seat. A dragon throne is known from China and a peacock throne for the Persian shahs.
[30] For the pavement, material, and its specific function, see ibid., 29 – 37.

697 cm wide,[31] extending from the rear wall of the chapel to the colonnade of columns. A geometric design runs around the throne and continues above it, finishing in two mosaic medallions containing lions. Directly above this is another mosaic, showing the enthroned Christ flanked by Peter and Paul. Such a composition contains a clear political message if one imagines a king, an earthly ruler, seated underneath, mirroring the heavenly order depicted above.

b) An account of previous scholarship dealing with the Cappella Palatina's architectural form and decoration

One of the main sources for understanding the architectural structure of the chapel, Kitzinger's account of the mosaic in an article from 1949, is inevitably connected to the architecture and his findings have only recently been challenged by Slobodan Ćurčić, who stresses the idea that one needs to see the nave apart from the sanctuary. The chapel is a space with two separate functions, one part functioning as a church, the other as a reception hall in the tradition of secular palace architecture.[32] The development of the argument on the origin of the architecture has been taken even further by Beat Brenk,[33] who argues that these two places – the sanctuary and the nave – served as special places for the king and his coronation ceremony, which was commemorated annually. It employed, namely, the liturgy of the German emperors. As Brenk notes, the ceremony, both the consecration of the ruler and the

[31] Ibid., 69.
[32] Ćurčić, "Palatine Aspects," 125-126, 140.
[33] Beat Brenk, "Zur Bedeutung des Mosaiks an der westwand der Cappella Palatina in Palermo," *Studien zur byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte. Festschrift für Hörst Hallensleben zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Birgitt Borkopp (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1995).

acclamation to him by the court, took place in the chapel, but in two different locations.

The most recent source for research on the previous scholarship on the architectural structure of the Cappella Palatina is William Tronzo's book,[34] in which he addresses all the questions of the chapel's architecture and decoration. He gives a detailed account of the original features of the chapel, such as the pavement, the balcony in the nave, the altars, and the door frames, as well as of later additions, where he places the mosaics, throne, and pulpit. He also summarizes the work of all three scholars mentioned above, but expresses doubt as to their proposed solutions. He is thorough in the accounts of previous research and detailed in the description of the inner structure, where he terms the chapel as a "hybrid" and a concatenation of "discrepancies."[35] His account is important, since it gives an overview of previous research and summarizes different issues of correlation between the architecture and its inner decoration, as well as stressing the importance of the bipolarity of the chapel's space as both a sacral and secular space. He also argues for political motivations in the chapel's decoration and the multicultural and multilingual character of Roger II's court.

i) The ceiling in the nave of the Cappella Palatina – account of previous research

Even more has been said on the wooden ceiling structure than on the architecture, but the views in the abundant scholarship on the central ceiling of the Norman kings' Cappella Palatina in the Palazzo Reale often differ quite substantially. Since the first

[34] William Tronzo, *The Cultures of his Kingdom.*
[35] Ibid., 19.

decades of the twentieth century many scholars have dealt with the intriguing depictions on the ceiling, trying to attribute the pictures to different stylistic approaches and origins. The task becomes even more complex when one tries to answer the puzzling question of the iconography of the *muqarnas* that carries the majority of the figurative paintings (Fig. 6). All these scholars deal with the ceiling either as part of the larger entity in relation to the architectural structure or they treat it as part of the chapel's decoration, describing it in detail, but not referring to it as an individual structure. This was also my intention initially, since I am convinced that the ceiling must be seen as part of the whole structure, but the image I am dealing with might not evoke direct connections to the space as such. What I mean by this is simply that the ceiling in general must be connected to the palatine structure of the chapel and all the questions related to that, but an isolated image as part of a supposed program of the ceiling might not be directly linked to these intriguing yet complex questions which have puzzled modern scholars. In order to fully understand the problems the ceiling poses, I suggest an overview of the existing scholarship to clearly differentiate three major research directions. When clarifying the scientific research done on the depictions and ceiling as such I will suggest the line I would like to follow and explore.

The depictions on the Cappella Palatina ceiling were first published in 1890 by Aleksei Pavlovsky[36] along with the nineteenth-century work *La Cappella di San Pietro nella Reggia di Palermo*, divided into chapters written by Michele Amari, Luigi Boglino, Saverino Cavallari, and Isidoro Carini. The book has valuable and detailed drawings

[36] Aleksei Pavlovsky, *Zhivopis' Palatinskoĭ Kapelly v Palermo* (Sant Peterburg, 1890). For more information on this source see also Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and their Relation to the Artistic Traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genoa: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005), 15-34.

made by Andrea Terzi.[37] Pavlovsky's publication served as the core source until the 1950s, when Monneret de Villard published his *Le pitture musulmane al soffitto della Cappella Palatina in Palermo*,[38] which is still an important source of visual documentation since many black and white pictures taken half a century ago show images with many details visible. Only the recent restoration, undertaken by the Soprintendenza per i Beni Culturali of Palermo,[39] has shown the glittering colors of the ceiling's depictions and its details.[40] The recent publication by Ernst Grube and Jeremy Johns, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina* (2005)[41] is an important contribution to the study of the history and iconography of the ceiling. Especially valuable is the compilation of the variety of iconographical motifs and their counterparts across artistic development as well as the proposed dating of the ceiling, based mainly on the ekphrasis of the Philagatos Kerameos.

The first to propose an iconographic interpretation of the ceiling was Monneret de Villard, although since then many different solutions have been suggested. There are three main ideas in the understanding of the ceiling; first, that the program shows cosmological depictions in close relation to the images of the zodiac; this idea was presented in a doctoral dissertation by Anabelle Simon-Cahn.[42] The second path of

[37] For more on this work, see: Fabrizio Agnello, "The Painted Ceiling of the Nave of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo: An Essay of its Geometric and Constructive Features," *Muqarnas* 27 (2010):413-414.
[38] Ugo Monneret de Villard, *Le Pitture Musulmane al soffito della Cappella Palatina in Palermo* (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1950). One needs to be warned that many pictures in this book are reproduced reversed, a fact that many scholars have pointed out, see Grube, *The Painted Ceilings*, 15-34.
[39] For results from the research done after the restoration see: Fabrizio Agnello, "The Painted Ceiling of the Nave of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo: An Essay of its Geometric and Constructive Features," *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 407-447. This article reports the 3D laser-scanning data of the eastern end of the wooden ceiling and a survey of the dimensions of the entire nave.
[40] We are awaiting more research to be published along with all the photographic references.
[41] See note 35.
[42] This thesis was defended at Columbia University in New York 1978; I was unable to consult the original work. For some additional remarks see: Grube, *The Painted Ceilings*, 345.

research leads to a direct relation between the king and the depictions of royal power[43] displayed in his private chapel. The last proposal suggests imagery of paradise with depictions of leisure-time activities.[44] Scholarship has been quite restrained in using the term "program" for the ceiling depictions, since there is no clear suggestion that the images would be regulated in accordance to any type of program. Although my initial intention was to see the ceiling in an apparent programmatic setting, I am no longer convinced that one can speak of a program as such. My research will show why this might be so, and I intend to show below the possible reading of some of the imagery that comprises the ceiling decoration (Fig. 4).

The puzzling question here is twofold: the princely cycle, as it is known from other different contemporary sources, is used in Islamic art only to depict objects and in spaces that are of a secular nature. The French scholar, Adeline Jeudy, also distinguishes the use of the same imagery as in Cappella Palatina on Coptic wooden screens, with the exception of the image of a seated ruler holding a cup. She concludes that this is so because the screens were used in churches to protect the sanctuary. The fact that this type of screen has a counterpart in Orthodox churches as an iconostasis is, according to Jeudy, a clear indication that the princely type of iconography was interchangeable, used according to the space or the intended usage of an object. [45] Why is there an indication of such a "program" used in a space that served both purposes, liturgical and political? The

[43] Suggested in her doctoral dissertation by Nora Nouritza Nercessian, "The Cappella Palatina of Roger II: The Relationship of its Imagery to its Political Function," University of California Los Angeles, 1981.
[44] The well known "princely cycle" can be seen on many objects of different types and suggests that these depictions had special connotations and were applied in strictly secular surroundings. The iconography will be explained more in detail below.
[45] Adeline Jeudy, "Masterpieces of Medieval Coptic Woodwork in their Byzantine and Islamic Contexts: A Typological and Iconographical Study," *Interactions (Artistic Interchange between the Eastern and Western worlds in the Medieval Periods)*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton and State College: Princeton University and Penn State University Press, 2007), 120-133. I owe grateful thanks to Adeline Jeudy for her kind assistance and visual material.

question will need to remain unanswered for now, but will lead to the depiction of a seated ruler itself. Crowned, bearded, with large wide-open eyes, flanked by two attendants, this has been seen as a depiction[46] of Roger II himself (Fig. 7-8) showing his royal power, established through the title of king after the coronation that took place in 1130. This idea, proposed by William Tronzo[47] after quoting Jeremy Johns, raised several skeptical responses, among others from Oleg Grabar and Ernst J. Grube. I am not convinced one can see a portrait in this seated ruler image. I would rather suggest that the bearded man represents the image of a just ruler, which even has some resemblance to the image of Christ himself. As such, it would serve as a symbolic representation of a ruler and his power, but would not necessarily evoke connections to portrait painting as it is known in the history of Western art. It is hard for me to believe that such a program as 'princely-cycle,' so widely used in Islamic art, when transmitted to Christian environment, would imply such imagery. In addition, portraits are usually made to be seen and observed, venerated or otherwise cherished, while a portrait on a ceiling with depictions from below hardly visible to the naked eye does not seem to be a suitable choice. One could argue that such limitations would also affect the image's iconographical context, thus preventing one from seeing a political connotation in a seated ruler image. I believe, however, that the general effect of the ceiling was what the king was after and not necessarily a direct relation to a portrait; I will show below the historical development of the image and its importance in an Islamic setting, which is

[46] Tronzo argues there are seven depictions of a seated ruler, while in his current research Lev Kapitaikin argues there are several more. As I hope to show, there are many images of seated princes or simply men with a cup or a goblet in hand on the ceiling in Cappella Palatina, but there are depictions of crowned rulers, which led Tronzo to believe they represent King Roger II himself. I will show below the open questions in relation to portrait painting in the twelfth century.
[47] Tronzo, *The Cultures of his Kingdom,* 59 – 60.

imperative for understanding the choice of this iconography in the Cappella Palatina under the rulership of Roger II.

CHAPTER 3

The Development of the Image of a Seated Ruler through Ruler Cults and Ceremonies

The shadow of God is Man
And men are the shadows of Man
Man that is the King
(who is) like the image of God.[48]

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the gradual development of the image of a seated ruler with an account of the ruler cult and the comparison of a deity to a ruler image. How the ruler-deity dynamics were used and gradually displayed in a ruler-cult image that the Christian world connected to an iconography of either a ruler with his regalia, seated on a throne, or a king being crowned by Christ, and thus receiving blessings and approval from God,[49] are questions that show the historical background of the image so widely applied in the visual representations of ruler cults. What are the relations between an image of a deity and the Christian reinterpretation of a ruler as a representative of God on earth? Is there a different background to the image of a seated ruler? Can the origin be discerned from a different historical development? I plan to show that all these images have the same background and are products of the same ideas, but in the course of time took on different interpretations and different meanings. Before turning to a more detailed explanation of the depictions in the Cappella Palatina in the

[48] This Sumerian verse is quoted by Per Beskow, *Rex Gloriae. The Kingship of Christ in the Early Church* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962), 254. Also Gabor Klaniczay. *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses. Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge University Press: 2002), 19.

[49] By capitalizing the word God I mean the God of monotheistic religions, for all other gods I use god or gods.

next chapter, I will indicate a possible development of a seated ruler image. These formulations went hand in hand with images of seated deities. Later, however, they made their ways individually into the history of art as historical and political representations of the power and glory of a certain ruler, chosen by a certain god. The connections between the historical development of the motif and the twelfth-century application in Sicily seems relevant, since in the next chapter I intend to show how the image changed its meaning when it was used on the wooden ceiling in the Cappella Palatina in Palermo. Whether its religious origin can be seen in twelfth-century imagery as interchangeable with a profane image is still debatable at this stage of research.

a) The development of a seated deity into an image of a seated ruler

Ancient complex state-centered civilizations shared a common image of a seated ruler, embodying the idea of a man directly connected to his god or set of gods, giving him special powers in order to be able to rule over his people and bring them prosperity and well-being. Since the social order represents an aspect of the cosmic order, royalty is held (by kings) to have existed from the beginning of the world. The creator was the first king; he transmitted this function to his son and successor. "The Emperor lives and reigns as an emanation of God and he is a carrier of divine power."[50] This constitutes royalty as a sacred institution. "There is no nation without gods, just as there is none without kings.

[50] Otto Treitinger, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach Ihrer Gestaltung im Höfischen Zeremoniell vom Oströmischen Staats- und Reichsgedanken* (Darmstadt: Hermann Gentner Verlag: 1956), 38.

Different people honor different gods, but the worship of all is directed toward the same power."[51]

In ancient Egypt one is immediately faced with the presentation of the pharaoh as a living god himself. The pharaoh, with his gestures and deeds, functioned as a god; following the prescribed constitution brought order and prosperity to the country of Egypt. The same system prevailed in other civilizations. The Mesopotamian cult saw a special bond between god and the king, usually calling a king the son of god, establishing him as an intermediary between gods and men. Sumerian kings had a special ritual of cosmic marriage to ensure stability and order on earth; the ritual took place during the New Year's festival.[52] The most important notion for both civilizations was the idea of divine representation.

> The king amongst his vassals and satraps is a prince of the heavenly hierarchy: just as the stars surround the Sun in the firmament, so the great lords surround the king in his palace. As sun he is an all-determining astral power, cosmocrator. In his hands rest the fate of all his subjects.[53]

The earthly kingdom became a reflection of the heavenly kingdom and ascension to the throne became connected to cosmic kingship. The king was called "the Axis and the Pole of the World." In Babylonian cults the king was entitled "the Sun of Babylon," "the King of the Universe," "the king of the four Quadrants of the World," and these titles were repeated in ever new adaptations right up to the Sasanian period, when the king was the "Brother of the Sun and Moon."[54] On Sasanian silver plates[55] (Fig. 9) a

[51] David Potter, *Prophets and Emperors. Human and Divine Authority from Augustus to Theodosius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 7.
[52] H. P. L'Orange "Expressions of the Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World," *La Regalità Sacra. The Sacral Kingshi*p, (Contributions to the Central Theme of the Eighth International Congress for the History of Religions) (Leiden: Brill, 1959).
[53] Ibid., 485.
[54] Ibid., 482.

seated ruler is represented wearing a crown with a jeweled fillet, with battlements, a celestial sphere, and a crescent moon. The king is seated on a chariot pulled by four horses; the image clearly shows the astral ascension of a king. Several other animals are also connected to such an act of a sun-king's elevation,[56] supporting his (golden) throne, which together with a throne room[57] decorated with astral symbols, was an innovation the West took from the East. The animals supporting the throne when the king is being elevated to the heavens are griffins,[58] eagles, and lions,[59] all of which appear on the wooden ceiling in Palermo (Fig. 10). Ideas of a throne supported by hybrid creatures penetrated Christian iconography and formed an image of the enthroned Christ. "Christ enthroned in heavenly splendour and the Evangelist symbols soaring around him – has sprung from the throne picture of the Ancient East."[60] The Oriental cult symbol of an eagle emerged in the Christian setting as a *psychophorus*, a symbol of elevation to heaven and immortality.

Such a depiction of an elevation to the stars can be seen in the Cappella Palatina (Fig. 11). For a possible interpretation of the ceiling in Palermo, the notion of a throne for the king of Persians is important. John Chrysostom gives an account that the king "made as a column a platane of gold with the heaven above, and he himself sat in the shade of

[55] For Sasanian silver and applied iconography see: Oleg Grabar, *Sasanian Silver: Late Antique and Early Medieval Arts of Luxury from Iran*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1967).
[56] See: H. P. L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1953), 64-79.
[57] On the ancient Eastern throne in Christian iconography see L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography*, 124-137.
[58] For the image of a griffin, see: Pamela Gravestock, "Did Imaginary Animals Exist?" in *The Mark of the Beast. The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature*, ed. Debra Hassig (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999): 119-135.
[59] For the symbolism of animals, see, among others: Debra Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[60] L'Orange, *Studies on the Iconography*, 132.

it."[61] The astral picture of a throne room developed into a system of circling stars making it possible to cast horoscopes and read the stars[62] (Fig.12). In such a place the ruler acted as judge, translating the symbols for his subjects, thus becoming their fate and destiny.

> This ruler theology gave rise in the course of late Roman times to allegories and symbols of power, … making the emperor appear a *particeps siderum, frater Solis et Lunae*, as the Sasanian kings officially called themselves. And from the Roman emperor the sun-moon symbol was inherited by the medieval rulers of the West.[63]

The king's high status influenced not only the mode of his rulership, but also the way he was represented and received. When his subjects faced a king's audience they could expect to stare at the veiled face of a king seated on his throne, as some Sasanian[64] sources report or they would talk to their ruler through a curtain, not able to see the king at all. Later, when the cult developed, a special type of veneration was introduced, namely, ritual abasement before the divine person of the ruler – *proskynesis*.[65] As Paula Sanders has observed for Fatimid court ceremonial, "the gestures, salutes, and acts of homage dictated by protocol were the building blocks of ceremonies: prostration, kissing the ground, addressing the ruler,"[66] all came in a prescribed manner, so called *rusūm*

[61] Ibid. 134.
[62] Note the famous fresco depiction of the zodiac in an Umayyad desert palace, Qusar' Amra. See more in Garth Fowden, *Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria. Qusayr 'Amra* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
[63] L'Orange, *Expressions of the Cosmic Kingship*, 488.
[64] "The Hellenistic *vellum*, a screen which shielded the sovereign from the public eye during ceremonies, and which seems to have originated with the Sasanians, became an integral symbol of the caliphate from the time of the Umayyads through to the Abbasids and Fatimids," in Aziz al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship. Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan Polities* (London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2001), 14.
[65] On *proskynesis* and the Hellenistic ruler cult see Lily Ross Tyler, "The 'Proskynesis' and the Hellenistic Ruler Cult," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 47 (1927): 53-62.
[66] Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City of Fatimid Cairo* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 14.

(protocol, ceremonies), which at the Fatimid court was much like that at the contemporary Abbasid court.[67]

The ruler cult and its iconography developed gradually and were dependent on political structure and historical events. Origins influential on Western European art can be traced back to Alexander the Great and his formal connections to Eastern cults. When he demanded that his Greek cities venerate him as a god, many consented, presuming that since he had conquered the world and come to its end, he must therefore be closely connected to the gods, possibly even one of them. He himself felt connected to the image of god; he considered himself to be god's representative; this was an important move toward artistic representations depicting the ruler as a close collaborator with god. For, as Plutarch writes,

> the rulers are ministers of God for the care and safety of mankind, that they may distribute or hold in safe keeping the blessings and benefits which God gives to men." and further "so justice [δίκη] is the end of law, and law is the business [or product, έργον] of the ruler, while the ruler is the image of God who ordains all things.[68]

The connection between gods and mortals was thus elaborated into a significant bond, giving those ruling on earth special power. In tracing his descent back, often all the way to the gods themselves, a ruler made a significant political move, ensuring himself legitimate rulership.

> The pairing of ruler and god is common in state representations and indicates the god's protectiveness of his or her people and the ruler's

[67] Ibid. 15. Also Hilal ibn al-Muhassin al-Sabi, *Rusūm Dār al-Khilafah (The Rule and Regulations of the 'Abbasid Court)*, transl. Elie A. Salem (Beirut : American University of Beirut, 1977).
[68] Kenneth Scott, "Plutarch and the Ruler Cult," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 60 (1929), 127.

> performance of the rites proper to the god. The clear figural demonstration of these relationships is the purpose of state monuments.[69]

In terms of concrete historical figures, it was the Romans who had the strong notion of the myth of sacral kingship.

