



An illustrated public lecture by

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# Rhetoric, Ambition, and the Function of the Capella Palatina in Palermo

Dedicated in 1140, the Cappella Palatina was a royal commission by King Roger II. Scholars have long considered the "hybridity" of the famous chapel. Some argue that the presbytery with its cupola was modelled after a Byzantine domed church, while the naves reflect southern Italian-Romanesque architecture. Byzantinists debate whether the Sicilian wall mosaics mirror pure Constantinopolitan models, and Islamicists are still unable to agree on whether the Palatina's painted ceiling should be attributed to artists from Egypt, North Africa, or the Near East.

All scholars agree, however, that the chapel was completed through the participation of Byzantine, Islamic, Sicilian, and Italian artists. The resulting amalgamated style makes the Palatina truly unique. Based on analyses of the chapel's architecture, this lecture will address the following questions: How does a king who is granted political power from the pope express himself? How did King Roger II, a Norman, rule over a foreign territory of Muslims, Greeks, Lombards, and Franks? How did this condition his political and cultural ambitions?

**Thursday, November 18, 2010, 5:30 pm**  
**The Music Room**

**Reservations required:**  
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