

## Introduction

# Mapping the heavens and treading the Earth: negotiating secular and sacred in medieval art

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The categories of sacred and secular are ubiquitous in the interpretation of medieval art. They serve to structure fields of research, essay collections, symposia, museum exhibitions, and course topics. These terms as we understand them today were not, however, consistently applied in the Middle Ages. Therefore distinguishing between secular and sacred always risks anachronism, imposing the values and divisions of modern mentalities upon medieval thought and practice.<sup>1</sup> Indeed the very terms that modern scholars use to distinguish non-sacred works of art – secular, *arte profana*, *weltliche Kunst*, *svetskoe iskusstva* – did not emerge until the seventeenth century and later.<sup>2</sup> Equally vexing for the scholar who seeks to define the categories of sacred and secular is their frequent convergence in almost every realm of medieval life, including politics, devotion, domesticity, science, entertainment, and perceptions of the supernatural. Works of art and architecture physically record this overlap, making absolute distinctions between secular and sacred features in a given monument or object difficult and sometimes unproductive.

The chapters in this collection reconsider the usefulness of the terms ‘secular’ and ‘sacred’ through the investigation of medieval monuments and objects that attest to passive convergence, active dialogue, or engineered friction between these categories. The papers were originally presented in a double session at the annual meeting of the College Art Association in Boston in February 2006. Readers might expect, as we did at the outset of this project, that a close examination of works of art that straddle the divide between sacred and secular would reveal the ineffectiveness of modern designations, which do not always set neatly upon medieval works of art. Yet the following

chapters generally argue for the retention of these categories because they prove to be valuable tools for analysis. At the same time, several authors offer alternative terms, in some cases introducing classifications generated from medieval sources themselves. While focusing on specific objects and monuments, the authors employ innovative methodologies applicable to broad fields of inquiry. In this respect, their arguments resonate beyond the borders of art history and archaeology into related fields such as political history, science, and literature. In so doing, they raise awareness of the rich complexity of the medieval secular world, which encompassed a vast array of social practices and cultural categories. At both the micro- and macro-levels, these studies contribute new and provocative conclusions regarding what secular and sacred meant in the Middle Ages.

This collection is diachronic, multimedia, and global in its approach. The material examined dates from the seventh to the sixteenth centuries and ranges from English books of hours to desert habitations in Syria, from churches in Constantinople to Japanese paintings. The multicultural perspective offers a more holistic view of medieval art history, reflecting the reality of an era during which religious, ethnic, and geographical groups were not hermetically isolated from one another. Rather, permeable borders were crossed by pilgrims, merchants, soldiers, prisoners, and refugees, by gifts, booty, trade goods, and souvenirs. From this broad cultural and chronological vantage, the contributors point to the value of comparative study for a topic that drives scholarship on a broad range of medieval cultures and periods.

In recent years, numerous exhibitions, symposia, conference sessions, and books have directly addressed the question of how to define and study sacred and secular in medieval culture.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps this burst of interest is spurred by the issue's resonance with current concerns. Indeed the power of religion in the contemporary world is widely apparent.<sup>4</sup> Some scholars suggest that medieval individuals viewed their world as a unified whole, unmarked by the boundaries drawn today between the religious and profane.<sup>5</sup> They may point to medieval sources which do not actively distinguish between categories of secular and sacred objects, spaces, and practices. For example, neither church treasury inventories nor later medieval royal records divide objects along these lines, preferring instead to classify according to function, material, language, or simply location. However, the authors of various medieval texts – from sermons to astronomical treatises to civic declarations to *belles lettres* – frequently assert distinctions between the natural and supernatural, the mundane and the spiritual, the demonic and the holy – in short, between what might arguably be called the secular and the sacred.<sup>6</sup> Although these categories are neither clear-cut nor consistent, they were recognized throughout the medieval world.

Some recent studies on the topic of secular and sacred in the Middle Ages suggest that modern concepts of these categories are too rigid to capture the diversity and fluidity of messages that medieval works convey.<sup>7</sup> Yet the terms sacred and secular are so deeply entrenched in modern scholarship, if not in our very ways of thinking, that they are unlikely to disappear. As the chapters that follow demonstrate, it is possible to retain contemporary understandings of secular and sacred as analytical tools that allow for common discourse across related topics and fields, while at the same time remaining vigilant against the shortcomings of these concepts and open to original medieval definitions. The authors in this volume do not attempt to establish universal definitions for secular and sacred or the myriad subcategories with which they intersect. Through this approach we hope to capture more accurately the nuanced and diverse understandings of these categories in the Middle Ages.

Before introducing the specific topics of the contributions to this anthology, we briefly summarize some major trends in the shifting constructions of secular and sacred, focusing on scholarship of the past century. To our knowledge, no review of this kind exists. The present survey does not claim to be comprehensive. Rather it aims to situate the chapters that follow and to offer some points of reference for past and current developments in this vital area of medieval studies.<sup>8</sup> Although this anthology includes one chapter on the art of medieval Japan, the following overview focuses on the historiography of western European, Byzantine, and Islamic medieval art. This bias results not only from the editors' own specializations in these fields, but also from the fact that a discourse on the secular as a separate and distinct category of artistic production is less salient in scholarship on medieval Japan. It is hoped that Samuel Morse's contribution on Japanese pilgrimage mandalas will help to spur consideration of relevant aspects of medieval East Asian art, and that scholars of Byzantine, Islamic, and Western medieval art will benefit from a different perspective on the familiar theme of pilgrimage.