> The imperial cult evolved out of the commemoration of benefactors in the Greek world, and from the time of Augustus through the fourth century it became the single most important institution for communication between the emperor and his subjects because it provided a ready way to introduce the emperor in the civic context.[70]

Worship of emperors and members of their families had two aspects: the worship of the living and the worship of the dead. The image of the emperor,[71] protected and favoured by the gods, codified expressions of the relation between an emperor and the gods; emperors followed in the footsteps of Jupiter and Hercules, who were their *conservatores*, and imperial nomenclature reiterated this fact.[72] This type of transfiguration of the emperor was influential and had many variations. In these types of representations the ruler understands himself as a god, expressing the god's qualities, and assuming the god's outer appearance. Alexander believed he was the son of Zeus and a new Dionysius, which is why he is shown with a thunderbolt in his hands. At the same time, his face radiated the ideal beauty of youth. Under the influence of Alexander's images, this type of transfiguration became a widely spread manner of representing a ruler made divine in the Hellenistic-Roman period. By the time of Constantine,[73] rulership was clearly supported with the visual means of the Constantinian

[69] Esther Pasztory, *Thinking with Things. Toward a New Vision of Art* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 69.
[70] Potter, *Prophets and Emperors*, 128.
[71] For a social image of the emperor and his mediating role see ibid. 1-58, 213-216.
[72] MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 32.
[73] For Constantine and idea of the ruler made divine see Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 127-157.

iconography;[74] it is important to consider the terminology used here as a starting point for the imagery which gave rise to the iconography for centuries to come.

b) Sacral kingship as an institution of political power

A variety of images existed in late antiquity which could be associated with the image and symbol of imperial accession. On coins,[75] antique imagery of imperial majesty shows the emperor enthroned. Coinage was a common medium for such depictions and was also a means of distributing the figure of the emperor among the army and to show that he was elected by the gods. In the idiom of the coinage, this set of ideas was conveyed by the familiar image of a god – in this instance Sol – crowning the emperor. Such images of Sol Invictus,[76] show the ruler being crowned by the divine presence of Sol, thus confirming him as emperor, handing him a globe or victory. The imagery of imperial power supported by the sun and moon can be seen in many cultures. The account from Theophanes about Heraclius, seeing "Khusrau's own image in the domed roof of the place, as though enthroned in Heaven, and around it the Sun and the Moon and the Stars,"[77] shows how this iconography was influential. A cosmological dimension was given to such descriptions, since just as the stars surround the sun, so too the king is surrounded by his attendants and great lords. Like the sun he is an all-determining astral

[74] The term is used by Monika Osvald in "Ikonografsko-slogovni razvoj motive apoteoze v likovni umetnosti do 6. stoletja" (Iconographical and stylistic development of the apotheosis motif in the history of art until the sixth century) MA thesis, History of Art, Faculty of Arts (Ljubljana, 2000). I use the term here to point out differences in the iconography which started with the rule of Emperor Constantine. To Monika Osvald I give grateful thanks for valuable suggestions and providing help.

[75] For Byzantine examples see Philip Grierson, *Byzantine Coinage* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1982).

[76] "And just as God put in heaven the sun, his exceeding beautiful image, and the moon, such also is the ruler in the city…" in Scott, "Plutarch," 128. On the Sol Invictus iconography see Gaston H. Halsberghe, *The Cult of Sol Invictus* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); Martin Wallraff, *Christus verus Sol. Sonnenverehrung und Christentum in der Spätantike*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum 32 (Muenster Westfalen: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2001).

[77] L'Orange, *Expressions of the Cosmic Kingship*, 484.

power, a cosmocrator. Rome was familiar with such notions. On Constantine's triumphal arch the sun and moon signs welcomed the emperor when he passed through. At such a moment the *adventus imperatoris* took on a cosmological connotation.[78]

The concept of imperial rule as an earthly reflection of divine rule in heaven had become codified by the fifth century,[79] but it was the imperial ceremonial that was important for establishing a hierarchy between the ruler and his subjects.[80] As the emperor claimed divine election and support, legitimizing himself with the help of art, so the imperial ceremony enabled a desirable relation between the secular and divine powers.

> In these rituals, then, the sacred and profane are brought together, the emperor even coming near at times to playing the role of Christ; and the imperial palace is used as the setting for the ceremonies that are undeniably religious. In the palace and the city, imperial ceremony is also religious ceremony.[81]

The ceremonies at Byzantine[82] and Fatimid[83] courts will be addressed now, since these two forms influenced royal ceremonials at Roger II's Sicilian court.[84] At court, the gestures, acts of homage dictated by protocol, prostration, addressing the ruler, prescribed

[78] Wallraff, *Christus verus Sol*, 165.
[79] See: MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 177.
[80] See: André Grabar, *L'Empereur dans l'art Byzantin* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1936), 85-97.
[81] Averil Cameron, "The Construction of Court Ritual: The Byzantine Book of Ceremonies," in *Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. David Cannadine and Simon Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 113.
[82] For Byzantine ceremonials see Marius Canard, *Byzance et les musulmans du Proche Orient* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1973), 355-420; Christopher Walter, *Art and Ritual of the Byzantine Church* (London: Variorum Publications, 1982), 116-163; Gilbert Dagron. *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 84-124.
[83] For Fatimid ceremonials see Canard, *Byzance et les musulman*, 355-420; Paula Sanders. *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), Ch. 2.
[84] Another court which formed its royal ceremonies under the influence of Islamic (Abbasid) and Byzantine court rituals was that of Armenian kingdom, see Lynn Jones, *Between Islam and Byzantium: Aght'amar and the Visual Construction of Medieval Armenian Rulership* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), Ch. 2.

and disciplined acts, composed an ideology that was used at both courts, but it is the political theology that should be in the focus here.

"Though he be guided by God, the Byzantine emperor, according to this political theology, is elected by the Trinity and, indeed, emanated from it. This divine kingship (*entheos basileia*) is kingship in Christ and, indeed, in God himself."[85] The Byzantine emperor was associated with the divine *logos* or with Christ and emanated the connection through ceremony. The emperor was a "ritual figure of Christomimesis,"[86] which enabled him to establish a hierarchical order in the same way the Cosmocrator runs the universe. By means of ritual he became the representative of God on earth, his likeness reflected in art. Art and ceremony portrayed imperial power and majesty with the same vocabulary. "The idea of the image as the 'seat of the divine being' and the idea of the "spirit animating the statue" both led to the conviction that the image possessed the same powers as its divine model."[87]

As mentioned above, in the Muslim world *rusūm*, prescribed forms of ceremonies, dictated the code of conduct at court. The king's position as an earthly ruler, however, was uttered through an *adab* or "protocol," which addressed all forms of human behavior and which, at the Fatimid court, had much in common with that of the Abbasid caliphs.[88] Despite the obvious similarities in practices at both courts, the context of such a ceremony in the Fatimid court assumed an additional dimension. Abbasids viewed the ceremony and its strict protocol in the presence of caliph as a necessary form of respect,

[85] Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 28, see also note 76.
[86] Aziz Al-Azmeh, "Monotheistic Kingship," in *Monotheistic Kingship. The Medieval Variants*, ed. Aziz al-Azmeh and János M. Bak (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), 20.
[87] Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, tr. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 37. See also: Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 31.
[88] Sanders, *Ritual*, 15-16; Canard, *Byzance et les musulmans*, 378.

while Fatimids, in accordance with their Isma'ili[89] thought, took it further and understood this protocol in the context of the glorification of God[90].

i) A seated ruler as an image of political theology?

> The description of this audience demonstrates how spatial arrangements, material objects, and protocol all functioned to construct the caliph as a permanent and immobile center. The caliph appeared in full regalia, seated on his throne. There was no visible formal procession to the throne. The audience saw none of the preparations. He was never seen moving from one place to another without great solemnity, and he was usually concealed, either by curtains or his bodyguard; he was never seen while he ate, slept, or spoke.[91]

Such a description of a ceremony opens the possibility for an interpretation of a seated ruler image. The posture will be addressed in the next chapter, but the regalia are of interest here. As will be shown on depictions from *muqarnas,* there is a set of insignia of sovereignty that can be seen and which are referred to by different terms. The most important for the Cappella Palatina is a variety of headgear (Fig. 13-14). The Fatimid *tāj* was in fact not a crown per se but rather a turban (*'imāma*) wound in a distinctive fashion. Other regalia were the parasol (*mizalla*), which always matched the fabric of the caliph's costume; a scepter, sword, and shield could also be part of a king's regalia.[92] More on royal garments and imperial insignia cannot be discussed here, but what types of attributes one can expect on images depicting rulers need to be noted. Several images that will be discussed in the next chapter depict some of this regalia. The human figure

[89] On Isma'ilism see Heinz Halm, *The Fatimids and their Traditions of Learning* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997), 3-40.
[90] Sanders, *Ritual*, 16. "The Abbasid treatises *Kitāb al-tāj* and *Rusūm dār al-khilāfa* view strict protocol in the presence of the caliph or king as a necessary and desirable form of respect. Isma'ili thought, the well-established rules of protocol, assumed an additonal dimension...Thus, the protocol that in an Abbasid context symbolized merely the relative ranks of men symbolized in a Fatimid Isma'ili context the glorification of God."
[91] Sanders, *Ritual*, 34.
[92] For more on regalia see: Canard, *Byzance et les musulmans*, 387-393; Sanders, *Ritual*, 24-25.

depicted in "princely-cycle" iconography usually holds a cup or goblet in one hand and a fruit (pomegranate?) in the other and wears a three-pointed crown;[93] such depictions are the most common in early Islamic and Turkish art. The postures such images show will be addressed below.

Another element of ruler image motifs is the frontality of the persons depicted. It seems that this became the main characteristic of both Christ and earthly rulers[94], however, it is not always present in Islamic imagery, where some rulers are depicted in three- quarter view.[95] Frontality and symmetry were transformed in the art of successive centuries, starting with the Byzantine emperors[96] followed by Christian rulers in the West, as was the case with the Ottonian rulers of the tenth century (Fig. 15). I stress this point since it played a significant role in interpreting the image here and below I will address the question of frontality in the early Middle Ages.

To emphasize another important feature of the images that came to prevail in the next centuries, I turn now to a different piece of art, The *Missorium* of Theodosius (Fig. 16). Coin images, for instance, circulated among the common people, but this ceremonial silver dish was a luxury item made to celebrate a ruler's accession to the throne. The *missorium* shows Emperor Theodosius I (347-395) in a niche, seated on a chair, displaying all his regalia. But what strikes one as significant, as pointed out by Sabine

[93] Gönül Öney, "Human Figures on Anatolian Seljuk Sgraffiato and Champlevé Ceramics," in *Essays in Islamic Art and Architecture in Honor of Katharina Otto-Dorn*, ed. Abbas Daneshvari (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1981): 114.

[94] See Garth Fowden, *Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria. Qusayr 'Amra* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004): 120-121, where he writes about Qusayr 'Amra's depiction of a prince that "recalls the frontal portrait of the Roman emperor that became current from the late third century onward and was particularly popular in the mid-eighth century, and the closely related iconography of the enthroned Christ."

[95] Finbarr B. Flood, "A Royal Drinking Scene from Alchi: Iranian Iconography in the Western Himalayas," in *Image and Meaning in Islamic Art*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (London: Altajir Trust, 2005): 89.

[96] On the iconography of Byzantine emperors and for ritual postures see Grabar, *L'Empereur*,10-30 and 98-106.

MacCormack, is the ageless representation of the emperor, "because it sets the individual moment into a permanent and enduring context; the worldwide and eternal imperial dominion."[97] Such an image is important for understanding the seated ruler image on the *muqarnas* in the Palermo chapel if I am to demonstrate that this imagery introduces the depiction of a broader complex of cosmological imagery. The idea of a prince enjoying leisure-time activities connects to the notion of just rule, which is supported by the gods or God. Since the ruler chosen by a deity rules in accordance with virtues and justice, his effort will be repaid in the afterlife with an enjoyable eternal life. Hence, all three elements – eternal youth, royal regalia, and frontality, play important roles in understanding the seated ruler imagery on the Cappella Palatina ceiling.

[97] MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 216.

CHAPTER 4

The Ceiling and its Iconographical solutions

a) Problems with dating and questions of visual presentation of the chapel in the life-time of Roger II

> As to the ceiling, one can never see enough of it; it is wonderful to look at and to hear about. It is decorated with delicate carvings, variously formed like little coffers; all flashing with gold, it imitates the heavens when, through the clear air, the host of stars shines everywhere. Most beautiful columns support the arches, raising the ceiling to the extraordinary height.[98]

Thus reads the first written description of the wooden ceiling in Cappella Palatina, from a sermon by Philagathos Kerameōs delivered for the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul.[99] It is unique to have a contemporary source describing the chapel as seen by Roger II and his court. But no matter how helpful such an account may be, this text has also contributed to numerous questions concerning dating of the chapel. There is no indication as to when this homily was written nor when it was read. Although it consists of lavish praise of a king, it cannot be stated for sure that the homily was ever read in Roger's presence. The most possible date for such an account once seemed the year 1140, when a charter of endowment was issued *die dedicationis ecclesiae*. This statement led Kitzinger to assume that the phrase might denote an anniversary of the dedication rather than the dedication itself. More recent research has shown that the homily is unlikely to antedate Roger's coronation on Christmas Day, 1130, or the latest possible date: 1153, for Roger died in

[98] Grube, *The Painted Ceilings*, 13 – 14.

[99] To read the whole Philigathos' homily see Jeremy Johns "The Date of the Ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo" in Grube, *The Painted Ceilings*, 1 – 11. For the problems with dating of the ceiling see also Ernst Kitzinger, "The Date of Philigathos' Homily for the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul," *Studies in Late Antique Byzantine and Medieval Western Art*, Vol. 2 (London: The Pindar Press, 2003), 1093 – 1098.

February, 1154. To narrow down the possible date, the mosaic decoration, which is also referred to in Philagathos' sermon, although not in detail, might be of help. One needs to bear in mind that the author's task was not to give a description of the chapel's decoration, but to "give an idealized description of the chapel, praising it and its founder, not to report on the progress of its decoration."[100] Johns proposed seeing the Greek inscription beneath the rotunda as a possible connection to the probable dating of Philigathos' sermon; the text implies the chapel being consecrated to St. Peter in 1143, "perhaps on the anniversary of the foundation – 28April 1143,"[101] allowing for the sermon to be delivered two months later, on 29 June 1143[102].

Of the chapel's decoration, the ceiling was probably the first part to be finished. It seems that scholarly research accepts the date of the execution of the ceiling as between 1140 and 1147, with a strong probability that it was completed by 29 June 1143 and an estimation that part of the mosaic program, namely, the one in the sanctuary, was also executed in the time of Roger's reign,[103] while most of the mosaic decoration was executed in the time of William I; according to stylistic correlations to both Cefalù (the estimated time scale of the mosaic decoration there is between 1143 and 1147) and the mosaics of Santa Maria dell'Ammiraglio (the mosaics were finished before George of Antioch, whose personal foundation this church was, died in 1151) the dating of the mosaics in the sanctuary would correspond to the time scale 1140 to 1150.

[100] Johns, *The date of the Ceiling*, 6.
[101] Ibid. 6.
[102] 29 June is the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul.
[103] Tronzo, *The Cultures of his Kingdom*, 54-56.

b) Description of the ceiling and possible solutions to the problem of interpretation

Wooden ceilings were rather commonly used in church structures in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, not only in the West, but also in the East. Just how popular this type of construction was in Islamic art is hard to tell, since not much has been investigated in a comprehensive study,[104] although relatively numerous wooden ceilings in Spain and Sicily can help estimate the popularity of such an architectural element. When Arthur Byne and Mildred Stopley[105] investigated wooden ceilings in Spain they noted that such structures, in Spanish called *artesonados*, are of remote origin. They mention two sources describing two separate examples of wooden structures. The first was Prudencio, an Iberian Roman, writing in the late fourth century, describing a "gilded ceiling with painted coffers" in the basilica of Saint Eulalia in Mérida; the second account came from the seventh-century author, Isidore of Seville, writing on rich *artesonados* of wood. Nothing from these periods has survived, but these accounts prove that wooden ceiling structures had a long tradition in Europe before Spain and Sicily became part of the Islamic cultural sphere. It was the Arabs, though, who first introduced a special wooden structure using star-shaped constructions which became popular in the centuries that followed.

Some of the wooden ceilings in Spain are preserved and remain a reminder of the once-lavish church decoration, which later more or less lost its charm when many churches containing wooden structures caught fire and burnt down. Wood was replaced

[104] James W. Allan, "The Transmission of Decorated Wooden Ceilings in the Early Islamic World," in *Learning, Language and Invention. Essays presented to Francis Maddison*, ed. W. D. Hackmann and A. J. Turner (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1994), 1-31.
[105] Arthur Byne and Mildred Stopley, *Decorated Wooden Ceilings in Spain* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920).

by stone or brick and ceilings got new types of vaulting. In Spain, however, one can encounter wooden ceilings dating to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, such as the ceiling over the Puerta del Lagarto in Seville cathedral, the ceiling over the cloister walk in the monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos (renewed in the fifteenth century), the ceiling in a chapel of Santa Agrieda in Barcelona, and the ceiling of the anteroom to the Sala Capitular in Toledo cathedral, which preserves the star-shaped structure.[106] This shows that such structures were in use for several centuries, even though not many are preserved.

North Africa is one of the areas where a considerable amount of woodwork has been preserved. One can only admire wooden ceilings and also wood carvings executed on panels, doors, *minbars*,[107] galleries, and Koran stands. One highly developed wooden ceiling example is that in the Great Mosque of Kairouan,[108] the so-called Uqba mosque[109] (Fig.17). It is a crossbeam construction similar to the one in the Cefalù cathedral, dated to the ninth century, decorated with ornamental floral paintings. Notably, the Fatimid woodcarving tradition played an important role in transmitting ideas and iconographical motifs to Sicily (Fig. 18). As mentioned above,[110] some Coptic carved wood screens, today in a museum in Cairo, show exactly this type of iconography used in both the Cefalù and Palermo ceilings.[111]

[106] Ibid. 24. See also Mirjam Gelfer-Jørgensen, *Medieval Islamic Symbolism and the Paintings in the Cefalú*, (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 171 – 172.
[107] A *minbar* is a pulpit-like structure where the imam stands to deliver sermons. It is usually shaped like a small tower, richly ornamented, with stairs leading up to it.
[108] For the Great Mosque of Kairouan see: Paul Sebag, *The Great Mosque of Kairouan*, transl. Richard Howard (London : Collier-Macmillan, 1965).
[109] It is named after its founder, Uqba ibn Nafi, who built the mosque in 670 after the Arab conquest of Byzantine North Africa.
[110] See note 44.
[111] For Islamic ceilings see: Gelfer-Jørgensen, *Medieval Islamic Symbolism*, 169-175. For the structure of *muqarnas* see Yasser Tabbaa, "The Muqarnas Dome. Its Origin and Meaning," *Muqarnas* 3 (1985): 61-74;

The painted ceiling in the nave of the chapel consists of a wooden stalactite structure – *muqarnas* -- and is known from churches and buildings across the Middle East, as well Spain, Sicily, and Armenia.[112] The material used for *muqarnas* structures varies according to the region; Egypt and Syria were not rich in wood and wooden structures were always considered a luxury. Hence, stone was usually used for *muqarnas* as it was in Turkey, while in Iran and Iraq brick structures with plastered decoration were more common. In North Africa, the *muqarnas* is made of plaster and wood.[113]

By the twelfth century the *muqarnas* structure was established as a common architectural element of Islamic buildings. Among the oldest examples in Western contexts are those in Palermo: On the ceiling of the nave of the Cappella Palatina, in the niches of the *iwan*[114] in the palace of Zisa, and fragments preserved on the southern wall of the Cuba, a palace built in 1180 for Guglielmo II d'Altavilla.[115] As recent research by Vicenza Garofalo has shown, some other structures from Palermo bear traces of *muqarnas*: the cathedral, the Favara Castle in Maredolce, and the Scibene Palace,[116] demonstrating that such an architectural element was common in the Sicilian context and no particular exception were made when choosing the ceiling of the royal chapel.

It is generally accepted the *muqarnas* in the Cappella Palatina is a work of Islamic craftsmen commissioned by the Normans. The ceiling in the nave, painted with vivid

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Arman Ghazarian and Robert Ousterhout, "A Muqarnas Drawing from Thirteenth-Century Armenia and the Use of Architectural Drawings during the Middle Ages," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 141-154.

[112] See: Arman Ghazarian and Robert Ousterhout, "A Muqarnas Drawing from Thirteenth-Century Armenia and the Use of Architectural Drawings during the Middle Ages," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 141-154.

[113] Vincenza Garfalo, "A Methodology for studying Muqarnas: The extant examples in Palermo," *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 357.

[114] An *iwan* is a vaulted architectural space in the form of a large niche. It usually opens onto a courtyard and is surrounded by a flat frame. The form is of Iranian origin.

[115] Ibid. 358.

