Since at least the sixteenth century, when Giorgio Vasari privileged painting, architecture, and sculpture (the *arte del disegno*) in his *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, a division has existed between the “major” and the “minor” in the discourse surrounding the visual arts. These sixteen essays, most of which were presented in some form at a 2011 conference organized by The Index of Christian Art, consider work that has previously been relegated to the minor arts and to some extent overlooked by art historians.

The topics included range from medieval jewelry to Romanesque mural painting and from coinage, prints, and pilgrim badges to tapestries, misericords, and Gothic stained glass. However, what is most interesting and useful in this collection, and perhaps what sets it apart from other work on these media, is the authors’ focus on what might be termed the history of reception. In addition to examining how particular works of art or media were seen and used in their original contexts, several of the authors discuss how their subjects fit into the major / minor hierarchy, considering both how artworks were valued by medieval viewers and tracing the historiography to show why and how these works have been classified among the minor arts by scholars. For example, in her essay, Brigitte Bedos-Rezak examines trends that have shaped the study of medieval seals since the sixteenth century, identifying how methods employed in past scholarship have concealed the complex significance of these wax impressions as they were understood during the Middle Ages.

The book contains an index, extensive notes, and numerous high quality images, most in color. In addition to providing an overview of the contents, the introduction by Colum Hourihane sheds light on the theme of the “minor vis-à-vis the major arts” (p. xvii) that unites the essays, acknowledging the complexity of such categorization and the diversity of opinion among the authors about the nature (and, in fact, the very existence) of a major / minor division.

This book is challenging, suitable for readers at the graduate level or above. It would be a valuable addition to a library collection at a university with a graduate program in medieval art history, as well as to a museum library supporting exhibitions of medieval art.

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