### **Secular and sacred in medieval art history**

The categories of sacred and secular in medieval art were not necessarily defined and developed as two halves of a whole. Instead, different histories and agendas have driven the study of religious and non-religious objects and monuments across time and across subfields. During the mid-sixteenth century, scholars of the Catholic Reformation began to study early Christian objects because of their power to suggest the ancient presence and authority of the Catholic Church. Interest in secular objects, on the other hand, developed more sporadically and partly in conjunction with interest in royal history.<sup>9</sup>

Subsequently, art historical scholarship has developed along a multiplicity of trajectories reflecting the religious, geographical, and cultural distinctions of the diverse peoples of the medieval world. No strict chronology or definition is common to all subfields. At the same time, certain tendencies across Western medieval, Byzantine, and Islamic studies can be identified, and recognition of these commonalities aids in untangling problematic aspects of earlier scholarship. In brief, and at the risk of over-generalization, the main trends are these: the early conviction that medieval art is almost entirely saturated by religion; the subsequent recognition and growth of interest in secular art, either in its own right or at times (as with classical imagery in medieval art) in complex but subordinate relation to religious art; the effort to establish, when possible, clear demarcations between sacred and secular, including the attempt to set off the secular realm as one that can potentially destabilize or threaten the authority of the sacred; and the current negotiation of overlap between these domains without assuming *a priori* the superiority of one over the other.

To elaborate upon this broad outline, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a general perception across subfields held that medieval art and the world it represented were primarily religious in character. Certainly not all scholarship of this period focused on religious art, but nearly all included at least tacit acceptance of the leading role played by religion. Seminal works in Western medieval art history concentrate explicitly on sacred art, perpetuating the division and its suggested hierarchy.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the assumed dominance of religious expression and sacred meaning persists in some current scholarship.<sup>11</sup> Emphasis on deep-rooted religiosity is particularly prevalent and perhaps more enduring in scholarship on Islamic art. Because of regulations against the depiction of living things, medieval Islamic art was misrepresented as exclusively aniconic, a characteristic which in fact applies only to religious art.<sup>12</sup> The 'image of the word,' inscriptions deriving from the sacred text of the Qur'an, came to characterize Islamic 'iconography.'<sup>13</sup> Traditions of figural representation were widely undertreated. Even non-figural motifs – such as geometric patterning and vegetal *rinceaux* – were read as expressions of the omnipotence and omniscience of God, and concern for religion was understood to pervade medieval Islamic culture. The persistence of the very term 'Islamic' to characterize a vast diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and geographies from the seventh century to the present further contributes to a perception of religion as the motivating force in artistic production.<sup>14</sup>

The tendency to emphasize the sacred aspects of medieval art depended on the notion that they could be isolated from secular features and that these categories were coherent and distinct. In this regard, early twentieth-century art history shows a debt to the broader conceptualization of the sacred

and profane forged at this time in other academic fields, particularly in the foundational theories of religion by the anthropologist and proto-sociologist Emile Durkheim. In his seminal study of 1912, *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, Durkheim argues that the mutual exclusivity of the sacred and profane realms is essential to the definition of religion and a universal feature of all cultures in which religion plays a role.<sup>15</sup> In particular, he notes distinct separations between sacred and profane space and time, a point that several authors of this volume implicitly critique.<sup>16</sup> Durkheim acknowledged that the sacred/profane dichotomy was most actively observed in the public realm; private practices might see a blurring of these categories and the beliefs and practices that constituted them.<sup>17</sup> Still, emphasis on the incompatibility of sacred and profane at the group level is a fundamental aspect of his theory, and one that has received pointed criticism from subsequent theorists, especially regarding its lack of applicability to actual social phenomena.<sup>18</sup>

By the mid-twentieth century, secular traditions across medieval cultures were increasingly acknowledged. Iconography from pagan myths, historical epics, ruler imagery, romance literature, foreign cultures, and the everyday world were identified as realms of non-religious expression. Perhaps following the Durkheimian concept of the sacred/profane dichotomy, a methodology of segregating secular from sacred prevailed.<sup>19</sup> The profane world was typically defined as that which did not contain any reference to the sacred, or that which reflected daily life or the natural world without any association with religious identity or meaning. For example, André Grabar defined secular art in the Byzantine world as that which 'exclut tout contact avec le domaine de la foi.'<sup>20</sup> In Western medieval art, Meyer Schapiro addressed the convergence of secular and sacred elements, especially in monumental programs, but typically dissected secular from sacred features and perceived them as functioning separately, despite their appearance in the same work of art.<sup>21</sup>

Narratives, iconography, and styles derived from Greco-Roman traditions were among the primary secular elements identified in Byzantine and medieval Western art as well as in specific realms of Islamic artistic production. A taxonomic approach to the analysis of antique traditions was undertaken by numerous scholars, who systematically traced the classical sources for medieval forms.<sup>22</sup> This method resulted, however, in the dislocation of individual motifs from their contexts, emphasizing their purported connections to ancient models and narrative systems while undermining appreciation of their medieval meanings. Scholars often concluded that antique forms were appropriated without recognition of their original content. A tendency to perceive classicizing elements as predominantly decorative – lacking the complexity of thought and meaning found in religious art – is a common, although certainly not ubiquitous, undercurrent in scholarship of various subfields at this time.