[116] Ibid. 365.

colors, extends from the presbytery to the sanctuary and measures 18.5 m in length and just over 5 m across (Fig. 4). The field of the ceiling is divided into a:

> star-and-cross pattern forming the basis for a series of bosses that drop from the ceiling…A set of small cupolas surrounds this field, while along the edges a highly complex stalactite or *muqarnas* frame is set. This carries the majority of the figurative paintings that have made it famous.[117]

The interpretation of this ceiling was a highly disputed topic among art historians[118] in the last century and it remains a complex task to discuss it as precedents in the construction, iconography and sources, can be found in neither the Byzantine nor Western European tradition. It has traditionally been attributed to Muslim artists brought from Egypt and accustomed to Fatimid artistic expressions.[119] One needs to be careful, though, when pointing toward Fatimid Cairo as a source of the origin of the style in the Palermo paintings, since the Fatimid style would probably have been more advanced by the mid-twelfth century [120] that what can be seen on the ceiling in the Cappella Palatina. What I have in mind here is the style of faces and development of movement which led some scholars to believe Tunisia to be a better possible mediator. There the Iraqi style, in the proximity of which one can put the Palermo paintings, lingered longer than in Cairo. Such assumptions also seem to be supported by recent research on the technical elements of the *muqarnas* vaults. In technical details the structures used are closer to contemporary structures in Fez and the architecture of Asir and Qal'a Bani Hammad, while in Egypt, as

[117] Grube, *The Painted Ceilings*, 15.
[118] For a compilation of the bibliography on the iconographical elements of the Cappella Palatina ceiling see: Grube, *The Painted Ceilings*, 418-441; Dalu Jones, "The Cappella Palatina in Palermo: Problems of Attribution," *Art and Archaeology Papers* 2 (1972): 41-57; Dalu Jones, "Romanesque, East and West?" *The Connoisseur* 191 (1976): 280-285.
[119] Connections between the Cappella Palatina wooden ceiling pictures and Fatimid art are well known and discussed since Richard Ettinghausen's "Painting in the Fatimid Period: A Reconstruction," *Ars Islamica* 9, (1942): 112-124, but have several opponents in today's scholarship. See, among others, Dalu Jones, "The Cappella Palatina in Palermo: Problems of Attribution," *Art and Archaeology Papers* 2 (1972): 41-57.
[120] Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1962), 44.

Jonathan Bloom observes, this typology of *muqarnas* vaults only came into use in the middle of the fourteenth century.[121]

The ascription of the ceiling, however, is a far simpler task, since many scholars have pointed out that the artists could have been from Sicily itself,[122] as the island had mixed cultures and a long tradition in Islamic art. It seems to me that such a presupposition is not only possible but also probable, since I am not entirely convinced by the idea of imported artists. First, one needs to acknowledge that wooden ceilings such as the one in the palatine chapel were also constructed in other places.[123] Secondly, for a structure as big as the Cappella Palatina's ceiling one needs more than one person, probably a whole workshop, specialized people dealing with woodcarvings and paint applications. It is possible, if not probable, that the ceiling was executed under the supervision of one or more artists from North Africa, but with additional support from local craftsmen. Such a supposition would also provide an answer to several iconographical questions to which I will return below.

c) Origins and correlations of a "princely cycle" in Islamic art

One of the frequently occurring iconographical regimes in Islamic art is the combination of motifs traditionally known as a "princely cycle." To identify an iconographical program by such a term, certain motifs need to be identified. Normally, one encounters three sets of images combined together to form the "princely cycle," thus called because it was traditionally connected to the courtly activities of a prince and his

[121] Vincenza Garfalo, "A Methodology for Studying Muqarnas: The Extant examples in Palermo," *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 376, notes 50 and 51.
[122] Kapitaikin, *The Paintings of the Aisle-Ceilings*, 129, note 74.
[123] See notes 101 and 102.

attendants. As some scholars warn, there are no rules to determine exactly how many motifs can be combined in such a cycle nor there is there any specification of the sequence of the motifs. What is clear, however, is the notion that neither musicians nor dancers should be omitted from such a cycle, where in the centre there is a depiction of a seated man with a goblet or a cup. His posture is typical and has a long tradition, as I will show below. The prince is flanked by one or two attendants (often holding a bottle of wine) and female dancers, which, however, are not constant companions of a seated prince.[124]

Gelfer-Jørgenson has argued that such imagery did not occur before the time of the Abbasids and was unknown to the Umayyads, but it was part of Sasanian royal iconography and was widely used, especially on Sasanian silver plates.[125] Before going into details of the imagery itself, a clarification of the term "princely cycle" is needed. It has been termed as such because it has been seen as a depiction of the literary motifs of the Islamic world, showing the courts of the East as a place of leisure and entertainment. Drinking and dancing have been seen as a description of the royal enjoyment of life in the East, and as Gelfer-Jørgensen points out, a Western idea of "Wein, Weib und Gesang."[126] The ritual of drinking, however, has a long history and has been explained in different contexts when addressed as part of the "princely cycle." What I will show is that drinking itself can be more than just a mere description of an act of pleasure and leisure activity. It bears different connotations when seen in a religious context.

[124] Compare the wooden ceiling depictions in Cefalù. See Gelfer-Jørgensen, *Medieval Islamic Symbolism,* 29.
[125] The plate is dated to the 7th century and is today in the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg.
[126] Gelfer-Jørgensen, *Medieval Islamic symbolism,* 36.

What is important to note at this stage of research is the combination of motifs used in this iconographical system. Besides a seated prince with attendants, one normally encounters two more sets of images, animal combat and hunting scenes.[127] These motifs are important if one is to see a political implication in the seated ruler image, since both sets of motifs carry this exact symbolism.

Iconography termed a "princely cycle" has been variously explained in the course of previous research. Several scholars have made attempts to explain these sets of images and what symbolic meaning they might have.[128] In the last decades these attempts have pointed to definite patterns which are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Some scholars regard the imagery as a cosmological description of the universe; others see it as terrestrial life making a transition to the sphere of paradise. The link to either the cosmological sphere or the heavenly sphere should be seen in the image of a seated prince with a cup in his hand.

i) Cosmological interpretations

Philagathos' description of the ceiling, quoted above, can once more serve as a point of departure for a justification for possible cosmological interpretations of the paintings. When he speaks of a ceiling as "wonderful to look at," with "stars everywhere" and its appearance "imitating heaven," many scholars believed the complex depiction system to be a representation of the cosmos with planetary figures and astrological connotations.

[127] Dororthy G. Shepard, "Banquet and Hunt in Medieval Islamic Iconography," in *Gatherings in Honour of Dorothy E. Miner*, ed. Ursula E. McCracken, Lilian M. C. Randall, and Richard H. Randall (Baltimore: The Walters Art Gallery, 1974), 79 – 92.
[128] See note 115.

To describe a ceiling as a stellar constellation and the iconography of a ruler in a cosmic setting, one needs to acknowledge that such imagery usually consists of several sets of images, traditionally attributed to cosmological iconography. In the center one expects to find the seated ruler image surrounded by the labors of the months, zodiac images, and stars with a moon and a sun. As for any imagery there are forerunners showing the possible development of motifs and their usage. Cosmological imagery has its roots in Assyrian and Babylonian cults, where the main importance was given to a moon god as a lord of the universe "who bestows power on the ruler even outside the limits of his inherited realm." It is he, who "establishes his throne over the four quarters of the world," or grants him "the rule over all the inhabited places to the end of days." It is the moon god who "creates the king for royalty," who "crowns him with the lordly tiara."[129] It was presumably the moon god that had a dominant position in the stellar religion of south Arabia, but solar and lunar theologies both occurred outside this geographical scope. As Segall points out, it is important to note that what made the reemergence of double symbol of a moon and sun so important is:

> the fact that it was combined with the iconography of a lion-fighting hero. Thus the nocturnal, the chthonic aspects of this cosmos deity were to be emphasized, and it is from this source that these ideas were to find their way into Greco-Roman funerary symbolism.[130]

Such an interpretation has a striking resonance with some of the Cappella Palatina imagery (combat scenes of man fighting a lion and a man fighting a bear) as well with the images on the wooden ceiling in Cefalù. It has been observed that besides numerous figure paintings there are several animal depictions with different symbolic connotations. Let me point out on here that when I refer to symbolism in describing the images I do not

[129] Berta Segall, "Notes on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship," *The Art Bulletin* 38 (1956): 76.
[130] Ibid., 78.

mean that every image needs to be a carrier of a deeper meaning; an animal can be seen also as just an animal – a lion or a bear. But one cannot fail to see that there are images that do not resemble real life, like men riding a winged, long-necked monster or harpies.[131] It is not my intention to research these depictions, but rather to point out that there might be a possible correlation between old traditions of the Arabian lands and Islamic imagery developed from the remnants of previous civilizations. Such a connection gives the first part of the answer as to why one would see an explanation of the imagery in the context of cosmological depictions. But if I return to the image I am investigating here, a seated prince with a cup in his hand, I need to mention that around such an image one can find (if one interprets them as such) six planets, in which Venus and Jupiter occupy the main axis, while Luna, Mercury, Mars, and Saturn appear on the right or left side of the prince.[132] As Eva Bear has observed when researching Islamic metal objects from the late twelfth and thirteenth century, the princely figure could represent the seventh planet – the Sun – or "we should see this figure as a princely image, who in this cosmic setting has assumed an astrological character."[133]

A princely seated figure with a cosmic character seems indeed to be elevated in the heavens and supported by all or some planets and other star constellations such as zodiacal images. Dorothy Shephard was the first to connect the surviving images of the Sasanian banquet scenes (Fig. 19) to the leisure activities of a "princely cycle." Her

[131] For the iconography of harpies and human-headed birds see: Eva Baer, *Sphinxes and Harpies in Medieval Islamic Art. An Iconographical Study*, Oriental Notes and Studies 9 (Jerusalem: The Israel Oriental Society, 1965).
[132] Eva Baer, "The Ruler in Cosmic Setting. A Note on Medieval Islamic Iconography," in *Essays in Islamic Art and Architecture (In Honour of Katherina Otto-Dorn)*, ed. Abbas Daneshvari (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1981), 13-19.
[133] Ibid. 13. The objects in the author's research are the cover of Ayyubid pen box (Bologna, Museo Civico), a Mamluk bowl (Florence, Bargelo), the base of a Persian casket (ex-Minassian Collection), Vaso Vescovali (London, British Museum), a Mesopotamian pen box (Athens, Benaki Museum), and two candlesticks, Mesopotamian (New York, Metropolitan Museum) and Persian (London, British Museum).

contribution, however, was in establishing a different explanation for the imagery described; after emphasizing the religious message and the sphere of apotheosis in the Sasanian banquet scenes on silver plates and other metal objects, she examined medieval Islamic princely scenes and stated that the imagery changed its context. In Sasanian art Shepard sees depictions of secular and courtly "pleasures and pastimes," while in medieval Islamic art, courtly art became a concrete expression of an abstract theme. She concludes that such an abstract theme "is a religious, eschatological one concerned with the concept of life after death. The two motifs, banquet and hunt, when taken together correspond precisely to the late classical iconography of heroization."[134] This is also the idea I myself would like to see in the seated prince image. Not only because it supports the tracing of an image and its correlation to old Assyrian and Babylonian art and religion, but also as it corresponds to an Islamic idea of power. I need to warn that are my accounts of possible solutions of the "princely cycle" iconography are bound to Islamic notions of imagery. It needs to be emphasized, however, that the motif under investigation in this thesis is in a Christian setting and if the appearance of the ceiling is Islamic it does not necessarily mean it was perceived as such by the courtly public in Palermo. These questions will be addressed in the conclusion.

ii) The image of heaven[135]

Paradise and the image of paradise as a garden have a long tradition in Islamic art. Though this research cannot include the gardens[136] of Islamic rulers, typical resting

[134] Shepard, *Banquet and Hunt*, 80.
[135] I will use here paradise and heaven as equal terms.

places within their palaces, it needs to be remembered that precisely such an image is one a Western admirer has in mind when there is a word of Islamic paradise. But what needs to be emphasized here is a different type of paradise, the one described in the Koran, where there is a depiction of an abstract garden and the acts of the blessed.

In the beginning God created paradise and hell, and Adam and Eve were created in paradise. This would mean that humans were created good, but strayed from the path. With the help of the Prophet he will find his way again and be rewarded in Paradise. As Gelfer-Jørgensen argues, paraphrasing Fritz Meier, "by following the Prophet man could once again find his way to his point of origin, Paradise, and the cycle of life would then be complete, having transpired from its beginnings in the original Paradise (*azal*) to its conclusion in the final Paradise (*abad*)."[137] Yet another source of the paradise vision can be applied here. In Persian poetry, for example, the vision of paradise is expressed as interplay between the images of an earthly garden and paradise, between real life and the ideal. The courtly life and the earthly garden are, according to Hanaway,[138] the foundation of an archetypal garden of paradise. This statement might seem contradictory at first, but it proves to be correct when one thinks of the images in pictorial or poetic sources. An artist, imagining heavenly glory, uses in his art the images he is familiar with and whose beauty stimulates his artistic expression. This consequently influences the development and architectural arrangement of earthly gardens and the circle is complete.

[136] For Islamic gardens see: D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

[137] Gelfer-Jørgensen, *Medieval Islamic Symbolism*, 88. Her remarks are a summary of Fritz Meier, "The Ultimate Origin and the Hereafter in Islam," in *Islam and its Cultural Divergence, Studies in Honor of Gustave E. Von Grunebaum*, ed. G. L. Tikku (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 96-112.

[138] William L. Hanaway, Jr., "Paradise on Earth: The Terrestrial Garden in Persian Literature" in *The Islamic Garden* (Washington: Dumberton Oaks, 1976), 42-63. For more on the religious idea of paradise see also J. Van Ess, "Das begrenzte Paradies," in *Mélanges D'Islamologie*, ed. Pierre Salmon (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 108 – 127.

The main object in the garden is the king himself, adorned and praised, who enjoys eternal bliss as the reward for his earthly achievements.

The main idea of heavenly enjoyment can be seen in the depiction of a place where there is no time, no aging, and therefore where ideal youth is preserved. The existence of men is based on enjoyment in relaxation and wine drinking, which has been much disputed in the *hadith* and among commentators. One secondary source known to me is by Jane D. McAuliffe,[139] who tries to explain through the commentaries of al-Rāzī and al-Tabarī the Islamic notion of wine and the act of drinking; al-Tabarī shares the opinion that drinking is not in itself sinful but sin can be connected to it, while al-Rāzī thinks that drinking is connected to celestial ritual. This is the exact notion I use in support of the seated ruler image. The Koran says:

> Circulating among them will be a cup of clear drink,
> White, a pleasure for the drinkers,
> There is no problem (*ghawl*) in it and they
> are not depleted in it. (Sura 37: 45-47)[140]

As McAuliffe points out, the passage can be summarized in the simple idea that all the reasons for which both, al-Rāzī and al-Tabarī, "insist that wine is here forbidden will be reversed in Paradise. What is now a sin will be, for those who enter there, a pleasure."[141] Another passage from the Koran complements the notion of the wine, poured to the righteous in the garden of Paradise. I will quote only the passage that is of the interest here:

[139] Jane D. McAuliffe, "The Wines of Earth and Paradise: Qur'ānic Proscription and Promises," in *Logos Islamikos. Studia Islamica (In Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens)*, ed. Roger M. Savoy, Dionisius A. Agius (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984).
[140] Trans. Arthur J. Auberry (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1983). See Gelfer- Jørgensen, *Medieval Islamic Symbolism*, 179 – 194.
[141] McAuliffe, *The Wines of Earth and Paradise*, 173.

…upon close-wrought couches
reclining upon them, set face to face,
immortal youths going round about them
with goblets, and ewers, and a cup from a spring …
(Sura 56:8 - 26)[142]

In this passage one can detect notions such as immortal youth, relaxation, and drinking with cups or goblets, all as a recompense for earthly labor. The pictorial vision of Paradise seems to include all this and even more. The inner symbolism of the paradise motif can be, and indeed has been, explained with cosmological interpretations, where figure paintings[143] represent planets and the prince or king in the center stands for the sun. It seems that the imagery of paradise became intertwined with cosmic iconography and, as I will show below, there is a correlation between the two.

[142] Gelfer-Jørgensen, *Medieval Islamic Symbolism*, 179 – 194.
[143] The earliest example of a painted figure on a Greek ceiling, found in a tomb in southern Russia, dates to the end of the fourth century B.C. See Karl Lehman, "The Dome of Heaven," *Art Bulletin* 27 (1945): 4.

CHAPTER 5

A seated man with a goblet or a cup – description of a motif

The prince with a goblet or a cup, depending on the shape of the vessel he is holding in his hand, is a motif in a "princely-cycle" iconography, where the term "prince" should be understood with wider connotations describing an image of a man seated in a central position, in a posture of clear stature, with royal garments or other artifacts that show him as a member of the nobility and of high rank (Fig. 13-14). The term "prince" is bound to the imagery itself, since it is still believed that in the general context of depiction in this type of imagery one can see leisure-time activities at court. What is of great importance here is that one can observe certain depictions of princes which have clear indications of royal insignia and attributes of political power. I propose to see these images as visual representations of the state and I will describe them below. Such images also carry a narrower meaning in the "princely cycle" iconography and are the focus of this thesis. By prince I mean a man of high rank and status; by ruler (Fig. 7) I mean a man not only of high rank and status, but also holding political power.

As for the posture of the sitting, one needs to note that not every seated man can also be called a prince or a ruler. It depends on the attributes that support such an image as well as on the other figures which accompany him, such as dancers, musicians, and horsemen.[144] The research is oriented only towards the images that can be clearly

[144] On military depictions on the ceiling in Cappella Palatina see David Nicolle, *The Cappella Palatina Ceiling and the Muslim Military. Inheritance of Norman Sicily* (Jarandilla: Instituto de Estudios sobre Armas Antiguas, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Patronato Menéndez y Pelayo, 1983).

supported with "princely cycle" iconography and those which preserve the details of such iconography in their entirety. In other words, I will be dealing with images where a seated man holding a cup is sitting (cross-legged or one leg tucked) on something (it varies from an identifiable chair (Fig. 13) to a dais to an amorphous cushion (Fig. 20, 20a), perhaps a throne, flanked by two attendants (Fig. 7). In the Cappella Palatina there are several depictions of seated figures but not all can be classified as this type of imagery. Therefore, a specific description will follow, connecting these images with a proposed cosmological explanation of a "program" called the "princely cycle."

a) Fatimid art in twelfth-century Cairo as the origin of depictions on the wooden ceiling in the Cappella Palatina

It is known that Fatimid art loved figural painting. Although it is all too often claimed that Islam forbade the representation of the human figure, this was rarely so.[145] In secular contexts figural painting was well established all through the history of Islamic art.

> Generally speaking, paintings of the human figure in early Islam can tentatively be divided into two main phases. The first covers the Umayyad and the early Abbasid era between the late seventh and tenth century; the second begins in the late tenth or the early eleventh century, covers Fatimid art in Egypt, and culminates in the late-twelfth – to mid-thirteenth-century paintings in Mesopotamia.[146]

The first phase of development used the language of the Greco-Roman and Sasanian worlds, with frequent representations of royalty and images of political power.

[145] Oleg Grabar, "Islamic Art and Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964): 81-85.
[146] Eva Baer, "The Human Figure in Early Islamic Art: Some Preliminary Remarks," *Muqarnas* 16 (1999), 32 – 41.

The second phase, however, shows that the range of human imagery widened. One sees more scenes from daily life, displayed especially on Fatimid luster plates (Fig. 21-22), and the style becomes more realistic, culminating in miniature paintings in late twelfth- to mid-thirteenth century Mesopotamia.[147]

In Palermo one can encounter the paintings of what Bear classified as the end of the first phase; though a tendency to realism is apparent, the pictures still preserve the iconographic and stylistic influences of the Samarra paintings[148] and Iraqi style. While the question of the provenance of the artists is not simple to answer and still remains widely discussed, it has long been established that the stylistic origin of the paintings on the ceiling in Palermo should be seen in the domain of Fatimid art.[149] The Fatimid caliphs,[150] who ruled from Egypt between 969 and 1171, are well known for their generous patronage of architecture and the arts. Many works of art found their way to European royal or church treasuries as presents of political presentation, thus being able to influence the art of the West through the centuries.[151] But in Palermo the direct impact of Fatimid art on Western art might be apparent, since, as argued above, one can probably see artists from Egypt at work in the Cappella Palatina.[152]

[147] Ibid., 36 and 40.
[148] For recent research on Samarra paintings see: Eva Hoffman, "Between East and West: The Wall Paintings of Samarra and the Construction of Abbasid Princely Culture," *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 107-132.
[149] For the development of Fatimid art, specifically its architecture, see Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Origins of Fatimid Art," *Muqarnas* 3 (1985): 20 – 38; for decorative arts see: Anna Contadini, *Fatimid Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1998), Jonathan Bloom, *Arts of the City Victorious: Islamic Art and Architecture in Fatimid North Africa and Egypt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2007). For the influence of Fatimid art in Palermo see among others Kapitaikin, *The Paintings of the Aisle-Ceilings*, 116 – 147.
[150] For the Fatimids and their history see: Michael Brett, *The Rise of the Fatimids. The World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the Tenth Century CE* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).
[151] Avinoam Shalem, *Islam Christianized. Islamic Portable Objects in the Medieval Church Treasuries of the Latin West*, Ars Faciendi 7 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Verlag, 1996).
[152] See note 118.

