Project: The NEH Summer Institute allowed me to work on and rethink two projects: a syllabus for a lecture class, **ARTH 267 Cross-cultural Encounters in the Medieval Mediterranean**, and my book, **Appropriation and Cultural Conversion: the Creation of a Mediterranean Architecture in Norman Sicily**. Both projects explore the ways in which art and architectural motifs are borrowed, transmitted, and adapted by the various cultures around the medieval Mediterranean.

Part I/ Syllabus for **ARTH 267 Cross-Cultural Encounters in Medieval Mediterranean**

During the NEH Institute, I reorganized and expanded the syllabus of a course that I will be teaching in Spring 2010. The new syllabus includes a broad range of materials and areas that were not included in the previous incarnation of the course. This course explores specific sites and objects that demonstrate the historical, geographical, and intercultural connections between various medieval Mediterranean societies. While this is primarily a lecture course, it will include regular student presentations and discussion. I have appended below the lecture topics that I will cover in the course.

Course Topics

1. What is the Mediterranean?
2. The Clash of the Gods: Polytheism, Mithraism and Christianity
3. The Conversion of Rome
4. Art, Architecture, and Civic Ritual in Constantinople
5. Ostrogothic and Byzantine Ravenna
6. Illustrating the Bible: Jewish and Christian Traditions
7. Pilgrimage and the Creation of a New Holy Land: Churches, Monasteries and Hospices
8. Byzantine North Africa
9. The Development of Islamic Architecture: The Dome of the Rock and the Mosque of Damascus
10. The Transmission of Knowledge: Manuscript Illumination in the Abbasid Court
11. Charlemagne and the Carolingian Renaissance
12. Caliphal Iberia: Cordoba
13. Mozarabic Art and Architecture in Spain
14. Heaven and Hell in the Romanesque Paintings of Catalonia
15. The Portable Arts and Cultural Interchange
16. Between Byzantium and Islam: Norman Sicily
17. Society, culture and architecture in Crusader Palestine
18. Crusader Art and Multiculturalism
19. The Architecture of Lusignan Cyprus
20. The Art and Architecture of the Crown of Aragon
21. Love, Pleasure and Leisure in Late Medieval Art
22. Complexes of the Mamluk Sultans in Cairo
23. The Seljuks and the Transformation of Medieval Anatolia
24. Picturing Alexander the Great around the Mediterranean and Beyond
Part II/ Book Project titled: *Appropriation and Cultural Conversion: the Creation of a Mediterranean Architecture in Norman Sicily*

My participation in the Institute allowed me to rethink and better focus my book-project. The Institute readings and lectures, as well as the formal and informal discussions with fellow Institute participants and lecturers gave me the opportunity to widen my understanding of the medieval Mediterranean and how Norman architecture in Sicily was shaped by this context. Norman Sicily (ca 1060-1194) is often noted for its “tri-lingual” character: a fusion of Greek Byzantine, Arab Muslim, and western European cultures. This mixed population left in its religious and secular structures a material record of a multi-ethnic society. My book project focuses on the ways in which the Normans formulated a new architectural language that promoted the supremacy of the Normans in the medieval Mediterranean world. By focusing on the monasteries built during this period in Palermo, I argue that Norman architecture cannot be explained by the traditional canons of medieval architecture (i.e. "Western" vs. "Byzantine" vs. “Islamic”). I propose rather, that the Sicilian Norman style transcends such style labels and while it should be understood as a unique, new style, it is closely related to a larger trend in medieval Mediterranean architectural production.