In mid-twentieth-century scholarship on medieval Islamic art, figural depiction was increasingly recognized as a significant aspect of secular artistic expression. Investigation of this phenomenon was often limited to private contexts, especially the elite sphere of rulers' residences decorated with the so-called 'princely cycle' of courtly pastimes.<sup>23</sup> Early Islamic figural representation, in particular that produced by the Umayyad dynasty, was commonly judged to be indebted to Sasanian, late Roman, and early Byzantine art, representing a remnant of antique inheritance eventually exhausted and abandoned.<sup>24</sup>

With greater cross-disciplinary study and a deeper understanding of relationships between textual and visual traditions, additional means of negotiating non-religious elements in medieval works of art emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. Through the support of exegetical texts, secular images, especially representations of pagan narratives, were read increasingly as religious allegories.<sup>25</sup> This method strongly shaped interpretation of early Byzantine classicizing art in the catalogue that accompanied an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in 1979, which consistently read Greco-Roman characters and scenes as symbolic representations of Christian themes.<sup>26</sup> While opening up the possibility that secular, often classicizing, art could maintain semantic relevance in medieval contexts, these interpretations co-opted and neutralized this imagery to serve Christian meanings, thereby reasserting the authority of the sacred. In this same publication, additional avenues of approach to secular art were also explored, including the themes of antique science, epic, poetry, and theater as well as daily life. Around this time, secular art received increased attention as an autonomous cultural phenomenon. Another exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum (in 1975) recognized profane art in the Western medieval tradition as an independent topic for investigation and concentrated expressly on secular medieval objects, defined predominantly as the art and material cultural of everyday life.<sup>27</sup> The realms of palace and court emerged – and continue to thrive – as a prime locus for considering objects and monuments of secular experience among the medieval elite.<sup>28</sup> In addition, increased attention to previously undertreated social groups (city-dwellers, women, the middle class) has generated innovative readings on the interaction of secular and sacred across social strata.<sup>29</sup> A clear sign of the impact exercised by these focused studies is the trend in survey books and collection catalogues of the later twentieth century in all subfields of medieval art history to provide express consideration of secular production.<sup>30</sup>

Since the 1980s, Islamic courtly iconography is no longer readily lumped into the generic category of princely cycle imagery, but is interpreted instead with respect to particular historical and geographic contexts, a trend especially apparent in the study of medieval Spain.<sup>31</sup> More recently,

additional domains of Islamic secular expression – including entertainment, poetic culture, historical and epic narrative, science, and humanism – have received renewed and expanded attention.<sup>32</sup> Increasingly research identifies the systematic nature of secular expression and its relationship to broader trends in intellectual and popular culture.

The last three decades have also witnessed a growing appreciation for the interaction and overlap of secular and sacred elements in Byzantine art.<sup>33</sup> Through greater attention to archaeological material, the domestic sphere has emerged as an important realm for this convergence.<sup>34</sup> Interest in the *realia* of daily life has led scholars to scrutinize representations of furniture, household utensils, clothing, and domestic interiors in religious art in order to excavate the forms and codes of the mundane from works of art intended to serve the spiritual.<sup>35</sup> Scholarship on late antique and early Byzantine art explores the polyvalence of imagery from the natural world, which could convey both secular and sacred meanings depending on context.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, political imagery has been identified as a necessarily hybrid form of expression that draws self-consciously from both the sacred and the secular domains, reflecting a medieval perspective that sees worldly power as indistinguishable from sacred authority.<sup>37</sup>

The reuse of classical imagery has proved an enduring question in the study of secular art, although not always apart from the sacred. Recent studies of Carolingian art emphasize the innovative and creative nature of the relationship between art of early medieval culture and classical traditions. Carolingian artists and patrons are proposed to have deployed antique models in ways that remake and even subvert ancient meanings.<sup>38</sup> Similarly scholars of later Western and Byzantine art have examined instances in which classical motifs conveyed meaning beyond allegory, maintaining the potential for classicizing iconography to carry significance without Christian translation and emphasizing context as an essential determinant of meaning.<sup>39</sup> Some of these studies reconsider long-standing assumptions regarding the generic and decorative nature of iconography appropriated from classical traditions, positing that medieval artists and patrons could deploy non-religious sources in secular programs that rivaled in complexity the most sophisticated of sacred art.

In late twentieth-century scholarship on medieval Western art, the theme of competition between sacred and secular is particularly noticeable. Scholars concentrate on the ability of secular material in, for instance, Romanesque sculpture or Gothic manuscript marginalia to upset the authority of spiritual messages.<sup>40</sup> A recent survey of this topic suggests that simple categorization of the apparent nature of the peripheral motifs (generic, parodic, scatological, monstrous) is less useful than analysis of the program as a whole, which reveals how secularizing marginalia generate complex messages that potentially

contradict and/or affirm the dominant meaning of the central, often sacred, text or image.<sup>41</sup>

The expanding study of popular art has complicated any simple hierarchy between sacred and secular. For instance, pilgrim badges, a class of material which includes images of saints and their symbols, are often studied alongside other badges that are similar in manufacture but display images of genitalia or other demonstrably unsacred themes.<sup>42</sup> This material provides a perfect opportunity for examining unexpected confluences in the production and function of popular art.

Continued study of medieval court culture as a domain of the secular has resulted in increased appreciation for the potential of these social spaces to promote intercultural artistic languages.<sup>43</sup> The movement of portable objects, such as caskets, textiles, and oliphants, among distinct medieval realms is one means by which this intercultural artistic community was established.<sup>44</sup> When traveling between different geographical and cultural domains, objects sometimes shifted from sacred to secular use, and vice versa, demonstrating that these categories were neither fixed upon nor intrinsic in a work of art.<sup>45</sup> Such objects also highlight the vitality of liminal areas not only between sacred and secular but between the Asian, Islamic, Western Christian, and Byzantine worlds. The reality of cross-cultural exchange and interdependence in the Middle Ages further supports the expanded definition of medieval culture adopted in this volume.