When talking of Fatimid influences it needs to be made clear that there are two ways in which one can see connections to the paintings in Palermo. One is the wall paintings and drawings with their traditions in Islamic lands, the other are small portable objects, especially woodcarvings and ivory objects, as well as ceramic luster plates[153] (Fig. 23), that can show stylistic and iconographic references. I will deal first with wall paintings and later with smaller decorative objects that can serve as comparative material for the paintings on the wooden ceiling in Palermo. I will describe the general features of the figures and the stylistic origin of such images and later refer to specific images I have selected to point out the iconographical research central to my thesis.

i) Islamic painting and its development

The situation with Islamic painting is a peculiar matter. Not much is preserved and what there is is either in a poor state or fragmentary. Frescoes from the early eighth century from Qusayr ʿAmra have recently been re-examined by Garth Fowden.[154] Stylistically, full-bodied figures and realistically depicted animals speak for the Greco-Roman tradition, still present in Umayyad art and recently discovered wall paintings from Qaryat al-Faw, Saudi Arabia,[155] attest a long-living pictorial tradition in the Arab world (Fig. 24). The other important source of information on Islamic painting comes from Samarra (Fig. 25-26), a ninth-century Abbasid capital.[156] As Ettinghausen[157] notes, there

[153] *Bacini* are lustre-painted ceramic bowls, imported to Italy from either Fatimid Egypt or contemporary Spain, and used on the church facades for decoration. For Fatimid lustre ceramics see: Oliver Watson, *Ceramics from Islamic Lands* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004).
[154] Garth Fowden, *Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria. Qusayr 'Amra* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
[155] Ali Ibrahim Al-Ghabban, ed., *Roads of Arabia: Archaeology and History of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (Paris: Somogy Art Publishers, 2010): 311-363, fig.161.
[156] Caliph Al-Muʿtasim, Harun ar-Rashid's son, moved the Abbasid capital from Baghdad to Samarra in 836. It was used as a new capital only until 883, when Baghdad became the capital again, leaving Samarra

is a gap between these paintings and thirteenth-century manuscripts from Iraq, Mesopotamia, and Syria. He notes, that "from Egypt there are supposedly only a few paper fragments of the ninth or tenth century"[158] (Fig. 27). That Egyptian art in the tenth and eleventh centuries was influenced by Iraq is well known, and the comparison between Samarra paintings[159] and Palermo has always been acknowledged. What long prevailed in the scholarship[160] is a notion that the Samarra paintings show less mobility and their style focuses on the plasticity of the human body, putting them stylistically in the Eastern context, while the Umayyad pictorial tradition owed more to Western, Mediterranean, influences. Such a strict division has recently been contested by Eva Hoffman, who argues that there is a common pictorial tradition in all these developments, since "there was no single model but rather a range of possibilities for shared continuities with past traditions of late antiquity, both Eastern and Western. In the final analysis, all these figures represent individual, local translations of these traditions."[161]

One encounters a type of a compact body with a "heavy-set moon-shaped faces"[162] in three-quarter view. The body posture is set in frontal view, feet in profile. Even in Samarra one can see the well-known disproportion between small feet and large

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a provincial town. See Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, 42. On the Abbasid dynasty see Hugh Kennedy, *When Baghdad Ruled the Muslim World: The Rise and Fall of Islam's Greatest Dynasty* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2005), also Amira K. Bennison, *The Great Caliphs: The Golden Age of the 'Abbasid Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009).

[157] Ettinghausen, "Painting in the Fatimid Period," 112 – 124.

[158] Ibid. 112.

[159] For Samarra paintings see Ernst Herzfeld, *Die Malereien von Samarra* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1927). The paintings from Samarra, so often quoted, were unfortunately lost in the turmoil of the First World War. They were discovered in archaeological excavations in Baghdad between 1911 and 1913. Ernst Herzfeld discovered paintings in private houses and bath establishments, but the most important ones came from the Jawsaq Palace. His publication is the reason why what the frescoes looked like is still known. Also: Eva Hoffman, "Between East and West: The Wall Paintings of Samarra and the Construction of Abbasid Princely Culture," *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 107-132.

[160] Richard Ettinghausen and Oleg Grabar, *The Art and Architecture of Islam* 650-1250 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1987): 124.

[161] Eva R. Hoffman, "Between East and West," 119.

[162] Ernst Herzfeld, *Die Malereien von Samarra*, (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1927): 114.

heads which is so characteristic on the Palermo paintings, especially on the seated ruler images (Fig. 7). Another obvious feature is large wide-open eyes encircled with black (Fig.20).

Though known for their luxury and affection for art, not much has come down to us that shows the taste of Fatimid caliphs for painting on a larger scale (Fig. 28-29). An impression of how figure painting must have looked in twelfth-century Cairo can today be enriched through the depictions in Palermo. But there are also other objects[163] that contribute to understanding Fatimid art and style. Carvings in ivory and wood show an exquisite interest in the human body and its movement. Even when figures are static, they show some inner tension and are given a feeling of life. Similar indications can be seen on Fatimid drawings (Fig. 27) which Rice[164] researched in the late 1950s. The composition is the same, with the figure occupying the whole rectangular surface. The face is round with a heavy chin, large, wide-open eyes, and rather emphasized eyebrows, though the long lovelocks and heavy braids of hair do not entirely match the Palermo pictures.

Other *comparanda* can be found in Siculo-Arabic objects such as carved ivory caskets and painted ivories.[165] The figures match in composition as well as in the figurative elements. A frontally seated ruler or prince, flanked by attendants who hold bottles or fans, and musicians and dancers regularly appear on these caskets (Fig.30). As with the ceiling, so also it is with the caskets that the problem of the origin of the artists

[163] For more see: Anna Contadini, *Fatimid Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Jonathan Bloom, *Arts of the City Victorious*.
[164] D. S. Rice, "A Drawing of the Fatimid Period," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 21 (1958): 31 – 39.
[165] Perry B. Cott, "Siculo-Arabic Ivories in the Museo Cristiano," *The Art Bulletin* 12 (1930): 131 – 146. For ivory objects and their clasificassion see also Ernst Kühnel, *Die Islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen: VIII-XIII. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1971).

emerges. It has been argued lately that due to the special manner of execution in a flat, angular style, which is in contrast to the deeply cut, relief type of softly swelling carvings of Fatimid workshops, that these objects should be seen as products of local craftsmanship.[166]

To show that ivory objects with the same iconography and a similar style of execution penetrated Europe before the Sicilian kingdom, the caliphal caskets from Cordoba provide an example (Fig. 30). Although they pre-date Fatimid carvings, they show a similar style and the same iconography as seen on the Palermo ceiling. What is more important here is the connection to the clear political purpose of such caskets and pyxis (Fig. 31), as has been argued by Francisco Prado-Vilar.[167] The objects were commissioned as opulent gifts to bear a declaration of political power and a clear indication that the dynasty would be able to preserve its political status. Prado-Vilar notes, that "with its complex rhetorical elaboration [al-Mughira's] pyxis is turned into a secret weapon. It has the power of communicating while at the same time remaining silent about itself."[168]

ii) The question of portraiture

To make the overview of depictions easier I propose to use the Grube-Johns graphic plan of the ceiling and their numbering of the positions of the depictions.[169] I have selected images that clearly show this seated ruler/prince type. The main focus of

[166] Cott, "Siculo-Arabic Ivories," 140-141.
[167] Francisco Prado-Vilar, "Circular Visions of Fertility and Punishment: Caliphal Ivory Caskets from al-Andalus," *Muqarnas* 14 (1997): 19 – 41.
[168] Ibid. 28.
[169] See Appendix I.

the interest is two depictions of seated bearded men with all the attributes that have led some scholars to believe that they represent King Roger himself (Fig.7-8). An argument to support such a statement has been that there are significant features of physiognomy that do not relate to Islamic figure depiction. As I have tried to point out above, this is not entirely true; the frontal position is by no means incidental since these two images hold positions in the middle of the ceiling, thus connecting all the images of drinkers, musicians, and dancers together in a "courtly" display. In addition, the images would better fit the medieval ideal representation of ageless, eternally beautiful men than a specific portrait. Portrait painting as we know it today was not known in the twelfth century and would be a peculiar exception rather than an understandable contemporary idea.

In discussing a portrait there are two principal factors: the rank or social position of the person portrayed and the use for which the portrait was destined. The portrait goes:

> beyond the simple end of representing the physical features of a person, as it does in the private portraits, in order to identify a man socially, by his class, profession, or some hierarchy, it makes use of a greater number of co-ordinates: typical accessories, costumes, actions.[170]

When one applies this typology to the Cappella Palatina one can see both the king and the political connotation such a portrait carries. But is it really so simple? As I hope to show below, "princely cycle" iconography is not simple at all, though widely used in the Islamic artistic world its context and symbolism are not codified and the imagery varies. The seated prince is the center of the "princely cycle," but this does not necessarily point toward political imagery. Therefore, a portrait could be a possible solution to this context in Palermo, but I am still not entirely convinced that Roger would

[170] André Grabar, *Christian Iconography. A Study of Its Origins* (The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts 1961, Bollingen Series 35) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 60 – 85.

have been depicted on such images, since portraits were not a custom in such Islamic iconography. One needs to be cautious with these explanations since it must be remembered that in Palermo one is dealing with Islamic imagery in a Christian setting, so some discrepancies from the original and traditional iconography are possible. In medieval Orthodox Armenia, an environment like Sicily influenced by Islamic visual tradition, Lynn Jones[171] has identified a seated prince image (Fig. 32) on east façade of the Church of the Holy Cross as a portrait of Gagik Artsruni, shown haloed and crowned, sitting cross-legged and dressed in tunic belted over trousers. He is holding a cup in his hand and is flanked by two attendants, hence attesting a princely-cycle type of iconography. However, the very understanding of portrait varied considerably among European, Near Eastern, and Asian cultures. As Eva Baer observes, "Islamic ideas about realistic images of portraits of human images require clarification."[172] She notes that interest in "realism" is displayed in twelfth- to thirteenth-century paintings, with vivid compositions, distortions, and caricatures apparent as early as in Fatimid art. However, real portraits of a specific person only occur in Iranian Timurid art.[173] Hence, the questions of portraiture within a codified iconographical concept such as princely-cycle would be highly unusual, since it would surpass the norm of imaginary portraits of figures identified by their attributes and perceived according to their social rank – the seated ruler image is a depiction of *a* king and not *the* king.

To connect such an image to Roger himself, I would be more convinced by seeing it as a facial assimilation to the image of Christ. Such a depiction, I would argue, has a

[171] Lynn Jones, *Between Islam and Byzantium: Aght'amar and the Visual Construction of Medieval Armenian Rulership* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 57.
[172] Eva Baer, *The Human Figure in Islamic Art: Inheritances and Islamic Transformations* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2004), 59.
[173] Ibid. 59.

clear political context and can be supported with the mosaic iconography in the sanctuary of the Cappella Palatina. Moreover, such an example exists on the famous mosaic in the church of Martorana in Palermo (Fig. 33). The mosaic shows King Roger II receiving his crown from Christ and a Latin inscription written in the Greek alphabet proclaims him king (*Rogerus Rex*). The king wears the costume of a Byzantine emperor and the pose in which he is shown is familiar from Byzantine imperial imagery.[174] Such a use of a Byzantine iconographic model for Roger's portrait is meaningful, but his facial physiognomy is essentially non-Byzantine. Kitzinger argued that such a notion could be based on the fact that, after all, Roger was a Western ruler, but what is more important is the resemblance to Christ. "The King is transfigured; his image is assimilated to a higher ideal, indeed, to as high as ideal as it was possible for medieval man to conceive."[175] This facial resemblance to Christ would also explain what some scholars found puzzling on the ceiling depictions, namely, that the seated images of two kings display two bearded men. When one sees a connection to Christ such a statement enters a different context, but also in the Islamic art bearded figures are not exceptions. As can be seen from other seated ruler images on the Palermo ceiling, several men wear beards (Fig. 34-35). From antiquity onwards the beard was a sign of age and physical maturity. "It marked the borderline between boys and men and between men and the gods, who never grew old."[176] Such a connotation would fit the idea that one could see an ageless king on these two depictions of a seated ruler on the Palermo ceiling. They are ideal presentations and not portraits of King Roger II and they express a political statement with the clear visual

[174] André Grabar, *L'Empéreur dans l'art Byzantine* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1936), 116 – 122.
[175] Kitzinger, *On the Portrait of Roger II*, 1058.
[176] Giles Constable, "Introduction," in *Apologia de Barbis*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 62) (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), 47 – 150.

connection between the king and Christ. As Esther Pasztory, when dealing with concepts of chiefdoms and royalty, observed: "portraits are as much about power as are crowns and thrones. The question about realism is not how but why."[177] Therefore, I suggest seeing in these images an answer to *why* they chose to depict them at all, yet clarifying *how* they did it. Hence the questions of the origin of the motif and seated postures should be addressed in what follows below.

iii) Selected images of a seated ruler

So far I have been focusing on two images only and I shall orient myself now to a selected corpus of images with seated ruler depictions. An excursus to a description of the seated-ruler type needs to be added. In the recent publication on the Cappella Palatina ceiling, Grube[178] published a great deal of comparative material for the images on the ceiling, including color and black-and-white plates of the ceiling itself. In his work, the identification of the seated figures varies substantially and it is not always consistent. He uses, for example, titles such as "youth with beaker,"[179] "youth with glass,"[180] "a seated crowned male figure,"[181] "frontally seated male figure with a beaker,"[182] and so on. He does not define why and how he uses one term over another. An attempt to do so exceeds the limits of this thesis, but it should be pointed out that if a person is clearly distinguished from other images by the attributes he is holding, his posture, his garments, flanked by two attendants and the place where he is seated, I propose to see such an

[177] Esther Pasztory, *Thinking with Things. Toward a New Vision of Art* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 64.
[178] Grube, *The Painted Ceilings*, Appendix I, 497 – 511.
[179] Grube, *The Painted Ceilings*, Fig.17.1, 120.
[180] Ibid, Fig. 14.3, 114.
[181] Ibid, Fig. 25.6, 135.
[182] Ibid, Fig. 18.6, 122-123.

image as a "seated-ruler type." The other types and their variations I am unable to discuss here. Their context and symbolism are still open questions.

All these images occupy prominent spaces within a *muqarnas* structure.[183] All these men are seated on some sort of a cushion or even a chair resembling a true throne. The seating posture varies between two types, both of which can be seen on Sasanian silver plates; one is the cross-legged position (Fig. 36), the other version has one leg tucked up under the other. When examining different types of seating through history, one notes that postures vary and some sort of a development in movement can be seen. For example, on Persian coins Baal is depicted in a rather odd twisted position, seated on a throne, with all the usual attributes; his torso and head are facing the viewer, but the lower part of the body is represented from the side. This changed slowly, since one of the depictions of the Sasanian king Khosrow (531-579) shows the king seated in a frontal position and in a special type of seating, feet turned out (Fig. 9, 37). This type of depiction is also known from Qusayr 'Amra[184] and Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbī[185] (Fig. 38). Another possibility shows the image that had the most widespread influence. It clearly shows a ruler, seated on a sort of a throne, equipped with cushions, and what is more important, this person has two attendants holding cups or pouring wine. This is the image that penetrated the Mediterranean and can be found on Cordoba ivory caskets (Fig. 30-31).[186] The origin of such motif was probably in Sasanian royal drinking scenes[187] as

[183] See Appendix I.
[184] For Qusayr 'Amra and the image of a prince see Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, 115-141.
[185] Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbī was built by Umayyad caliph Hisham between 724-727 in a Syrian desert, some 37 miles west of Palmyra. See http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.jsp?site_id=7365 (last accessed 23 May 2011).
[186] On ivory caskets in Cordoba see John Beckwith, *Caskets from Cordoba* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1960); Francisco Prado-Vilar, "Circular Visions of Fertility and Punishment: Caliphal Ivory Caskets from al-Andalus," *Muqarnas* 14 (1997): 19-41; Mariam Rosser-Owen, "A Córdoban Ivory Pyxis Lid in the Ashmolean Museum," *Muqarnas* 16 (1999): 16-31. On ivory caskets in general see also

depicted on two silver plates (Fig. 19-19a) each showing a reclining figure with royal attributes, holding a cup in one hand and a flower in the other. The courtly setting is emphasized by musicians and other court officials preparing the drink.[188]

Sasanian royal drinking scenes penetrated Islamic art with an image of a seated ruler holding a branch in one hand and a cup in the other.[189] Such a motif appears on numerous Abbasid ceramic vessels (Fig. 39), Sasanid imitations of luster ceramics and on already mentioned Fatimid luster plates (Fig.21-22), which confirms the continuity of the motif from the ninth to at least the eleventh century. The Abbasid rendering of a motif depicted on a decorative frieze (Fig. 32) on the exterior of an early tenth-century church at Agthamar[190] in eastern Anatolia only supports the transmission of this well-known and widely used iconographical motif in a different cultural setting. The ceiling of Cappella Palatina, also with several depictions of seated rulers, may find its counterpart as far away as in the wall-paintings of the Buddhist complex at Alchi[191] in Ladakh (Fig.40). The motif seems to have prevailed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the arts of the Saljuqs,[192] as is apparent on numerous glass and ceramic objects of the period[193] (Fig. 41-43).

Ernest Kühnel, *Die Islamische Elfenbeinskulpturen: VIII-XIII* (Berlin: Deutschenverlag für Kunstwissenschaf, 1971).

[187] See Oleg Grabar, *Sasanian Silver: Late Antique and Early Medieval Arts of luxury from Iran* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1967).

[188] Finbarr B. Flood, "A Royal Drinking Scene from Alchi: Iranian Iconography in the Western Himalayas," in *Image and Meaning in Islamic Art*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (London: Altajir Trust, 2005), 75.

[189] Abbas Daneshvari, "Cup, Branch, Bird and Fish: An Iconographical Study of the Figure Holding a Cup and a Branch Flanked by a Bird and a Fish," in *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand*, ed. Bernard O'Kane (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 103-125.

[190] Lynn Jones, *Between Islam and Byzantium*, 57-67.

[191] For the iconography of Alchi see: Pratapaditya Pal, *A Buddhist Paradise: The Murals of Alchi Western Himalayas* (Vaduz [Liechtenstein]: Ravi Kumar, 1982); Flood, "A Royal Drinking Scene from Alchi," 79.

[192] For the Seljuks see Robert Hillenbrand, *The Art of the Saljuqs in Iran and Anatolia: Proceedings of a Symposium held in Edinburg in 1982* (Costa Mesa. CA: Mazda Publishers, 1994); Taef Kamal El-Azhari,

Emel Esin[194] and Katharina Otto-Dorn,[195] who have researched the cup-bearer image in the Central Asiatic, Turkish, and Iranian cultural environments, indicate that such an image symbolizes rituals of investiture, has ontological meanings within religious, funerary or blood-bonding rituals, and is a celebratory motif of victories and battles.[196] Abbas Daneshvari has shown how the same motif of a seated dignitary holding a cup should be associated "with the sun and earthly abundance,"[197] quoting Manshūri Samarqandī, a poet at the Ghaznavid court, when he describes the arrival of his ruler at the ceremony: "The universe has tonight transformed the sun into a cup/Here comes the king holding the brimful cup in his hand."[198] When studying this motif in more detail one observes the universal nature of the goblet/cup motif, appearing especially abunduntly in Saljuq contexts, described both as a symbol of temporal power connected with the enjoyments of courtly life, as well as the prefiguration of earthly delights in the context of the afterlife in paradise.[199]

Emel Esin has researched the sitting postures in Turkish iconography and discovered that the "seated-ruler type," (a seated ruler flanked by two attendants), represents a *qagan* (king) enthroned, facing east, in homage to the sun, flanked by two

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The Saljuqs of Syria During the Crusades 463-549 A.H./1070-1154 A.D. (Klaus Schwarz Verlag: Berlin, 1997).

[193] This continuity seems to be apparent in literature as well as in the arts. Note the description of drinking scenes in Ferdowsi's epic *Shahnameh*, which, as E. Yarshater has observed, "probably represent a late Sassanian tradition which continued in the courts of the Samanids, Ghaznavids and Saljukid monarchs." Ehsan Yarshater, "The Theme of Wine-Drinking and the Concept of the Beloved in Early Persian Poetry," *Studia Islamica* 13 (1960): 44-53.

[194] Emel Esin, "The Cup Rites in Inner-Asian and Turkish Art," in *Forschungen zur Kunst Asiens, In Memoriam Kurt Erdmann*, ed. Oktay Aslanapa and Rudolf Naumann (Istanbul: Baha Matbaasi, 1969): 224-225.

[195] Katharina Otto-Dorn, "Türkisch-Islamisches Bildgut in den Figurenreliefs von Achtamar," *Anatolia* 6 (1961): 1-69.

[196] Daneshavri, *Figure Holding a Cup*, 110.

[197] Ibid. 119.

[198] Ibid. 115.

[199] "everlasting youths will go round among them with glasses, flagons, and cups of a pure drink."Qur'an: 56:17-18, after: *The Qur'an*, transl. M. A. S. Abdel Haleem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

attendants, possibly two wise kings. "The Qagan presumably throned in the middle of the tent which he considered the center of the world, with the sun and the polar star altering their apogee, throughout the succession of days and nights, above him."[200] Esin connects the sitting positions he is describing with *asana* postures from India and makes the observation that such positions enable a seated person to achieve complete serenity. This would be an interesting argument against a stylistic regression to the immobility of the two seated kings. Be that as it may, I propose to see a statement of a royal posture with a political context in all these arguments, an expression of high rank, and a clear indication that such postures are widespread in the art of the East.

Such comparative material points to a variety of postures that can, and indeed were, used on the ceiling in Palermo. Several images show different postures, but they all have attributes in common such as a cup in the hand (Fig. 13, 20, 34). They clearly represent the same type of "princely-cycle" image. Their facial expressions place these images in the vicinity of Fatimid art, yet their large, wide-open eyes have a long history around the Mediterranean, connecting these images with Coptic art[201] in Egypt, where large eyes symbolize the spiritual eye that looks beyond the material world. Yet not all the facial expressions are the same and not all the figures of seated rulers have same types of eyes. Another type is present, one which can be seen in the Central Asian (and Indian) cultural context(s) along with curly locks of hair on the side of the head and the red mark on the forehead (Fig.44). Interestingly, the same typology of the human figure can be seen on two geographically and chronologically distant examples, yet of the same

[200] Emel Esin, "Oldruğ – Turuğ. The Hierarchy of Sedent Postures in Turkish Iconography," *Kunst des Orients* 7 (1970/71): 1 -29.
[201] Massimo Capuani, *Christian Egypt: Coptic Art and Monuments through the Millenia* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002).

princely-cycle iconography. I have in mind the paper drawing from Fatimid Egypt with a female musician (Fig. 27), dated to the eleventh or twelfth century,[202] and mural paintings from the Buddhist complex of Balayk-tepe[203] in northern Turkistan, today Uzbekistan, dated to the sixth or seventh century (Fig. 45). All these depictions also clearly show figures dressed in Muslim tradition[204] with robes decorated with *tiraz* (translation) or arm bands (Fig. 14, 44). Such imagery of a "seated male" wearing Islamic garments and *tiraz* bands can be seen on numerous objects in both the Mediterranean and Central Asian geographical contexts (Fig. 40, 41, 43). Often inscribed with blessings or the name or titles of the ruler such arm bands and Islamic costume made political statements as well as transcended ethnicity, as observed by Flood[205] in his research on the mural paintings at Alchi. He terms it "cross-cultural dressing"[206] and identifies it with self-fashioning and the construction of identity that occurs at the intersection of sign systems and are thus a "negotiated product of circulation, both of representations and their signifying potential, firmly embedded in relations of production and trade, of circulation of imagery."[207]

All these selected images also show a special facial feature, a peculiar twist in their eyes. One eye is turned to the left, the other is turned slightly upwards (Fig. 13, 20). Such an expression in the gaze led me to question where were they looking and what they were looking at. Can one see them pointing in some common direction? Indeed, one can

[202] D. S. Rice, "A Drawing of the Fatimid Period," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 21 (1958): 39.
[203] Daneshavri, *Figure Holding a Cup*,113, Fig. 7.16.
[204] Note the observation of the continued use of Islamic fashion on the court of Roger II in Irene A. Bierman, *Art and Politics: The Impact of Fatimid Uses of Tiraz Fabrics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1980): 109, where she writes that the representations "support the often-repeated statements that the Norman court continued in the mode of the Fatimid Mediterranean, particularly during the reigns of Roger II and his grandson, Frederick II."
[205] Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation. Material Culture and the Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009): 71.
[206] Ibid. 72.
[207] Ibid. 72.

see in the way these images are arranged that they are focusing their gaze toward the two kings who are positioned in the middle of the ceiling, on the right side of the "nest" construction of a *muqarnas* (Fig. 6, 46). Can such an arrangement have a symbolic meaning? And can it be connected to an expression of political power? It looks as if the variety of gazes would encapsulate the looker and enforce where to look and what to look at. The gaze is suggested and controlled. In a different context and different geographical setting, Jacques Mercier has described the perception of eyes as follows: "To look at these eyes, in other words, is simultaneously to be looked at. There is a potentially mirrorlike reciprocity here that is absent from any other kind of representation."[208] Such notions would have probably been too strong to fully apply to the visitor's perception of the Cappella Palatina ceiling, however, they reveal the general idea of how people responded to the imagery and how great the importance of the gaze and the eyes was. Medieval men understood the power of sight as a means to the perception of God, where neither hearing nor touching can supplement the power of the eyes.

Here the questions of reception of Cappella Palatina come into the discussion and how the visual effect of the chapel influenced its visitors. I would argue that the visual means were carefully selected, since the common message was clear – to represent the power of the king and to acknowledge his political and royal legitimacy through artistic means. I believe people recognized the choices of mosaics, floor decorations and marble panels for what they were –highly elaborate and complex decorative means with stories (of political and religous content) to tell. This is especially true for the mosaics and their connection to the Byzantine artistic environment. Although there are similarities and

[208] Jacques Mercier, *Art that Heals, the Image as Medicine in Ethiopia* (Prestel: The Museum for African Art, 1997), 94.

clear influences, there is no word on the transmission of influences, but as Grabar puts it "borrowings." Byzantine art served as the "pattern book" for Muslims, who borrowed the iconographic expressions when they needed them. It was "not Byzantine art but the themes of Byzantine art which were used by the Muslims."[209] I cannot go further into the details of Muslim-Byzantine dynamics here, but find it important to emphasize such a connection in artistic interchanges and in disentangling the meaning of the messages.

Pictorially, the Cappella Palatina clearly relates to Byzantine royal audience halls. In the Chrysotriclinium in Constantinople there was a royal throne beneath a mosaic of the enthroned Christ in the central apse and opposite, on the other side of the room, a mosaic of the Virgin Mary with apostles, saints, and a portrait of the imperial donor. At Palermo the system is reversed. The Enthroned Christ with Peter and Paul appears above a royal seat in the entrance wall and the apostles and Pantokrator (Fig. 47) fill the apse. Such an arrangement of the iconography is a reverse of traditional Byzantine iconography, yet it enables the king to be under the protection of Christ and have a direct view of the Ruler of all. "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool, what kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord," reads the quote from the Bible (Acts 7: 49) and when one thinks of the church Roger built and where he normally sat during audiences, in my opinion the political message Roger is sending is clear. It allows me to point out that nothing was done without thorough planning, which many scholars[210] have confirmed in the case of the mosaic research. I daresay that there is no obvious reason why the same was not the case with the wooden ceiling. Is the reason why we cannot

[209] Oleg Grabar, "Islamic Art and Byzantium," 87.
[210] Otto Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (London: Routledge, 1950); Ernst Kitzinger, "The Mosaics of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo: An Essay on the Choice and Arrangement of Subjects," *The Art Bulletin* 31 (1949): 269 – 292.

establish a proper clarification of the imagery on the ceiling merely the perception of today's viewer? Is it because the stories on the mosaics are still understood, while the clear connotations of the images on the ceiling seem to have been lost? As in the case of the woodcarvings, the images of seated rulers repeat and they come in many variations. The same goes for the Pantokrator image on the mosaics, where there are three images repeated in the context of the Ascension and the Second Coming of Christ, which was a deliberate choice, a way of presenting a heavenly kingdom and establishing the link between the divine and the secular, the celestial and terrestrial. Such a divine apotheosis can also be detected on the wooden ceiling, corresponding to the Sicilian king whose motto declared that he was sitting on the Lord's right hand in this world, and hopefully in the next one, too.[211]

Muqarnas, a decorative element in many builings in Sicily, was understood as an Islamic component without clearly seeing what it was depicted on it. However, the glitter of gold and colors of the *muqarnas* decoration evoked additional feelings of opulence, wealth, and power. With the choice of the "princely cycle" iconography, deeply rooted in Eastern Mediterranean and Northern African visual imagery, visitors also understood the ideas of power and royal aspirations hidden in such depictions. The ceiling's imagery might not be clearly visible from the ground, but the iconographical motifs and common ideas applied on such depictions were available on other objects of metal, glass, ceramics, and wood, all used in close proximity to courtly life and royal ceremonies.

[211] Roger's royal motto was *Dextera Domini fecit virtutem, dextera Domini exaltavit me*. See Borsook, *Messages,* 22.

One example is the well-known mantle of Roger II,[212] showing an image of two lions attacking camels and the Tree of Life dividing the imagery on two (Fig. 48). The mantle is a semi-circle made of red silk and has a kufic inscription telling the date and place of its production. It was made in Palermo, at the royal textile workshop,[213] in the year 1133-34 and was used as coronation regalia. The imagery is a traditional combat scene of two animals where there weaker is succumbing to the stronger, although the lion would usually be attacking a gazelle[214] or a hare, not a camel (Fig. 49). This is the only such case known to me where the combat scene includes camels and it has been argued this is meant to represent North Africa and send a clear message of the Norman rule over their Muslim subjects. Can one see the same typology of "borowings" in the ceiling imagery as on the mantle? I would like to argue that Roger II and his court knew what visual references they needed to use in order to address the audience without words yet still send them a clear message of political changes happening under Norman rule in twelfth-century Sicily.

[212] Albert Frank Kendrick, " The Sicilian Woven Fabrics of the XIIth and XIIIth Centuries, " *The Magazine of Fine Arts* (1905-1906): 36-44, 124-131; William Tronzo, "The Mantle of Roger II of Sicily," *Investiture* (2001): 241-253.

[213] For the textiles in Sicily see Irene A. Bierman, *Art and Politics: The Impact of Fatimid Uses of Tiraz Fabrics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1980): ch. 4.

[214] Note the famous lion-gazelle floor mosaic of Khirbat al-Mafjar. For the iconography see Doris Behrens Abouseif, "The Lion-Gazelle Mosaic at Khirbat al-Mafjar," *Muqarnas* (1997): 11-18.

CONCLUSION

The Cappella Palatina and its ceiling decoration have been discussed in abundant scholarship and more questions have been raised than answered. Many solutions to understanding the iconography of the ceiling and its possible program have been given. I have tried to summarize the opinions that have either influenced the scholarship the most or were specifically interesting for my own research: to see images of seated rulers on the ceiling as a political message Roger II intended to send to his rivals as well as his subjects. I approached the images from several different perspectives, giving an account of the possible solutions within already established "princely cycle" iconography and trying to see in all these "hybrid" solutions a well organized and planned idea of establishing a new kingdom and gaining recognition for it. Roger tried to gain recognition for the legitimacy of his new kingdom in all possible ways, also by turning to Byzantium and the Fatimid dynasty as two royal units on Mediterranean which gave him models to follow. As Kitzinger has pointed out, Roger's ambitions during the last years of his reign are evident from literary sources, since he allowed himself to be called *basileus* and he:

> is said to have demanded from an emissary of Manuel Comnenos that his rank should be recognized as being equal to that of the Emperor. Indeed, there is reason to believe that during and after the Second Crusade he hatched out far-reaching plans of ousting the Comnenian dynasty and setting up a Latin Kingdom on the Bosphorus.[215]

Such political ambitions are not only evident in written sources, but also in art. His famous portrait in La Martorana shows him being elected and supported by Christ himself, his facial features on the mosaic put him in the close relation to Imago Christi.

[215] Kitzinger, *On the Portrait of Roger II*, 1055.

Roger did not hesitate when it came to art to exploit all possible iconographical means to support his ambitions. Well-established Islamic iconography was used for this purpose and is comparable to the mosaic decoration and Christological program. Such a combination made his claim for might and legitimacy even more powerful.

"Princely cycle" iconography can be understood in terms of cosmological interpretations, where a seated prince with his attribute, a cup, holds a central position in the composition and is often associated with an image of the sun. With the long history of cosmological imagery in the East, such an explanation fits the Palermo ceiling when one reads Philigathos' homily. The author describes the ceiling as a sky covered with stars, possibly implying an image of heaven. Not only do the Sun and Moon accompany the seated prince, but also numerous dancers and musicians, alluding to images of leisure time activities of drinking and entertaining that depict the after-life. However, there are several images that cannot be Islamic in their origin, since they depict a clearly Christian setting with images of a cross and a church. Though André Grabar[216] has shown that such images are also not exceptional in Islamic art, one needs to be cautious since they probably had different connotations when their setting was Christian, as in the case of Cappella Palatina. It needs to be remembered that although the images I am dealing with do have an Islamic background and originate from Islamic art, they could have been used in a different manner, bear different meanings or merely be exploited differently in order to send a different message. The culturally mixed island of Sicily probably played an important role in reading the images and understanding them. Future research, if focused on the evaluation of the imagery in Cappella Palatina through perception of local Sicilian,

[216] André Grabar, "Image d'une église chrétienne parmi les peintures musulmanes de la Chapelle Palatine à Palerme," *Aus der Welt der Islamische Kunst (Festschrift für Ernst Kühnel zum 75. Geburtstag),* ed. Richard Ettinghausen, 227.

Arab and Christian population, should bring a better understanding of selection of images in the chapel and choices of iconography, while the questions of perception of such images within Sicilian context could prove an interesting addition to the general queries of art historians for the cross-currents of motifs and their application in a culturally different setting.

I selected several images of seated rulers, calling them this when the images clearly display royal power with the attributes and postures of seated rulers. I did not describe images in a traditional art historical manner because I consider my research to be focusing on the broader context images can carry. To see a seated ruler in the context of rulership and to point out its connection to ceremonies and ruler cults was the intention of this thesis. Further, the gaze and the visual reception were the backbone of the argument for the choice of such a motif by Roger II and his court, who knew well what an image can mean when displayed on a specific position in a royal chapel. In Appendix I I have identified the positions I find important for the context of seated ruler as a political image of power and one can easily see that images were not randomly set within a *muqarnas* zones. There are frequent repetitions of the seated ruler images on positions 4-5 and 5-6 showing that these central positions were reserved for the prime subject – the ruler himself. As with princely iconography and traditional cosmological settings, here, too, a ruler holds the central position. Even more, I propose to see in the two images in the middle of the ceiling two Christ-resembling kings, not portraits of Roger II. What can be seen here is a clear indication that the ruler sits in the center and has an immediate connection to Christ himself. His facial features resemble these of God and, in the tradition of rulership, he is to be understood as the chosen representative of God on earth.

All the other seated rulers and princes also hold important positions on the ceiling, but I found only two more that are displayed in frontal position. The rest are seated in such a way that their bodies and gazes point toward the central two seated rulers.

Through historical, iconographical, and visual material, one can see the significance of the seated ruler image. Its lineage has traces far back in history, but the meaning of the image could change according to the place where it was used. I can conclude that the seated ruler image in Cappella Palatina had a special function: to complement the image of the earthly king sitting on his throne looking across his chapel toward a Pantokrator image in the apse. Above him, the ceiling, where the ruler, again in the center, flanked by attendants and accompanied with courtiers, signifies clearly the power and prestige he enjoys. As Esther Pasztory observed, "the important issue is not the ability to represent, but rather the motivation to do so."[217] Such an image, within the whole Cappella Palatina setting, would make a seated ruler an image of a God's representative on earth and Roger II the representative of new political power on the map of the twelfth-century Mediterranean.

[217] Esther Pasztory, *Thinking with Things. Toward a New Vision of Art* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 46.

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APPENDIX I

Index of Images of the stalactite part (Muqarnas zone) of the wooden ceiling of the nave of the Cappella Palatina. All references to the composition of the ceiling are to Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatine in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005): 499 - 511. The A and B number refer to the two systems of the *muqarnas* zone and can be distinguished on the drawing of the ceiling (see Fig. 46). It was important to me how frequent the seated prince images appear and which positions of *muqarnas* they occupy. These references are therefore exclusively for this information. Highlighting of the chosen depictions is mine.

WEST END OF CEILING

A1.
1. Two knights on horseback duelling
2. Repainted: Pair of winged addorsed lions
3. Repainted: Pair of winged addorsed lions
4. Bust
5. corner unit
6. Woman on elephant
7. – 10. Harpies
11. corner unit
12. Repainted: Figure of a saint
13. Repainted: Figure of a female saint
14. & 16. conrner unites
15. & 17. busts

B1.
1.- 2. Floral decoration
3. Palmette-tree
4. falcon swooping down on a gazelle
5. Seated male figure
6. – 7. Falcons
8. Bust
9. Floral scroll
10. Repainted: Eagle with spread wings.

A2.
1. Man between two quadrupeds
2. Pair of addorsed lions
3. Frontal eagle
4. Bearded seated male figure with beaker
5. **The sun chariot**
6. **The moon chariot**
7. - 10. Harpies
11. Seated female musician
12. Repainted: Eagle with spread wings
13. Seated female musician
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Decorative floral bands with heart-shaped leaves

B2.
1.- 2. Decorative floral pattern
3. Winged palmette-tree
4. Frontal peacock
5. **Frontally seated male figure with a cup**
6. – 7. Birds
8. Bust
9. Floral scroll band
10. Repainted: A bird

A3.
1. Two Knights on horseback duelling
2. Addorsed griffins
3. Repainted: Pair of harpies
4. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker**
5. **Seated male figure with beaker, flanked by knotted curtains**
6. –
7. – 10. Repainted
11. Musician
12. Repainted
13. –
14. Bust
15. –
16. Inscription band
17. –

B3.
1. Repainted
2. Two lions
3. Repainted: Double-headed eagle.
4. Repainted: Saint Christopher
5. Seated musician
6. – 7. Floral scrolls
8. Bust
9. Inscription bands

NORTH SIDE OF CEILING

A4.
1. A huge lion persuing (?) a rider fleeing to the right
2. – 3. Repainted
4. Repainted
5. –
6. Repainted
7. – 10. Harpies
11. –
12. Birds
13. Musician
14. –
15. Bust
16. –
17. Floral band

B4.
1.- 2. Repainted
3. Bust in medallion
4. Wrestlers
5. Cockerel
6. – 7. Animal scrolls
8. Bust
9. Inscription band

10. Repainted: Pair of confronted birds

A5.
1. Bust of man in scroll work above kufic inscription
2. Lion attacking gazelle
3.Destroyed and repainted with a geometric pattern
4. Lion in scroll work
5. **Frontally seated ruler with attendants**, badly damaged
6. **Frontally seated ruler with attendants**, badly damaged
7.- 10. Falcons with their prey
11. Griffin
12. Frontal bird with spread wings (largely repainted)
13. Griffin (largely repainted)
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Decorative bands with alternating vase-shaped and large, fan-shaped leaf elements

B5.
1. – 2. Floral scrolls
3. Repainted
4. Wrestlers
5. **Seated lion**
6. – 7. Floral scrolls
8. Bust
9. Birds of Pray (badly damaged)
10. Birds of Pray (badly damaged)

A6.
1. Rider escaping to the left from a huge, fire-spitting (?)
2. Lion with two bodies and one head
3. Addorsed lions (totally repainted)
4. Repainted
5. An elephant (almost completely lost, only part of the elephant's head and the
two tusks are surviving)
6. **A frontally seated figure** (almost completely lost only a small portion of the lower edge of the original painting, including a foot, remains)
7. – 10. Harpies
11. Musician playing a lute
12. Two seated figures (largely repainted)
13. Seated woman with drinking bowl
14. – 15. Busts
16. Floral patterns
17. Inscription band

B6.
1. Repainted
2. Floral motif
3. Palmette tree with bust at top
4. man riding a winged, long-necked monster
5. **Seated lion**
6. – 7. Floral scrolls
8. Bust
9. Pair od confronted ibexes and a pair of birds
10. Destroyed

A7.
1. Two camel riders
2. Musicians flanking a palm tree: two lute players
3. Couple flanking palm tree
4. Falcon
5. – 6. Repainted
7. – 10. Pairs of long-tailed birds
11. Man carrying a peacock
12. Frontal peacock
13. Man carrying peacock
14. – 15. busts
16. – 17. Inscription bands

B7.
1. – 2. Abstract floral patterns
3. Palmette tree with bust at top
4. Falcon swooping down on a gazelle
5. Animal
6. Man carrying a ram on his shoulders
7. Man carrying a barrel
8. Bust
9. A pair of ibexes and a pair of birds above a pair od addorsed lions
9. A&B Flying, long-tailed birds
10. A pair of peacocks

A8.
1. Confronted lions
2. Repainted
3. Two lions with a single head
4. Bird (double-headed eagle with spread wings; repainted)
5. **Frontally seated figure (repainted)**
6. Elephant with howdah, driver on elephant's neck, woman in howdah, fairly bad damaged
7. – 10. Harpies
11. **Seated figure, drinking from bottle**
12. Repainted
13. Seated figure od a musician: lute player.
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Inscription bands

B8.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette-tree
4. Frontally seated female figure, on cushioned seat, holding a small vase in her right hand and a floral stalk in her left; flanked by knotted curtains
5. **Frontally seated male figure**
6. Man carrying a gazelle on his shoulders
7. Man carrying peacock
8. Bust
9. Two falcons swooping down on gazelles, below a pair of small felines
10. Repainted

A9.
1. Frontally seated lion-strangler
2. Pair of musicians (?) flanking a palm tree(?)
3. Repainted
4. **Frontally seated figure**
5. A building with female figures looking out from an upper storey (the palace?)
6. The inside of a church, or chapel, with an altar, with a huge cross behind it, and two (badly damaged) figures in front of it. The one to the left, dressed in a full-length garments with long sleeves (a woman or a cleric [?]) appears to turn its back to the altar standing behind the figure to the rightm dressed in a knee-length coat (trousers?) and boots (?), clearly a male. He appears to pull the ropes of a bell which might have appeared in the bell-tower above, both of which have been lost.
7. – 10. Harpies
11. Seated musician
12. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker**
13. Seated musician
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Floral pattern of same type as A4, A5, and A17. 16-17.