Overall current work on the theme of secular and sacred can be characterized by a greater appreciation for the fluidity of these categories and their productive confluence. Rather than performing dissections of secular and sacred organs from the anatomies of objects and buildings, scholars today allow worldly and spiritual features that were conjoined by their makers to work together as a single body.<sup>46</sup> This is not to say that distinctions between the sacred and secular are not at play.<sup>47</sup> But strict divisions are not assumed *a priori*, and the secular, when articulated as a separate category, is identified as a multi-faceted realm with the potential to equal the formal and semantic complexity of sacred art.<sup>48</sup>

### **Contributions to this volume**

Each of the following chapters examines a work of art or architecture in which elements of the profane and the spiritual operate in tandem. Although addressing a diversity of cultural and historical contexts, the authors undertake three common tasks. First, they show how the labels 'sacred' and 'secular' – when used bluntly and without regard for the internal meanings generated by a given culture – can obscure our understanding of the medieval

world. Second, they examine what secular and sacred meant in the Middle Ages, what distinctions there might have been in the vast complexity of the profane and spiritual realms, and what attitudes and terms might elucidate those distinctions. Third, they demonstrate how the modern categories of sacred and secular can still be used to make medieval works of art more comprehensible to a modern perspective, without imposing these categories in such a way as to occlude medieval intentions for and understandings of these objects and monuments. The specific topics range from the seventh to the sixteenth centuries and showcase a variety of secular interests in science, law, civic space, chivalric romance, entertainment, domesticity, and the display of earthly authority. Despite diverse approaches, the authors underline the determinative force of historical and cultural context and insist on the necessity of assessing each object or site as a unified whole, within which sacred and secular elements played greater or lesser roles, varying across time and according to the beholder.<sup>49</sup>

Kathryn A. Smith analyzes the introduction of chivalric imagery into a fourteenth-century English book of hours, proposing that the manuscript uses secular matter to urge a viewer toward deeper spiritual awareness and devotional intensity. Recognizing that medieval individuals admitted the spiritual utility of the profane, she argues that the sequence of text and image in the manuscript subtly binds together chivalric, courtly, devotional, and penitential themes. This interweaving of profane and religious imagery prompts meditative self-examination. Smith re-evaluates the nature of the term 'romance' in the Middle Ages, which is typically considered to operate within a secular context, but was used by medieval writers to describe tales about both Arthurian heroes and Christian saints.

Caroline Wamsler examines a monumental civic program in fourteenth-century Venice, analyzing how secular and sacred imagery coalesce in the paintings that once covered the walls of the Sala del Maggiore Consiglio in the Ducal Palace. Wamsler argues that the program converts a secular space into an extension of a sanctified domain. This transference of sacred vocabulary to the civic setting demonstrates the potential for productive overlap between the heavenly and earthly realms, a strategy that finds support in the writings of the contemporary humanist, Petrarch.

Galina Tirnanić investigates another monumental program in a fourteenth-century building but shifts our focus to Constantinople and the murals in the Church of St. Savior in Chora. She demonstrates how the representation of cosmological order in the late Byzantine world was shaped by secular and sacred visual models that worked in concert. Considering the program's relation to public ceremony in medieval Byzantium, she draws from both permanent and ephemeral visual culture to reconstruct a contemporary audience's reading of otherworldly imagery through the lens of everyday

experience. She argues that imperial practices of punishment and distribution of rewards shaped the way in which a Byzantine viewer understood the representation of divine justice in wall-paintings of the *Anastasis* and *Last Judgment* at the Chora, enhancing the immediacy of these supernatural scenes.

Eric Ramírez-Weaver writes about illustrations in Carolingian astronomical manuscripts, deriving from his study an important analysis of the distinction between natural and supernatural matters and the uses for each type of material in Western European art of the ninth century. He examines the incorporation of a classical pre-Christian heritage into later Christian texts, concluding that the makers of these manuscripts did not reject the pagan past wholesale, but edited and appropriated from it what they considered beneficial. His articulation of the nature of science and the understanding of the universe describes an uneasy but durable relationship between antique knowledge and Christian dogma during the ninth century. In the context of Carolingian intellectual culture, understanding the scientific order of the world meant drawing from both pagan (secular) and Christian (sacred) traditions.

Lara Tohme addresses the Syrian steppe of the seventh century, where magnates of the recently established Islamic Umayyad dynasty negotiated relations with indigenous Christian groups. In this multicultural environment, Christian monasteries served a variety of functions, many of which extended beyond traditional expectations for hermetic devotion. In appropriating models of architectural and social authority, Islamic patrons of regional estates, or *qusur*, turned to Christian monasteries as examples for articulating political power in visual and spatial terms. Through a framework of analysis that recognizes both monasteries and *qusur* as places that facilitated cultural 'convergence,' Tohme explores the fluidity of identity and practice among categories usually considered mutually exclusive: Christian and Islamic, secular and sacred.

Veronica Kalas reconsiders the long-standing interpretation of rock-cut buildings in the medieval Byzantine territory of Cappadocia (modern-day central Turkey) as monasteries and the landscape of this region as inherently sacred. Through nuanced historiographic analysis, she probes the untested assumptions that led early scholars to stake these claims as well as the circumstances that allowed these unfounded readings to go so long unchallenged. Marshalling evidence yielded from rigorous archaeological survey at these sites, she proposes new ways of reading the settlements as lay domestic enclaves. This reinterpretation holds rich potential for a deeper understanding of domestic space in the middle Byzantine era. The buildings combined secular and sacred spaces, requiring the convergence of these categories in analysis of the sites.

Samuel Morse examines the representation of devotional and recreational practices in medieval Japanese pilgrimage mandalas and considers how the mixture of profane and religious actions in these paintings shifted toward an emphasis on the non-devotional over time. This transition is understood as a practical response to religious institutions' growing need for financial support, which was satisfied by attracting an emerging lay audience in search of both worldly and spiritual fulfillment. By drawing out the secular content of these images, Morse highlights the non-religious aspects of medieval Japanese art and raises the possibility of useful comparative study between Japanese pilgrimage culture and that of other medieval groups.