B9.
1. – 2. Floral motifs.
3. Palmette-tree.
4. Male figure, on a cushioned seat, drinking from a long-necked bottle, flanked by knotted curtains
5. **Frontally seated male figure**
6. Man carrying a gazelles on his shouders
7. Man carrying a goat on his shoulders
8. Bust
9. Floral scroll
10. Pair of confronted birds.

A10.
1. Pair of confronted lions
2. Two lions with a single head
3. Falcon swooping down on a gazelle
4. Destroyed
5. **Three men at a table, eating and drinking**
6. Lute player
7. – 10. Long-tailed birds
11. **Seated male figure with beaker**
12. A seated couple (almost entirely destroyed)
13. **Frontally seated crowned figure holding floral stalks**
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Inscription bands

B10.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree
4. Seated male (?) figure playind a string instrument
5. **Frontally seated male figure with a cup**
6. Man carrying a gazelle on his shoulders
7. Man carrying a ram on his shoulders
8. Bust
9. Groups of addorsed birds
10. Pair of confronted birds

A11.
1. Rider fighting dragon-snake
2. Pair of musicians flanking a palm tree
3. Female musician
4. **Frontally seated figure**
5. – 6. Frontally seated figures, both severely damaged
7. – 10. Harpies
11. Seated musician, playing a long thin flute
11A. A Harpy
12. **Frontally seated man with beaker**
12. A&B Attendants
13. Seated musician
14. -15. Busts
16.- 17. Inscription bands

B11.
1. – 2. Floral patterns
3. Pair of addorsed griffins
4. Bird
5. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker**, badly damaged
6. **Seated male figure with raised beaker**
7. – 8. Harpies
9. Dancer with clappers
10. Dancer with clappers
11. **Seated figure**
12. Largely repainted, but part of a human figure to the right preserved
12A. A musician
12B, Tambour player
13. Dancing girl
13A. Reed flute player
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Inscription bands

B12.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree with flying bird above
4. Frontally seated musician
5. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker**
6. – 7. Harpies
8. Bust
9. Two riders on a lion hunt
9A&B. Floral scrolls
10. A pair of confronted birds.

A13.
1. A pair of confronted lions
2. Pair of seated musicians: lute players
3. Pair of seated musicians, one playing a bi-conical drum, the other qussāba.
4. **Frontally seated youth with a beaker**
5. Male lute player
6. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker**
7. Dancer
8. Tambour player
9. Dancer
10. Lute player
11A. Harpy
11. Seated male figure
12A. Griffin
12. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker**
13. Seated musician playing a bi-conical tambour
13A. Harpy
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Inscription bands

B13.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree with flying bird at top
4. **Frontally seated figure with a beaker**
5. Lute player
6. – 7. Harpies
8. Bust

9. Battle scene: Two riders fighting off a lion (to the left), and an enemy (to the right). The rider to the left wears a western knight's chain mail armour and a long, pointed shield with a cross.
10. Pair of confronted birds.

A14.
1. Pair of confronted lions.
2. Pair of addorsed griffins
3. Couple flanking a tree, left figure badly damaged
4. Largely destroyed: a bird
5. **Seated male figure with beaker**
6. –
7. – 10. Attendants
11. Standing figure
12. A confronted pair of harpies above a floral scroll
13. –
14. Bust
15. –
16. Inscription band
17. –

NORTH-EAST CORNER OF CEILING

B14.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree
4. Man seated on a folding chair, holding a scroll
5. Standing figure
6. Bird
7. Attendant figure
8. Bust
9. Inscription band

EAST-SIDE OF CEILING

A15.
1. Man astride a lion, rasing in his right a sickle-like weapon (badly damaged): Samson killing a lion
2. Largely lost: originally pair of addorsed birds (?)
3. Almost entirely lost: originally couple flanking tree (?)
4. Pair of confronted birds
5. –
6. **Man, seated on a folding chair**, holding a musical instrument (harp psaltery)
7. – 10. Attendants and musicians
11. –
12. A frontally seated figure (only partially preserved)
13. A standing figure
14. –
15. Bust
16. –
17. Inscription band

B15.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree
4. Frontal peacock
5. **Frontally seated male figure**
6. – 7. Floral scrolls
8. Bust
9. Hounds attacking gazelles
10. Pair of confronted birds

A16.
1. Lion attacking rider (damaged)
2. Seated musician: lute player (badely damaged)
3. Lute player and man holding beaker
4. Falcon
5. **Lion wrestling with a snake**
6. **Lion wrestling with a snake**
7. – 10. Musicians (two flute [qussāba] players, player of a rectangular instrument) and a man with a beaker
11. **Seated figure with a beaker**
12. A peacock
13. Seated lute player
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Floral bands

B16.
1. – 2. Floral ornaments
3. Palmette tree with bird at top
4. A heraldically displayed falcon, with spread wings and a large fan-shaped tail, and his pray, a giant rabbit or hare
5. A cockerel
6. – 7. Standing attendant figure
8. Bust
9. Three gazelles
10. Pair of confronted birds

A17.
1. A pair of falcons with their prey, gazelles
2. – 3. Pairs of musicians (both rather badly damaged)
4. Seated lion
5. **Frontaly seated male figure, holding a small vase**
6. –
7. Man carrying a bird
8. Man carrying a bird.
9. Dancer with a handkerchiefs
10. Dancer with clappers
11A. Falcon

11. Seated musicians
12A. Standing attendant
12. Frontally seated male figure
12B.—
13. –
14. Bust
15. –
16. Inscription band
17. –

SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF CEILING

B17.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree
4. **Seated male figure with beaker**
5. Seated musician
6. – 7. Attendant and a bird
8. Bust
9. Inscription

SOUTH SIDE OF CEILING

A18.
1. Pair of confronted lions
2. Repainted: Pair of addorsed lions or leopards
3. Pair of seated musicians
4. Badly damaged: A bird?
5. –
6. **A beardless turbaned frontally seated figure, drinking from a bottle**
7. A harpy
8. (missing in Grube's Index)
9. Musician playing a tambour which is inscribed *latmah*
10. A dancer
11. –
12. A pair of seated musicians
13. Seated musicians
14. –
15. Bust
16. –
17. Inscription band
3. Win
ged addorsed lions (?)
4. A bird (badly damaged)
5. **A seated male figure raising a boat-shaped drinking bowl**
6. **A seated male figure drinking from a small handled ewer**
7. – 10. Harpies
11. Musicians

B18.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree with bird at top
4. Zithar player
5. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker**
6. – 7. Harpies
8. Bust
9. Hawks attacking ibexes
10. Pair of confronted birds

A19.
1. A man, to the left, carrying off an animal on his shoulders, while a rider on the right fights off an attacking bear
2. Repainted: Addorsed lions
3. Addorsed lions
4. Seated lion
5. Seated musician: lute player
6. Seated musician: lute player
7. – 10. Harpies and falcons
11. Falcon with pray, a duck
12. Frontally seated male figure raising two beakers
13. Falcon with pray: duck or quail
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Inscription bands

B19.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree with bird at the top
4. Frontally seated male figure with a beaker
5. Seated lion
6. Harpy
7. Harpy
8. Bust
9. Confronted ibexes, a bird (duck?) to the left, and a hunting dog (?) to the right
10. Confronted birds

A20.
1. A pair of confronted lions
2. A seated couple (top repainted. Original severly damaged)

12. A seated couple
13. A seated figure with a drinking cup (badly damaged)
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Inscription bands

B20.
1. – 2. Floral motifs

3. Palmette tree
4. A frontal eagle with a gazelle in each claw, outspread wings in the top-end of each a small human bust, and a frontally seated human figure placed against the bird's body, holding floral stalks
5. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker**
6. – 7. Men carrying gazelles on their soulders
8. Bust
9. Two riders in combat
10. Pair of confronted birds

A21,
1. Man stride a lion rendingapart the beast's jaws: *Samson and the Lion*
2. Pair of seated musicians
3. Pair of musicians (severly damaged)
4. **Seated figure** (badly damaged)
5. **Frontally seated lion**
6. **Frontally seated lion**
7. – 10. Falcons
11. Frontally seated figure with beaker
12. Frontally seated man holding flower stalks in his upraised hands
12A&B. Standing figures of weapon-bearers
13. Tambourine player
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Inscription bands

B21.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree
4. A frontal eagle with a gazelle in each claw, outspread wings in the top-end of each a small human bust, and a frontally seated human figure placed against the bird's body, holding to a rope (?) that hangs around the bird's neck
5. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker**
6. Man carrying a peacock
7. Man carrying a gazelle on his shouders
8. Bust
9. Two knights fighting off a bear (left) and an attacking lion (right)
10. Pair of confronted birds

A22.
1. Pair of confronted lions
2. A snake climbing up a tree, flanked by cheetahs or leopards
3. Two addorsed griffins
4. Destroyed
5. **Seated man holding a floral stalk in his uplifted left hand**
6. Two men to the right and left of a fountain in a palace pavilion, the one on the right playing a bi-conical drum he strikes with a very thin stick, the one on the ledt blowing a thin reed-pipe.
7. – 10. Harpies
11. Seated male figure with beaker
11A&12A. Animated floral scrolls
12. Repainted
12B. Man carrying gazelle on his shoulders
13. Seated male figure with beaker
13A. Man carrying a gazelle on his shoulders
14. – 15. Busts
16. Inscription
17. Floral band

B22.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree
4. **Seated lion**
5. Frontally seated man with drinking cup
6. – 7. Animated floral scrolls
8. Bust
9. Heavy kufic inscription band
10. Pair of confronted birds

A23.
1. Rider fighting dragon-snake
2. A pair of musicians (lute players) flanking a palm tree
3. Repainted
4. **Frontally seated male figure with a beaker**
5. **Frontally enthroned ruler, holding a beaker** in his right, and a floral stalk in his left hand, flanked by two standing attendants, the one to the left holding another beaker and a bottle
6. **Frontally enthroned ruler holding a small vase** (? probably meant to be drinking vessel) in his right, and a floral stalk in his left hand, flanked by two attendants with flabellae.
7. – 10. Long-tailed birds
11. A falcon and his prey, a hoofed quadruped
12. Two heraldically displayed falcons to the right and left to a palmette-tree
13. A falcon and his prey, a large water-bird
14. – 15. Busts
16 – 17. Decorative floral bands

B23.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree
4. **Frontally seated lion attacked by a dragon-snake**
5. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker**
6. – 7. Floral scrolls

8. Bust
9. Broad lettered kific inscription band
10. Pair of confronted birds

A24.
1. Pair of confronted lions
2. Addorsed felines (damaged)
3.Heraldic image of a griffin-like monster
4. Small seated figure (repainted)
5. Two men at a well
6. Two men playing chess in a tent
7. – 10. Harpies
11A. Man carrying a long-horned gazelle on his shoulders
11. **Seated male figure with a beaker in his raised right hand, and a floral stalk in his left**
12A. Man carrying a long-horned gazelle on his shoulders
12. Repainted
12B. Floral scroll
13. **Seated male figure with beaker**
13A. Floral scroll
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Decorative floral bands

B24.
1. – 3. Repainted
4. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker, flanked by two attandents holding floral stalks** or flabellae, under a roof with three small domes
5. Falcon with his prey, a small quadruped
6. – 7. Birds, seen in profile but with spread wings
8. Bust
9. Decorative floral band with three large, fan-shaped leaves
10. Pair of confronted birds

A25.
1. Largely destroyed, but original scene with a rider
2. Repainted
3. Two seated musicians
4. Repainted: a bird
5. Largely destroyed: probaby a tent
6. Badly damaged: an elephant, (probably with riders which are lost): only the face of the driver, the head, trunk and lower part of the elephant's body survive in good condition
7. – 10. Lions
11A. Falcon scroll
11. Falcon with his prey, a large bird
12A. Animated floral scroll
12. **Frontally seated male figure with beaker**
12B. Animated floral scroll
13. A falcon with his prey, a large bird
13A. Floral scroll
14. – 15. The usual bust are here replaced by elaborate interlace band design with a small floral design at the top
16. – 17. Fat kufic inscription bands

B25.
1. – 2. floral motifs
3. Palmette tree with a bird at the top
4. **Lion struggling with a dragon-snake**
5. A seated griffon
6. Man carrying a gazelle on his shoulders
7. Man carrying a peacock
8. Bust
9. Decorative floral scroll with three large fan-shaped leaves
10. Pair of confronted birds

A26.
1. A large lion confronting a large greay feline
2. Two falcons descending on their pray, small long-eared animals, probably hares
3. Frontally seated male figure, flanked by two falcons, holding a small golden vase
4. Badly damaged
5. **Ruler with a beaker, frontally seated in a triple-domed building, flanked by two attendants** (head of ruler, which appears to have had a haloe, and head of attendant to the right have been lost)
6. A rider, wearing a curious tall pointed cloth cap, fighting a dragon-snake monster
7. Seated animal (griffin?)
8. – 10. Repainted
11. A falcon and his prey,a large bird
12. Repainted
13. A male figure, seated on a wooden box-chair with a high back, drinking from a bottle in his right hand, and holding a fly-whisk (?) in his left
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Inscription bands

B26.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree with bird at the top
4. **Frontally seated male figure with a beaker in his right hand, and a floral stalk in his left**
5. A harpy
6. – 7. Animated floral scrolls
8. Bust
9. Three ibexes
10. Pair of confronted birds

A27,
1. Badly damaged: confronted rider (?)
2. Badly damaged: a seated couple
3. Pair of musicians flanking a tree
4. Addorsed falcons
5. A richly decorated tent
6. Another tent of a similar kind
7. – 10. Harpies
11. A falcon and his prey, a large bird
12. A frontal peacock
13. A falcon and his prey
14. – 15. Busts
16. – 17. Inscription bands

B27.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree
4. **Frontally seated male figure with a drinking cup**
5. A bird attacked by a dragon snake
6. – 7. Animated floral scrolls
8. Bust
9. Two riders, facing each other, on a hunting expeditio, the one on the right dragging a huge dead bird by its legs, the one of the left, holding a long pointed Norman shield, about to kill a bear attacking the hunter's horse
10. A pair of confronted birds

A28.
1. Completely repainted: a pair of confronted lions
2. A seated man with falcons: repainted
3. Addorsed griffins (only the one to the right survives)
4. Completely repainted
5. **Crowned seated male figure with a drinking bowl**
6. –
7. – 10. Harpies
11. A seated figure
12. Completely repainted: a heraldic eagle
13. –
14. Bust
15. –
16. Inscription band
17. –

SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF CEILING

B28.
1. – 2. Floral motifs
3. Palmette tree
4. Crowned seated lute player
5. Seated musician: flute (qussāba) payer
6. – 7. Animated floral scrolls
8. Bust
9. Inscription band

APPENDIX II

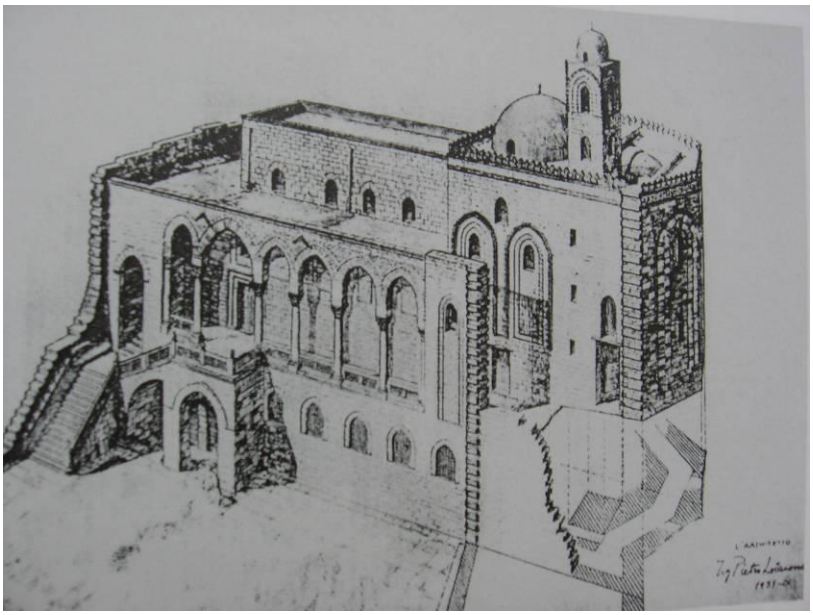

Fig. 1 Palermo, Norman Palace, reconstruction of entrance into Cappella Palatina in period of Roger II. Photo: William Tronzo, *The Cultures of His Kingdom. Roger II and Cappella Palatina in Palermo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

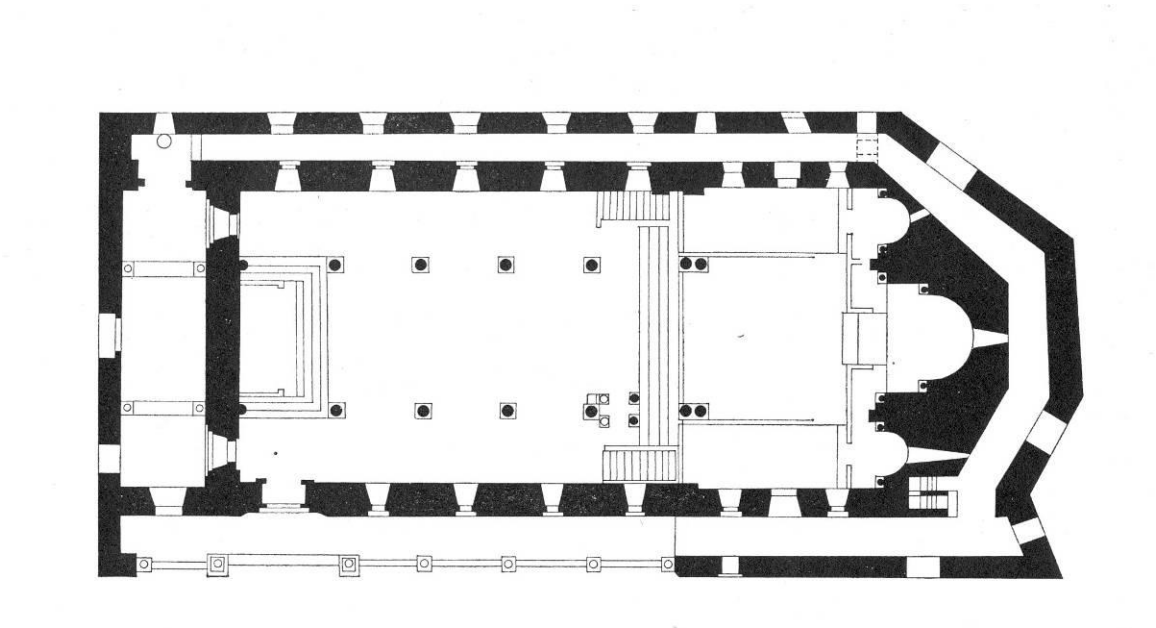

Fig. 2 Ground floor, Cappella Palatina
Photo: Giovannella Cassata, Gabriella Costantino and Diego Ciccarelli, *La Sicilia. Italia romanica 7* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1986), 50.