The authors in this collection remain wary of the potential for the modern concepts of sacred and secular to create artificial separations in medieval material. At the same time, the studies demonstrate the continuing utility of secular and sacred as heuristic tools, especially when negotiated through methodologies that allow for their collaboration in diverse realms of medieval reality. Together the authors make clear that sacred and secular were not fixed categories; rather, they operated throughout medieval life and art in manifold ways. This collection both embraces a notion of confluence and variation on a large scale while attending to rigorous and specific distinctions on the small scale. The contributions demonstrate that a full understanding of secular and sacred demands careful scrutiny of historical, literary, and archaeological evidence to comprehend the social matrixes within which these trends were negotiated and from which art and architectural expression emerged.

Needless to say, this collection does not claim comprehensive treatment of the vast topic of secular and sacred in medieval art and architecture. Rather, it demonstrates a variety of techniques for tackling the issue, introducing methods that carry weight and value beyond the authors' particular foci. By considering the theme across a diversity of medieval subfields, the chapters make available innovative approaches for investigating a question that bridges divides of religion, geography, and chronology. The authors engage with a problem that has been long debated and will no doubt continue to be a major concern of scholarship on medieval art, architecture, and material culture. As such, these studies are intended as a benchmark of current trends, rather than a definitive statement. Opening consideration of the secular beyond the traditional fields of Christian monasteries and manuscript marginalia to encompass Islamic desert habitations and Buddhist pilgrimage mandalas, Byzantine church painting and Venetian civic decoration, can only enrich this discussion. By examining liminal objects, locations, and terminology, these authors reveal more clearly the rich and fertile landscape of medieval art: evocative, inconsistent, and ever-challenging.

## Notes

1. Regarding the inconsistency of modern, Western notions of sacred and profane with concepts prevalent in other cultures, see J.R. Goody, 'Religion and Ritual: The Definitional Problem,' *British Journal of Sociology*, 12/2 (1961): 142–64, esp. pp. 150–51 and 155–7.
2. Anthony Cutler, 'Sacred and Profane: The Locus of the Political in Middle Byzantine Art,' in Antonio Jacobini and Enrico Zanini (eds), *Arte profana e arte sacra a Bisanzio* (Rome, 1995), pp. 315–38, esp. p. 317.
3. For example, Lynn Jones, 'Byzantine Secular Art,' session at the College Art Association Annual Meeting, New York, February 2003; *The Secular World of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, 26th Annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum, Plymouth State University, Plymouth NH, April 2005; Lawrence Besserman (ed.), *Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures: New Essays* (New York, 2006); Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (eds), *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 2006); Nancy Netzer (ed.), *Secular Sacred: Eleventh–Sixteenth Century Works from the Boston Public Library and the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston (Chestrut Hill MA, 2006); Eunice Dauterman Maguire and Henry Maguire, *Other Icons: Art and Power in Byzantine Secular Culture* (Princeton NJ, 2006).
4. A spurt of publications on the themes of the mundane and the transcendent, the secular and sacred in our own era includes Richard Francis (ed.), *Negotiating Rapture: The Power of Art to Transform Lives* (Chicago, 1996); Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge, 2004).
5. Nancy Netzer, 'Secular and Sacred Objects from the Middle Ages: Illuminating the History of Classification,' in Netzer, *Secular Sacred*, p. 11.
6. It must be noted, however, that in the medieval world, the supernatural was not exclusively sacred; unholy otherworldly forces were widely recognized as real and powerful, if unpropitious. For extended discussion of this point in relation to medieval Byzantine art, see Maguire and Maguire, *Other Icons*. Regarding distinctions between the natural and the supernatural in western medieval thought, see Robert Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2008).
7. Netzer, 'Secular and Sacred Objects from the Middle Ages,' in Netzer, *Secular Sacred*, p. 11; Lawrence Besserman, 'Introduction: Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures: Issues and Approaches,' in *Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures*, pp. 1–15.
8. The extensive literature on this topic is not fully encompassed by the select references offered here, which merely provide some useful departure points; recent publications noted below can be consulted for more complete bibliography on specific subtopics and material.
9. Netzer, 'Secular and Sacred Objects from the Middle Ages,' in Netzer, *Secular Sacred*, p. 12.
10. For instance, Emile Mâle's studies of sculpture in Western medieval monasteries and churches tend to concentrate on the unification of the beauty of this world with the spiritual messages of the next; for him, the medieval cathedral's appeal lay in its ability to reveal the contents of religious books in a way that also represented the beauty of nature. See Mâle, *The Gothic Image/Religious Art in France, the Thirteenth Century: A Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources* (1898; trans. Princeton NJ, 1984), p. 396; and Mâle, *Religious Art in France, the Twelfth Century: A Study of the Origins of Medieval Iconography* (1922; trans. Princeton NJ, 1978).
11. For instance, a recent survey of Early Christian and Byzantine art states: 'Although some have looked for and found secular art produced during the centuries covered here, the very concept of "secular" as not concerned with religious is suspect.' John Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (London, 1997), p. 6.
12. Richard Ettinghausen, 'The Character of Islamic Art,' in N.A. Faris (ed.), *The Arab Heritage* (1944; rpt Princeton NJ, 1946); Ettinghausen, 'Early Realism in Islamic Art,' *Studi Orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi Della Vida* (2 vols, Rome, 1956), vol. 1, pp. 250–73; Terry Allen, 'Aniconism and Figural Representation in Islamic Art,' in *Five Essays on Islamic Art* (Sebastapol CA, 1988), pp. 17–37.
13. Erica Cruikshank Dodd, 'The Image of the Word: Notes on the Religious Iconography of Islam,' *Berytus*, 18 (1969): 35–61.
14. For more recent consideration of this issue, see Oleg Grabar, 'Islamic Art: Introduction. Definition,' in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, 34 vols (New York, 1996), vol. 16, pp. 99–102; Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, 'The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field,' *Art Bulletin*, 85/1 (2003): 152–84, esp. pp. 152–3.

15. Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: The Free Press, 1995), esp. pp. 34–9 and 310–13. Regarding this text, see N.J. Allen, W.S.F. Pickering, and W. Watts Miller (eds), *On Durkheim's 'Elementary Forms of Religious Life'* (London, 1998).
16. See chapters by Galina Tirnanić, Eric Ramírez-Weaver, Carolina Wamsler, Lara Tohme, and Veronica Kalas. For further discussion of anthropological theories dealing with distinctions between secular and profane space and time, see R.L. Stirrat, 'Sacred Models,' *Man*, N.S. 19/2 (1984): 199–215.
17. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms*, p. 313. This point is especially relevant to the chapter in this volume by Kathryn A. Smith.
18. See Goody, 'Religion and Ritual,' E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford, 1965), esp. pp. 64–5; Renate C. Barber, 'Sacred and Profane: Some Thoughts on the Folk–Urban Continuum of this Dichotomy,' *Man*, 65 (1965): 45–6; Tomoko Masuzawa, 'The Sacred Difference in the Elementary Forms: On Durkheim's Last Quest,' *Representations*, 23 (1988): 25–50. Durkheim's concept of radical separation between sacred and profane was upheld in the work of other scholars, for example, Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1966).
19. Early studies include R. Van Marle, *Iconographie de la décoration profane des demeures princières en France et en Italie aux XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1926); Van Marle, *Iconographie de l'art profane au Moyen-Âge et à la Renaissance, et la décoration des demeures* (2 vols, La Haye, 1931–32); Roger Sherman Loomis and Laura Hibbard Loomis, *Arthurian Legends in Medieval Art* (London, 1938). Also see the collected essays of André Grabar, *L'Art de la fin de l'antiquité et du moyen âge* (3 vols, Paris, 1968), esp. 'Art profane,' pt. III, vol. 1, pp. 189–338.
20. A. Grabar, 'Art profane,' in *L'Art de la fin de l'antiquité et du Moyen Age*, vol. 1, p. 189; cited by Cutler, 'Sacred and Profane,' p. 316. See also A. Grabar, 'L'Art profane à byzance,' *Actes 14 Congrès études byzantines* (1974), pp. 317–41.
21. For example, he saw mundane 'intrusions' – insertions of worldly vignettes into the sacred realm of monastery cloister – as eruptions of the artist's independent creative impulse. Meyer Schapiro, 'From Mozarabic to Romanesque in Silos,' *Art Bulletin*, 13 (1939): 113–74.
22. Jean Adhémar, *Influences antiques dans l'art du Moyen Age français* (London, 1939); Kurt Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art* (Princeton NJ, 1951); Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Resuscitations in Western Art*, 2 vols (Stockholm, 1960); Anthony Cutler, 'The Mythological Bowl in the Treasury of San Marco at Venice,' in Dickran Koumjian (ed.), *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy, and History* (Beirut, 1974), pp. 235–54. Also see the collected essays of Weitzmann, *Classical Heritage in Byzantine and Near Eastern Art* (London, 1981). This trend is also found, although at a later date and to a lesser degree, in scholarship on medieval Islamic art, see Oleg Grabar, 'Survivances classiques dans l'art de l'Islam,' *Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes*, 21 (1971): 371–80.
23. Ettinghausen, 'Painting in the Fatimid Period: A Reconstruction,' *Ars Islamica*, 9 (1942): 112–24; O. Grabar, 'The Painting of the Six Kings at Qusayr 'Amrah,' *Ars Orientalis*, 1 (1954): 185–7; A. Grabar and O. Grabar, 'L'Essor des arts inspirés par les cours princières à la fin du premier millénaire: princes musulmans et princes chrétiens,' in *L'Occidente e l'Islam nell'alto medioevo* (2 vols, Spoleto, 1965), vol. 2, pp. 845–901.
24. Richard Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium to Sasanian Iran and the Islamic World* (Leiden, 1972).
25. For an earlier study employing this method, see Van Marle, *Iconographie de l'art profane au moyen-âge et à la renaissance*, vol. 2, *Allégories et symboles*.
26. Kurt Weitzmann (ed.), *The Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979). An intriguing corollary to this approach is found in an approximately contemporaneous treatment of the Islamic princely cycle, in which courtly, worldly themes were read as allegories of spiritual apotheosis. Dorothy Shepherd, 'Banquet and Hunt in Medieval Islamic Iconography,' in Ursula E. McCracken, Lilian M.C. Randall, and Richard H. Randall (eds), *Gatherings in Honor of Dorothy E. Miner* (Baltimore MD, 1974), pp. 79–92.
27. Metropolitan Museum of Art, *The Secular Spirit: Life and Art at the End of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1975). Also see Claude Gaignebet and Jean-Dominique Lajoux, *Art profane et religion populaire au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1985); Josie P. Campbell (ed.), *Popular Culture in the Middle Ages* (Bowling Green OH, 1986); Malcolm Jones, *The Secret Middle Ages* (2002; rpt Westport CT: Praeger, 2003). An important precursor to these publications is Van Marle, *Iconographie de l'art profane au moyen-âge et à la renaissance*, vol. 1, *La Vie quotidienne*.

28. See footnote 18, above, and Vladislav Petrovic Darkevic, *Svetskoe iskusstvo Vizantii; proizvedenija vizantijsk. hudoz. remesla v Vost. Evrope X–XIII v.* (Moscow, 1975); V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne (eds), *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (London and New York, 1983); O. Grabar, 'La Place de Qusayr Amrah dans l'art profane du haut moyen age,' *Cahiers archéologiques*, 36 (1988): 75–83; Gulru Necipoğlu (ed.), *A Special Issue on Pre-Modern Islamic Palaces, Ars Orientalis*, 23 (1993); Marcell Restle, 'Höfische Kunst in Konstantinopel in der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit,' in Reinhard Lauer and Hans Georg Majer (eds), *Höfische Kultur in Südosteuropa* (Göttingen, 1994), pp. 25–41; Henry Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington DC, 1997); Malcolm Vale, *The Princely Court: Medieval Courts and Culture in North-West Europe (1270–1380)* (Oxford, 2001); Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song: The Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005–1134 A.D.* (Leiden, 2002); Maguire and Maguire, 'Marvels of the Court,' in *Other Icons*, pp. 29–57.
29. O. Grabar, 'Imperial and Urban Art in Islam: The Subject Matter of Fatimid Art,' *Colloque international sur l'histoire du Caire* (Cairo, 1972), pp. 173–89; Jonathan J.G. Alexander, 'Iconography and Ideology: Uncovering Social Meanings in Western Medieval Christian Art,' *Studies in Iconography*, 15 (1993): 1–44.
30. For example O. Grabar, 'Islamic Secular Art: Palace and City,' in *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven CT, 1973), pp. 1–44; Thomas Mathews, 'The Secular Domestic World,' in *Byzantium from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (New York, 1998); Veronica Sekules, 'Pleasures,' in *Medieval Art* (Oxford, 2001); Tim Stanley, *Palace and Mosque: Islamic Art from the Middle East* (London, 2004).
31. Ranée A. Katzenstein and Glenn D. Lowry, 'Christian Themes in Thirteenth-Century Islamic Metalwork,' *Muqarnas*, 1 (1983): 53–68; Renata Holod, 'Luxury Arts of the Caliph Period,' in Jerrilynn D. Dodds (ed.), *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York, 1992), pp. 41–7; Francisco Prado-Vilar, 'Circular Visions of Fertility and Punishment: Caliphical Ivory Caskets from al-Andalus,' *Muqarnas*, 14 (1997): 19–41; Prado-Vilar, 'Enclosed in Ivory: The Miseducation of al-Mughira,' *Journal of the David Collection*, 2/1 (2005): 138–63.
32. Within the substantial bibliography on Islamic secular art produced in the later twentieth century, the following studies are of particular note: O. Grabar, *The Illustrations of the 'Maqamat'* (Chicago, 1984); Marianna Shreve Simpson, 'Narrative Allusion and Metaphor in the Decoration of Medieval Islamic Objects,' in Herbert L. Kessler and Marianna Shreve Simpson (eds), *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Washington DC, 1985), pp. 131–48; Eva R. Hoffman, 'The Author Portrait in Thirteenth-Century Arabic Manuscripts: A New Islamic Context for a Late-Antique Tradition,' *Muqarnas*, 10 (1993): 6–20; Hoffman, 'A Fatimid Book Cover: Framing and Reframing Cultural Identity in the Medieval Mediterranean World,' in Marianne Barrucand (ed.), *L'Égypte Fatimide* (Paris, 1999), pp. 403–19; Oya Pancaroğlu, 'Socializing Medicine: Illustrations of the Kitab al-Diryaq,' *Muqarnas*, 18 (2001): 155–72; Pancaroğlu, 'Signs in the Horizons: Concepts of Image and Boundary in a Medieval Persian Cosmography,' *Res*, 43 (2003): 31–41; Persis Berlekamp, 'Painting as Persuasion: A Visual Defense of Alchemy in an Islamic Manuscript of the Mongol Period,' *Muqarnas*, 20 (2003): 35–60; Eva Baer, *The Human Figure in Islamic Art: Inheritances and Islamic Transformations* (Costa Mesa CA, 2004); Bernard O'Kane (ed.), *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand* (Edinburgh, 2005).
33. Iacobini and Zanini (eds), *Arte profana e arte sacra a Bisanzio*.
34. Eunice Dauterman Maguire, Henry P. Maguire, and Maggie J. Duncan-Flowers, *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House* (Urbana IL, 1989). On the topic of Byzantine secular architecture, see also Slobodan Curčić and Evangelia Hadjityrphonos, *Secular Medieval Architecture in the Balkans 1300–1500 and Its Preservation* (Thessaloniki, 1997); Thomas Mathews and Annie-Christine Daskalakis Mathews, 'Islamic-Style Mansions in Byzantine Cappadocia and the Development of the Inverted T-Plan,' *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 56/3 (1997): 294–315; Ken Dark (ed.), *Secular Building and the Archaeology of Everyday Life in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford, 2004); and Veronica Kalas's chapter in this volume.
35. Maria G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images: Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11th–15th Centuries)* (Leiden, 2003); and Jennifer Ball, *Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth- to Twelfth-Century Painting* (New York, 2005).
36. Henry Maguire, *Earth and Ocean: The Terrestrial World in Early Byzantine Art* (University Park PA, 1987).
37. Cutler, 'Sacred and Profane.' Also see André Grabar, *L'Empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris, 1936); Sabine Maccormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley CA, 1981); Ruth E. Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity: Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries* (Aldershot, 2004), esp. pp. 11–59. Also see Galina Tirnanić's chapter in this volume.