Fig. 3 Cappella Palatina, western arch of crossing: Presentation in the Temple.
Photo: Eve Borsook, *Messages in Mosaic: The Royal Programmes of Norman Sicily (1130 – 1187)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

Fig. 4 Ceiling of the Palatine Chapel (Cappella Palatina), Italy, Sicily, Palermo (c.1140-1143)
http://www.qantara-med.org/qantara4/public/show_superzoom.php?im_id=3426

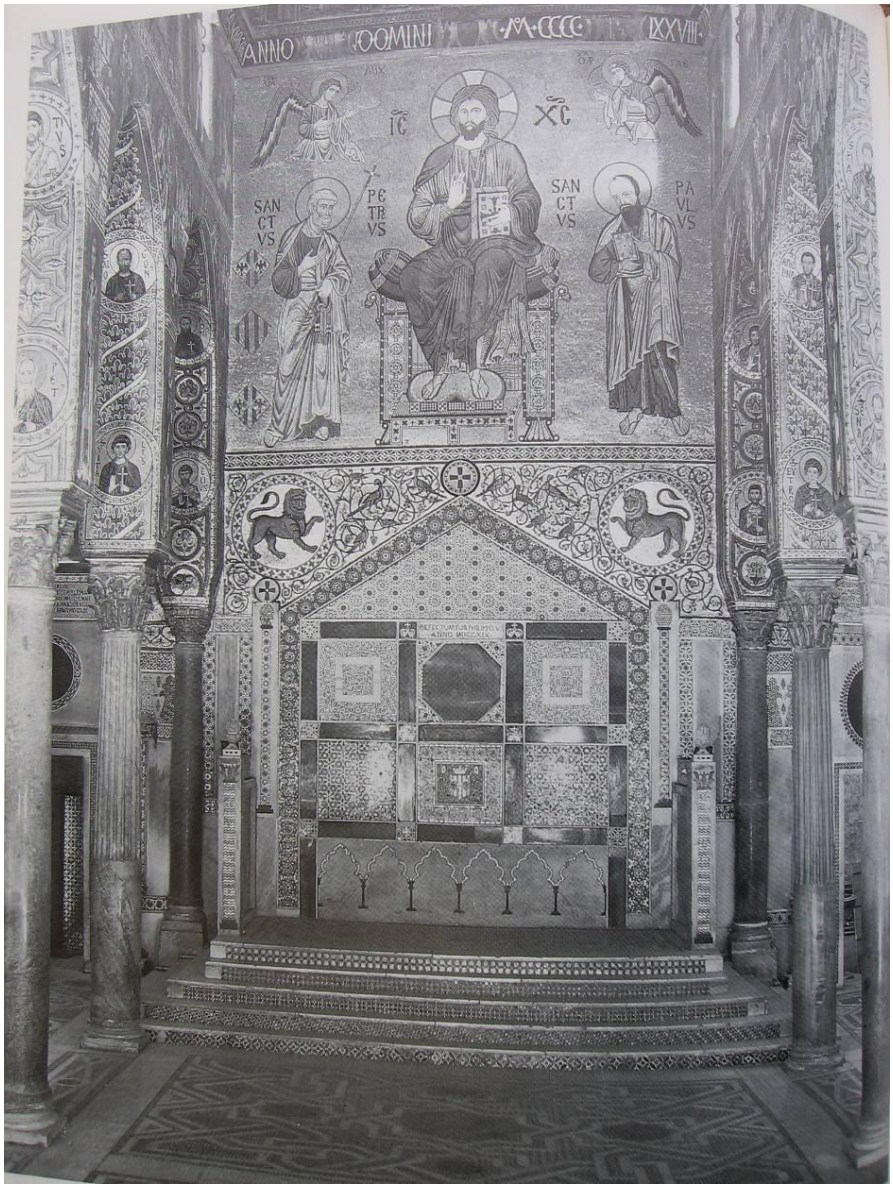

Fig. 5 Cappella Palatina, view to west. A Throne with a mosaic depicting Christ and SS. Peter and Paul.
Photo: Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatine in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

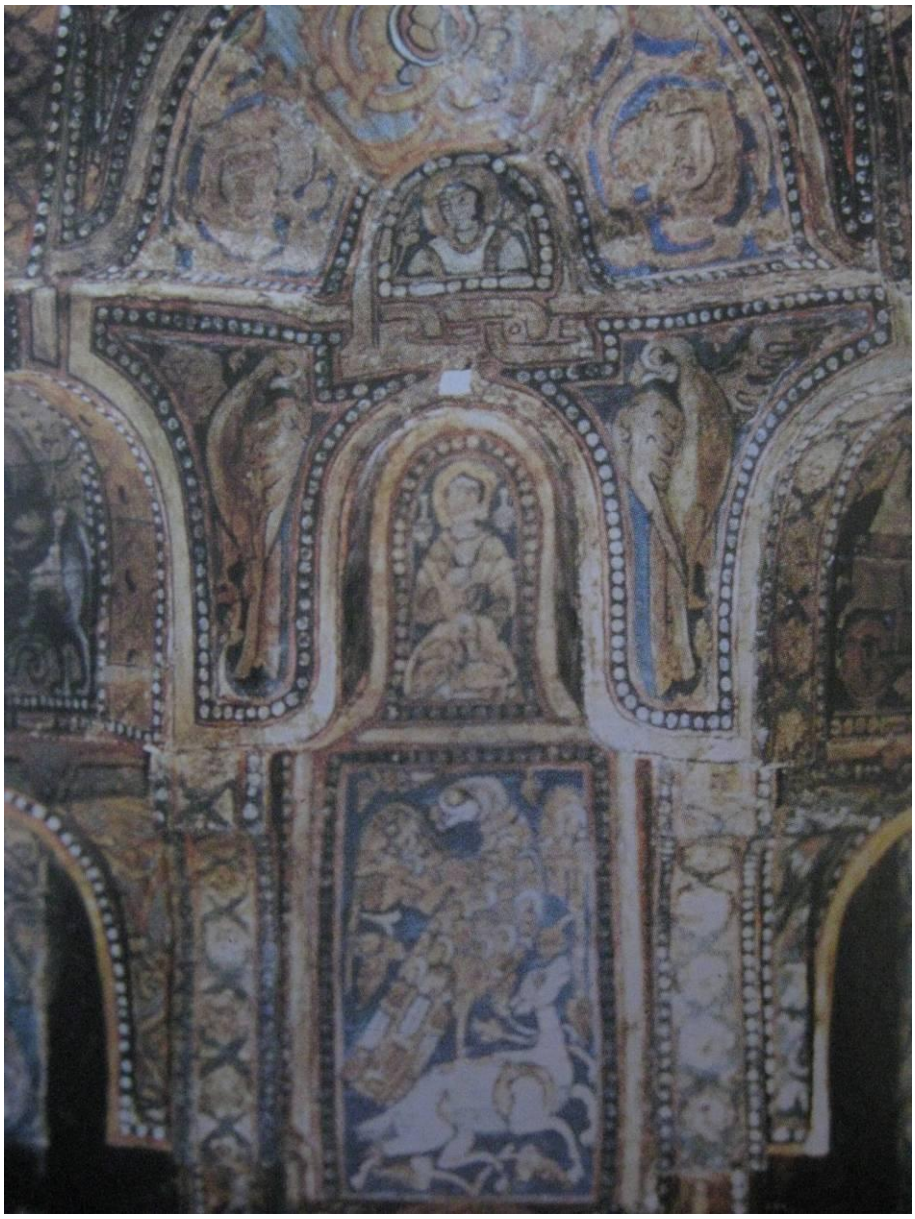

Fig. 6 View in the muqarnas zone of the nave ceiling in Cappella Palatina.
Photo: Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatine in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

Fig. 7 Seated ruler on Cappella Palatina wooden ceiling, Palermo
http://www.citizendia.org/Arab-Norman_culture (last accessed 21 May 2011)
also Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatine in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

Fig. 8 Seated ruler on Cappella Palatina wooden ceiling, Palermo
Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatine in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

Fig. 9 Silver bowl, showing Sasanian king Koshrow I (531-579) seated on a throne, 6th century. St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum.
Photo: Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

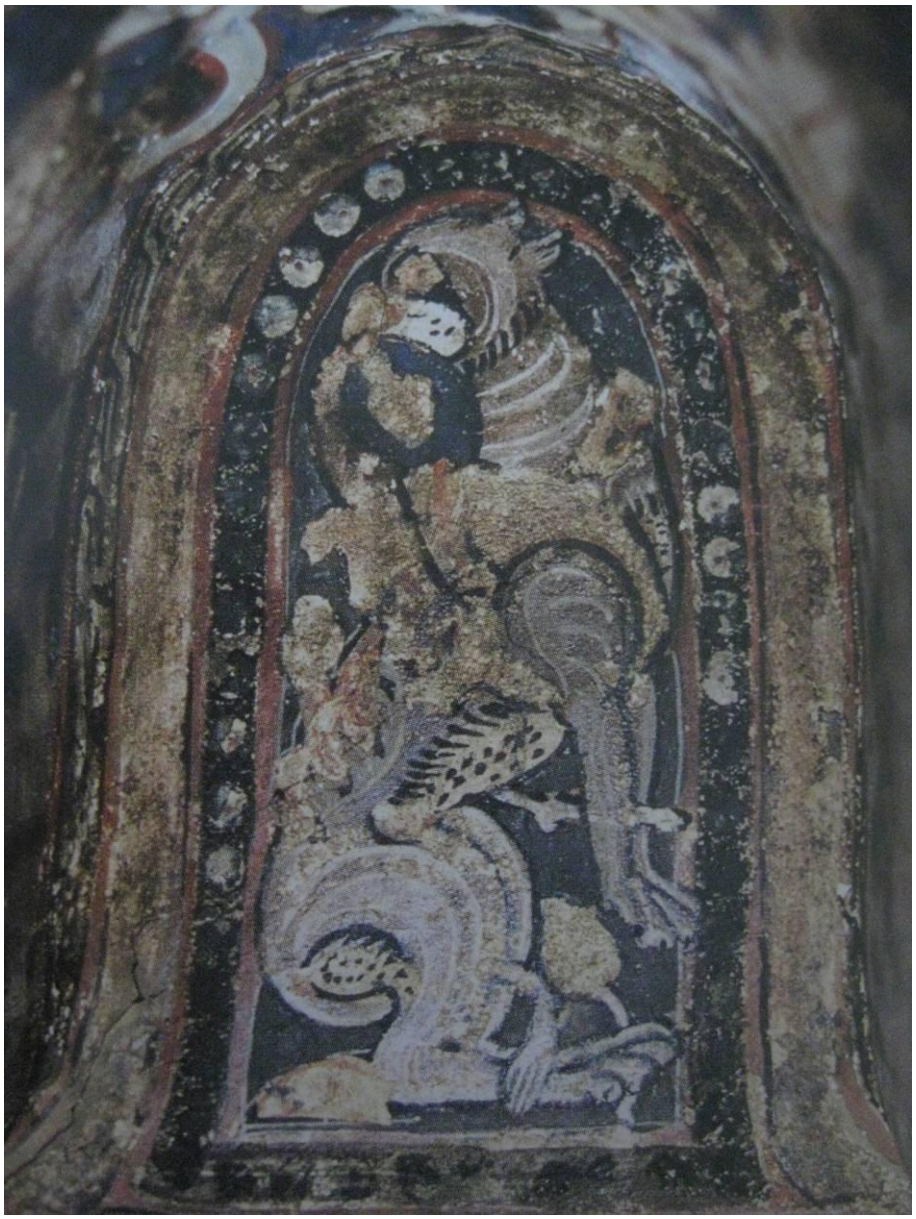

Fig. 10 Griffin from a ceiling in Cappella Palatina, Palermo
Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatine in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

Fig. 11 Ascesion Scene on *muqarnas* in Cappella Palatina.
Photo: Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

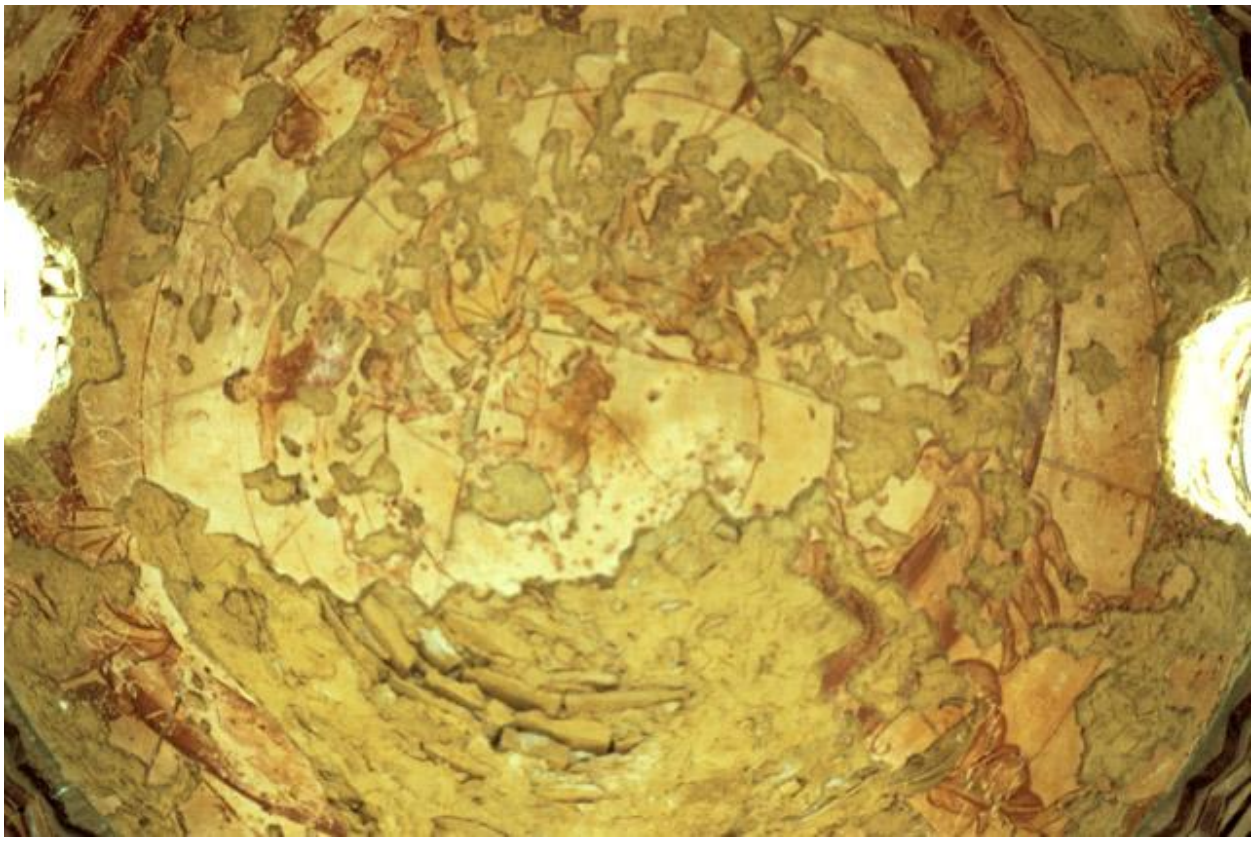

Fig. 12 Qusayr 'Amra, Fresco of the zodiac in the caldarium vault
http://archnet.org/library/images/one-image-large.jsp?location_id=5993&image_id=42615

Fig. 13 Seated prince with a beaker on *muqarnas* in Cappella Palatina.
Photo: Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

Fig. 14 Seated prince with a beaker on muqarnas in Cappella Palatina.
Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatine in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

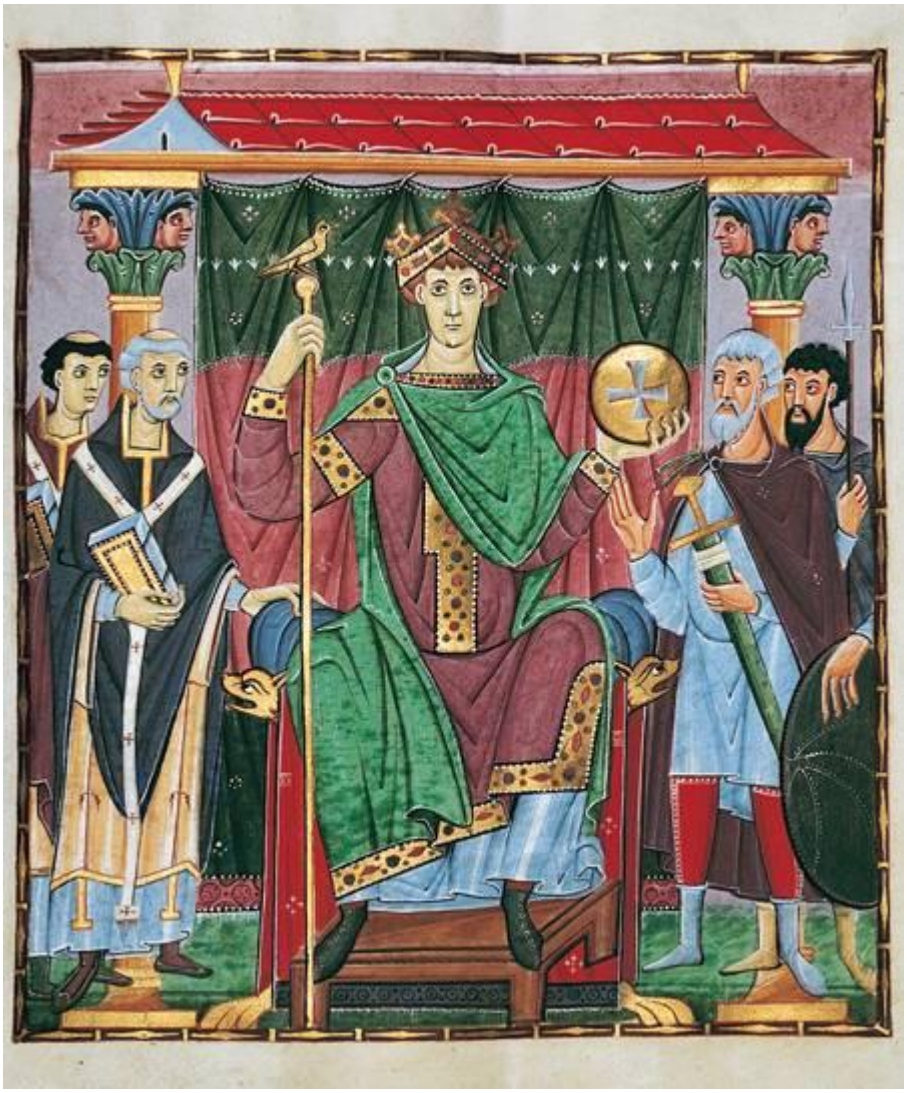

Fig. 15 Emperor Otto III (980-1002), Gospels of Otto III.
http://www.oneonta.edu/faculty/farberas/arth/Images/arth212images/ottonian/ottoIII_gospels_enth.jpg (last accessed 21 May 2011).

Fig. 16 Missorium of Emperor Theodosius I (347-395), dated 388. Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, Spain.
Photo: Kurt Weitzman, "Prolegomena to a Study of the Cyprus Plate," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 3 (1970): 109.

Figure 7. Floral designs painted in silver white adorn the wooden beams supporting the flat roof.

Fig. 17 Great Mosque of Kairouan, wooden ceiling with floral decoration.
http://www.muslimheritage.com/topics/default.cfm?articleid=358

Fig. 18 Fatimid influenced woodcarvings with figurative scenes. Sicily, 12th century. Florence, Palazo Nazionale del Bargello.