38. Lawrence Nees, *A Tainted Mantle: Hercules and the Classical Tradition at the Carolingian Court* (Philadelphia PA, 1991); Geneva Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire* (University Park PA, 1995), esp. 23–4, 58–62, 116–18. Also see Eric Ramírez-Weaver’s chapter in this volume.
39. Anthony Cutler, ‘On Byzantine Boxes,’ *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 42–3 (1984–85): 32–47; *Survival of the Gods: Classical Mythology in Medieval Art* (Providence RI, 1987); Ioli Kalavrezou, ‘The Cup of San Marco and the “Classical” in Byzantium,’ in Katharina Bierbrauer, Peter K. Klein, and Willibald Sauerländer (eds), *Studien zur mittelalterlichen Kunst 800–1250* (Munich, 1985), pp. 167–74; Henry Maguire, ‘Epigrams, Art, and the “Macedonian Renaissance,”’ *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 48 (1994): 105–15; Leader-Newby, *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity*, esp. pp. 123–216; Frank Althaus and Mark Sutcliffe (eds), *The Road to Byzantium: Luxury Arts of Antiquity* (London, 2006); Maguire and Maguire, *Other Icons*, esp. pp. 97–156; Alicia Walker, ‘Meaningful Mingling: Classicizing Imagery and Islamicizing Script in a Byzantine Bowl,’ *Art Bulletin*, 90/1 (2008): 33–53.
40. Lilian M.C. Randall, *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts* (Berkeley CA, 1966); Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art, Essays in Art and Culture* (Cambridge MA, 1992); E.C. Block, J. Fellows, and M. Jones (eds), *Profane Imagery in Marginal Arts of the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2005). For elements shared between secular and sacred manuscripts, see Alison Stones, ‘Sacred and Profane Art: Secular and Liturgical Book-Illumination in the Thirteenth Century,’ in Harold Scholler (ed.), *The Epic in Medieval Society: Aesthetic and Moral Values* (Tübingen, 1977), pp. 100–12.
41. Lucy Freeman Sandler, ‘The Study of Marginal Imagery: Past, Present, and Future,’ *Studies in Iconography*, 18 (1997): 1–49. Also see Kathryn A. Smith’s chapter in this volume.
42. H.J.E. van Beuningen, A.M. Koldeweij, and Malcolm Jones, *Heilig en profaan: 1000 laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit de collectie H.J.E. van Beuningen* (Cothen, 1993); Brian Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges* (London: Stationery Office, 1998).
43. Lucy-Anne Hunt, ‘Comnenian Aristocratic Palace Decorations: Descriptions and Islamic Connections,’ in Michael Angold (ed.), *Byzantine Aristocracy, Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 138–56; Eva Hoffman, ‘Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century,’ *Art History*, 24/1 (March 2001): 17–50; Lynn Jones, ‘Abbasid Suzerainty in the Medieval Caucasus: Appropriation and Adaptation of Iconography and Ideology,’ *Gesta*, 43/2 (2004): 143–50. For an early study of elite cross-cultural exchange in the medieval secular realm, see André Grabar, ‘Le Succès des arts orientaux à la cour byzantine sous les Macédoniens,’ *München Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 2 (1951): 265–90.
44. Muriel J. Hughes, ‘Marco Polo and Medieval Silk,’ *Textile History*, 6 (1975): 119–31; Oleg Grabar, ‘The Shared Culture of Objects,’ in Maguire, *Byzantine Court Culture*, pp. 115–29.
45. David MacKinnon Ebitz, ‘The Oliphant: Its Function and Meaning in a Courtly Society,’ in Edward R. Haymes (ed.), *The Medieval Court in Europe* (Munich, 1986), pp. 123–41; Ebitz, ‘Secular to Sacred: The Transformation of an Oliphant in the Musée de Cluny,’ *Gesta*, 25/1 (1986): 31–8; Julie A. Harris, ‘Muslim Ivories in Christian Hands: The Leire Casket in Context,’ *Art History*, 2 (1995): 213–21; Avinoam Shalem, *Islam Christianized: Islamic Portable Objects in the Medieval Church Treasuries of the Latin West* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996); John Eric Hanson, ‘The Ivory Casket in Sens Known as La Sainte Chasse’ (Ph.D. diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1996); Martin W. Walsh, ‘The Perceval Casket as Rite of Passage,’ *Source*, 17/4 (1998): 6–10; Shalem, *The Oliphant: Islamic Objects in Historical Context* (Leiden, 2004).
46. Caroline Wamsler’s chapter in this volume exemplifies this approach.
47. For instance, Henry Maguire has proposed distinct formal qualities for secular art in Byzantium, perceiving it to employ a different mode of representation than sacred forms. See ‘The Profane Aesthetic in Byzantine Art and Literature,’ *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 53 (1999): 189–205.
48. For an extended consideration of the complex relationship between secular and sacred artistic production in Byzantium, see Maguire and Maguire, *Other Icons*.
49. A paper by Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo was delivered at the conference session but published elsewhere. See ‘Touch Me, See Me: The Emmaus and Thomas Reliefs in the Cloister of Silos,’ in Colum Hourihane (ed.), *Spanish Medieval Art: Recent Studies* (Tempe AZ, 2007), pp. 35–64; *Palace of the Mind: The Cloister of Silos and Spanish Sculpture of the Twelfth Century* (forthcoming, Turnhout, 2009). Valdez del Alamo reconsidered the role of secular elements in the sculptural program of the eleventh-century monastery Santo Domingo de Silos in Burgos, Spain, a building whose role in studies by Meyer Schapiro and others played a seminal role in the historiography of sacred and secular in Western medieval art history. See Schapiro, ‘From Mozarabic to Romanesque in Silos’;

O.K. Werckmeister, 'The Emmaus and Thomas Pillar of the Cloister of Silos,' in *El Románico en Silos: IX Centenario de la Consagración de la Iglesia y Claustro* (Santo Domingo de Silos, 1990), pp. 149–72. Questioning earlier tendencies to view worldly imagery as an 'intrusion' into the sacred meaning of the monastery, Valdez del Alamo proposed instead that profane themes cooperated in the production of a unified message and argued that the sculptural program communicated with both the ecclesiastical and lay populations who created, maintained, and moved through the monastic space.