Photo: Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

Fig. 19 Plate depicting a drinking party in the Sassanian-Persian Style
7th-8th century, Silver, partially gilt, Diam: 24 cm,Gift of Marion Hammer, Jerusalem - Zurich , Accession number: 2002.110.77
http://www.imj.org.il/imagine/collections/item.asp?itemNum=199397 (last accessed on 21 May 2011)

Fig. 19a Silver gilded dish, with foot-rim. Made in Tabaristan, South of the Caspian Sea. 7th-8th century.
http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectId=236898&partId=1 (last accessed 21 May 2011)

Fig. 20 Seated Ruler with a cup in his hands and two attendants. Muqarnas in Cappella Palatina.
Photo: Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatine in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

Fig. 20a Seated prince with a cup in his hand. Muqarnas in Cappella Palatina.
Photo: Ugo Monneret de Villard, *Le Pitture Musulmane al soffito della Cappella Palatina in Palermo*. (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1950).

Fig. 21 Seated prince with a cup in his hand. Fatimid lustre-painted ceramic plate, Egypt, 11th century, Athens, Benaki Museum. re, Egypt 11th C. Benaki Museum, Athens (ΓΕ 206)
http://www.benaki.gr (last accessed 21 May 2011).

Fig. 22 A Musician and a Man Pouring Wine into a Beaker. Fragment of a Fatimid lustre-painted ceramic bowl, Egypt, 11th century. Benaki Museum, Athens.
http://www.benaki.gr/ (last accessed 21 May 2011).

Fig. 23 Bacino with drinker,San Sisto Church, Pisa, Italy, Egypt, last quarter of 11th C. Museo Nazionale de San Matteo (No. 130)
http://www.qantara-med.org/qantara4/public/show_document.php?do_id=1392 (last accessed 21 May 2011).

Fig. 24 Fragment of wall painting, Qaryat al-Faw, 3rd c. B.C.–3rd c. A.D., Riyadh National Museum. © Saudi Commission for Tourism & Antiquities (exhibition *Routes d'Arabie* at the Louvre)
http://www.art-of-the-day.info/art-of-the-day-weekly-00413.html (last accessed 21 May 2011).

Fig. 25 Fragments of wall paintings with human heads, Iraq, Samarra, from the palace of Gausaq and from a private house. 9th c. CE. Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin
http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/museums/mik/miksamarra.html (last accessed 21 May 2011)

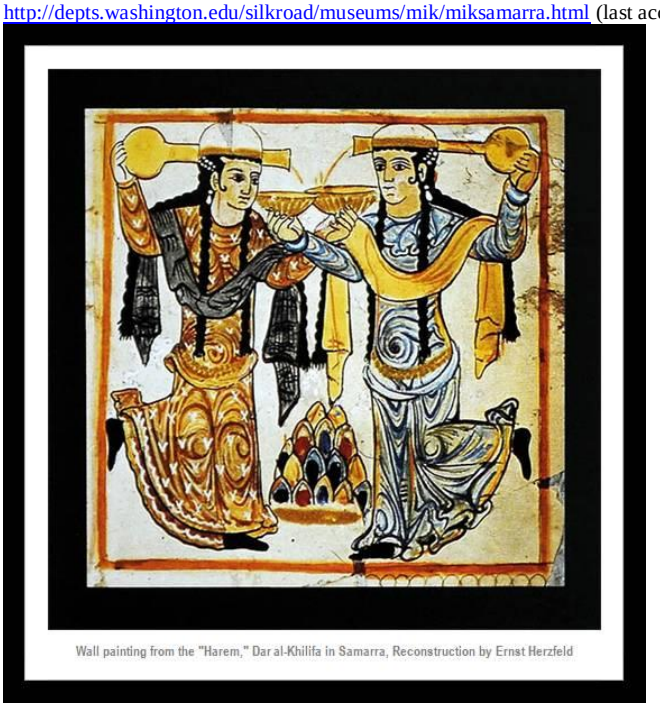

Fig. 26 Reconstruction of the "Samarra dancers" wall painting, Samarra 9th century
http://islamic-arts.org/2011/architecture-of-the-abbasids-iraq-iran-and-egypt/8/ (last accessed 21 May 2011)
also Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (Cleveland: The World Publishig Company, 1962).

Fig. 27 Courtesan/Musician, Fustat (Old Cairo), Fatimid period, 11th century,
Ink and watercolor on paper, H: 28.5; W: 18 cm, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Harari, London, Accession number: B65.04.0165
http://www.imj.org.il/imagine/collections/item.asp?itemNum=370406 (last accessed 21 May 2011)

Fig. 28 Painted muqarnas with design of seated prince, Fustāt, Egypt, eleventh century (?) (before AD 1136) Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art (12880)
http://www.qantara-med.org/qantara4/public/show_document.php?do_id=803 (last accessed 21 May 2011).

Fig. 29 Detail of the painted muqarnas with design of seated prince, Fustāt, Egypt, eleventh century (?) (before AD 1136) Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art (12880)
http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/976/cu3.htm (last accessed 21 May 2011).

Fig. 30 Casket made for Abd al-Malik, son of al-Mansur, in 1004-5. Front. Pamplona, Cathedral Treasury.
Photo: John Beckwith, *Caskets from Cordoba* (London: Her Majesty's stationery office, 1960).

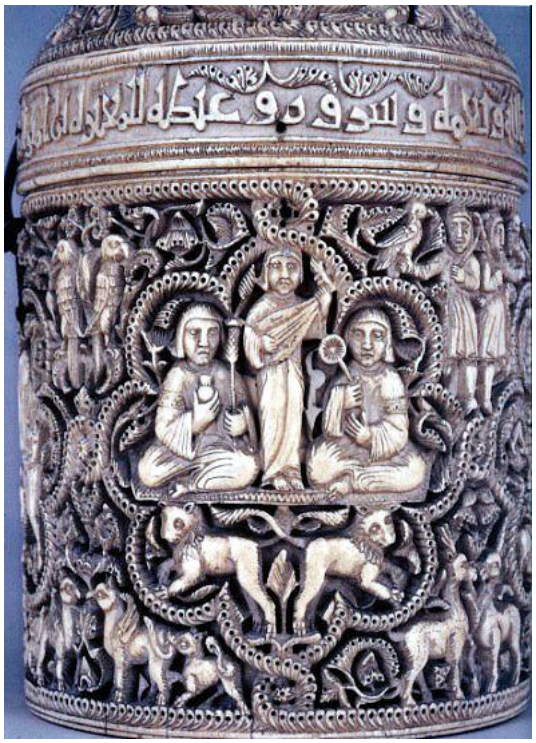

Fig. 31 Pyxis presented to al-Mughira, side featuring a seated ruler . 968, Caliphal period. Musée du Louvre, Paris.
Photo: John Beckwith, *Caskets from Cordoba* (London: Her Majesty's stationery office, 1960).

Fig. 32 Seated prince image on east façade of the Church of the Holy Cross as a portrait (?) of Gagik Artsruni, Aght'amar, Armenia.
Photo: Lynn Jones, Between Islam and Byzantium. Aght'amar and the Visual Construction of Medieval Armenian Rulership (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

Fig. 33 Roger II crowned by Christ. St. Mary of the Admiral (La Martorana), Palermo. 1146/47.
Photo: Eve Borsook, *Messages in Mosaic: The Royal Programmes of Norman Sicily (1130 – 1187)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

Fig. 34 Seated prince with a cup in his hand, on *muqarnas* in Cappella Palatina.
Photo: Ugo Monneret de Villard, *Le Pitture Musulmane al soffito della Cappella Palatina in Palermo*. (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1950).

Fig. 35 Seated ruler (?) drinking from a bottle.
Photo: Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

T 31

Fig. 36 Seated Ruler depicted on a silver gilded dish from Eastern Iran. 2nd half of 8th-1st half of 9th century. St. Peterburg, State Hermitage Museum.
http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/museums/shm/shmeiranca.html (last accessed 21 May 2011).

Fig. 37 A bowl with Khosraw I, Sassanid, silver-gilt, 5th–7th century. Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris
http://www.irandefence.net/showthread.php?t=9022&page=2

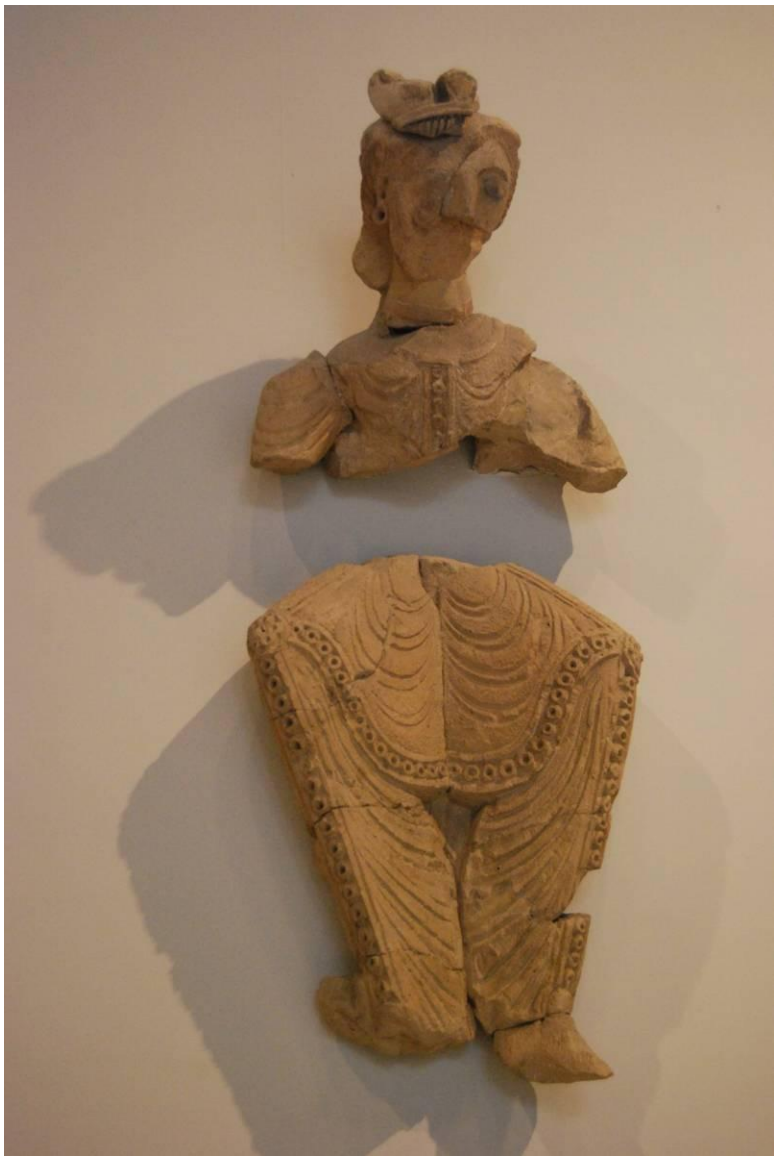

Fig. 38 Ruler from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbī, Sasanian-style, National Museum, Damascus.
Photo: by courtesy of Dr G. King.

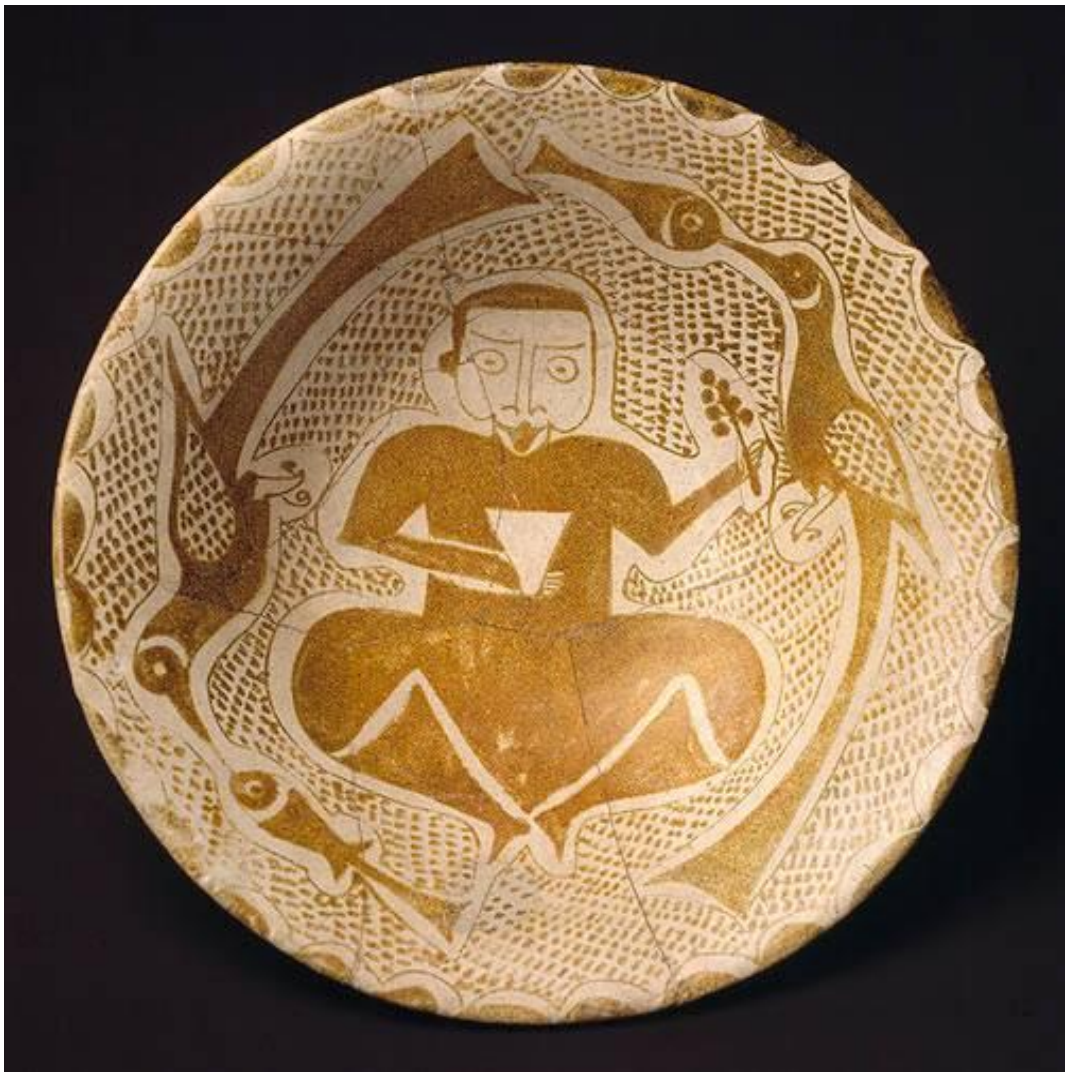

Fig. 39 Abbasid type of lustre ware depicting seated figure with a cup in his hand and a flower.Iraq, Basra (?) 9th/10th century.
http://sara.theellisschool.org/worldciv/museum2006/pattim/index.html

Fig. 40 A royal scene, Dukhang Buddhist Temple, Alchi, Ladakh
Photo: Finbarr B. Flood, Objects of Translation. Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Fig. 41 Fritware bowl, decorated with luster over an opaque, white glaze. Tell Minis type, Syria c. 1150, H: 7; Diam: 20.5 cm, Copenhagen, The David Collection
http://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/dynasties/late-abbasids/art/isl_195

Fig. 42 Palmer cup, enamelled and gilded glass, Egypt/Syria 13th century, Height: 26.8 cm,British Museum London, WB.53
http://www.britishmuseum.org/ (last accessed 21 May 2011)

Fig. 43 Bowl showing ruler and attendants. Iran, Kashan, late 12th-early 13th c. CE. Fritware, underglaze-painted, overglaze-enameled *haft rang* or *mina'i* decoration. ME OA 1930.7-19.63. British Museum, London.
http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/museums/bm/bmpremongolceramic.html

Fig. 44 Seated Ruler (?) with a cup in his hands and a fan (flower?). Muqarnas in Cappella Palatina.
Photo: Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

Fig. 45 Mural painting, Balayk-tepe, northern Turkistan, Uzbekistan, 6th-7th centuries.
Photo: Daneshvari, Abbas. "Cup, Branch, Bird and Fish: An Iconographical Study of the Figure Holding a Cup and a Branch Flanked by a Bird and a Fish." In *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand*, ed. Bernard O'Kane, 103-125. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

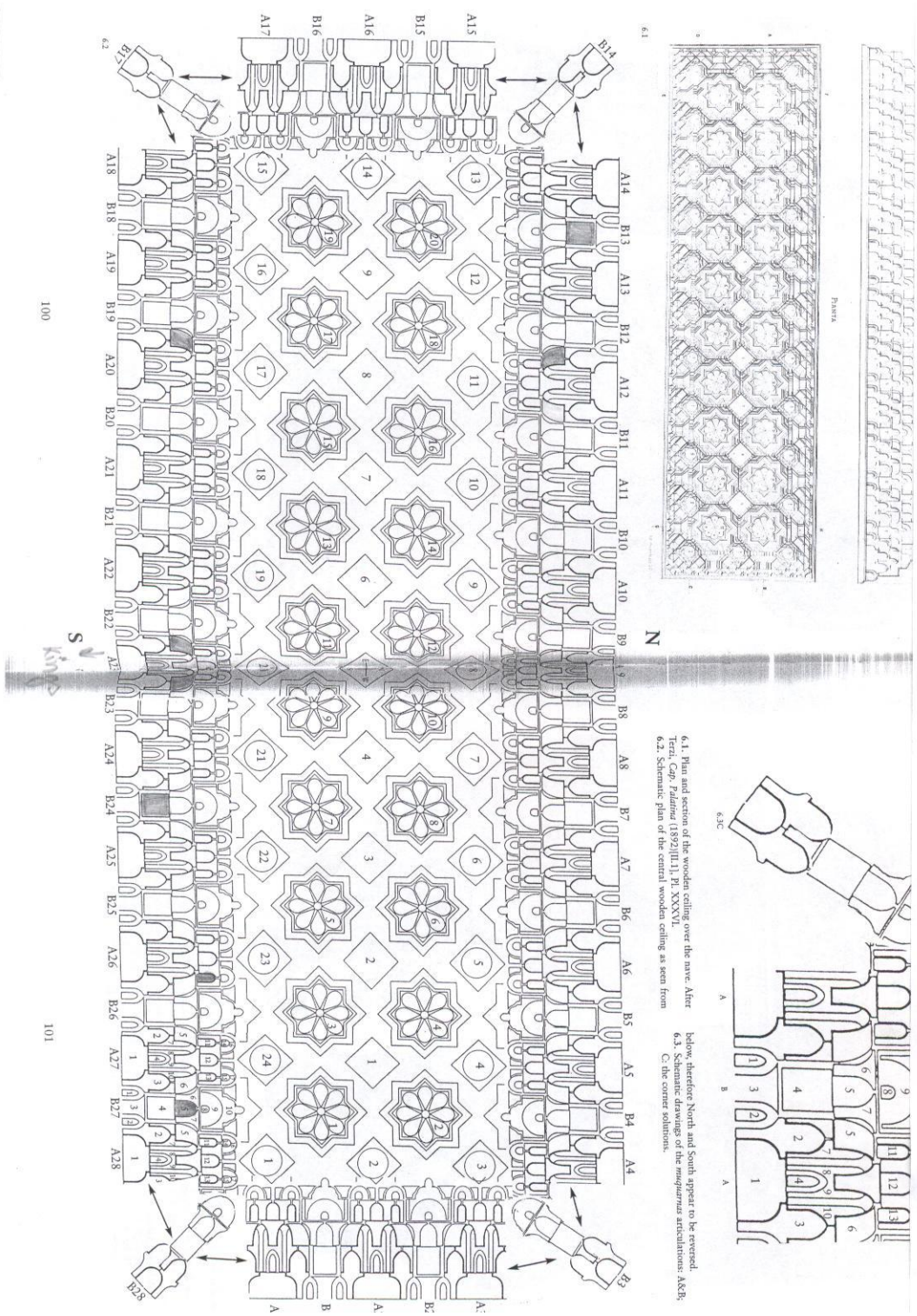

Fig. 46 Schematic drawing of the muqarnas articulations. Black markings are mine and show the positions of chosen seated ruler images.

Photo: Ernst J. Grube, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo and their relation to the artistic traditions of the Muslim World and the Middle Ages* (Genova: Bruschettini Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, 2005).

Fig. 47 Cappella Palatina, mosaic of Pantocrator, apse conch.
Photo: Eve Borsook, *Messages in Mosaic: The Royal Programmes of Norman Sicily (1130 – 1187)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

Fig. 48 Coronation mantle of Norman King Roger II of Sicily, embroidery, silk and pearls, Royal workshop, Palermo, Italy (1133-1134).Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Schatzkammer.
http://www.lessing-photo.com/dispimg.asp?i=30010215+&cr=2&cl=1 (last accessed 21 May 2011).

Fig. 49 Floor mosaic in Khirbat al-Mafjar, palace dated 740-750.
http://www.muslimheritage.com/topics/default.cfm?ArticleID=462 (last accessed 21 May 2011).